



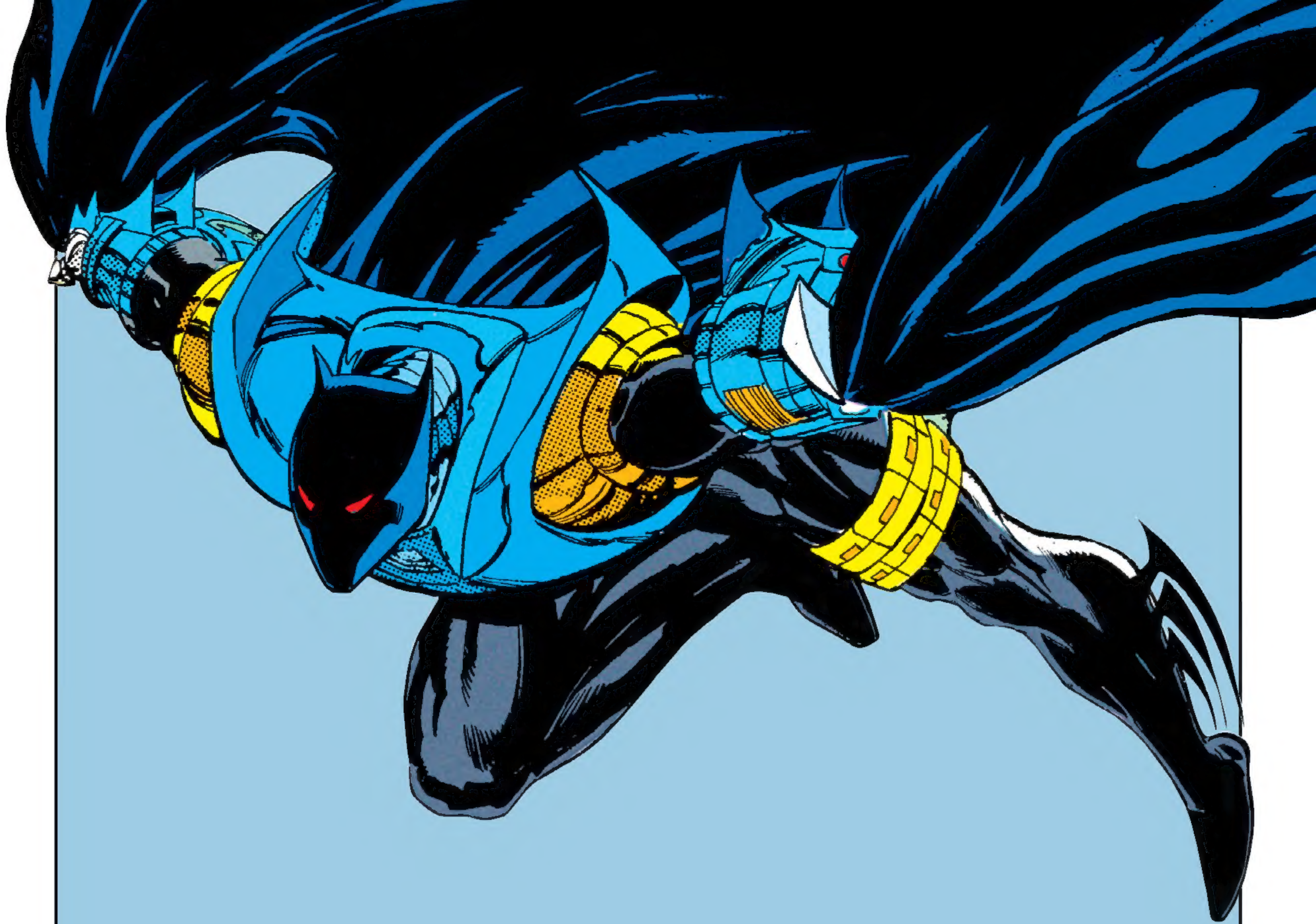
BATMAN

KNIGHTFALL

VOLUME TWO

KNIGHTQUEST





B A T M A N

KNIGHTFALL

volume two

KNIGHTQUEST



B A T M A N
KNIGHTFALL

volume two

KNIGHTQUEST

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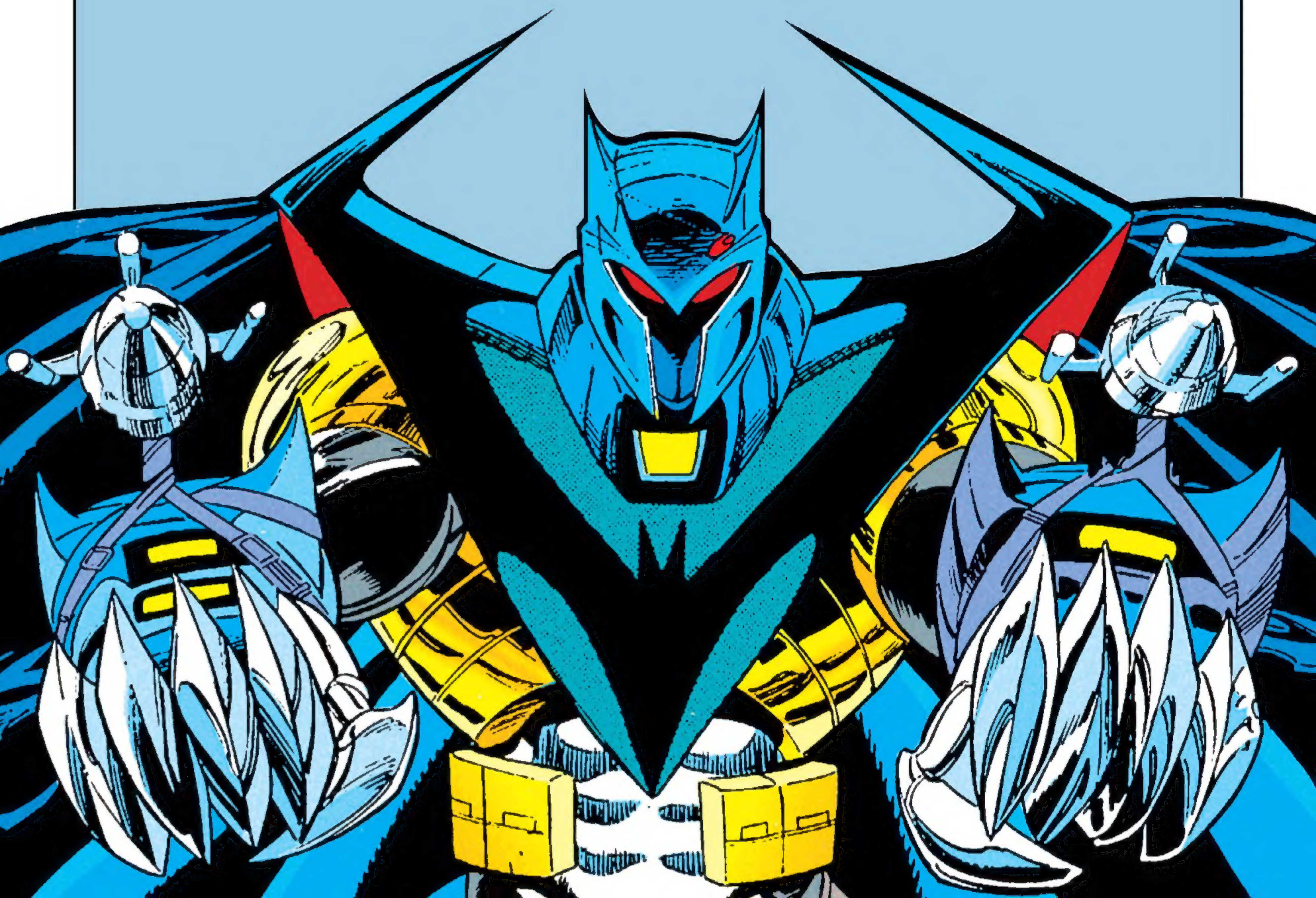
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BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL VOLUME TWO

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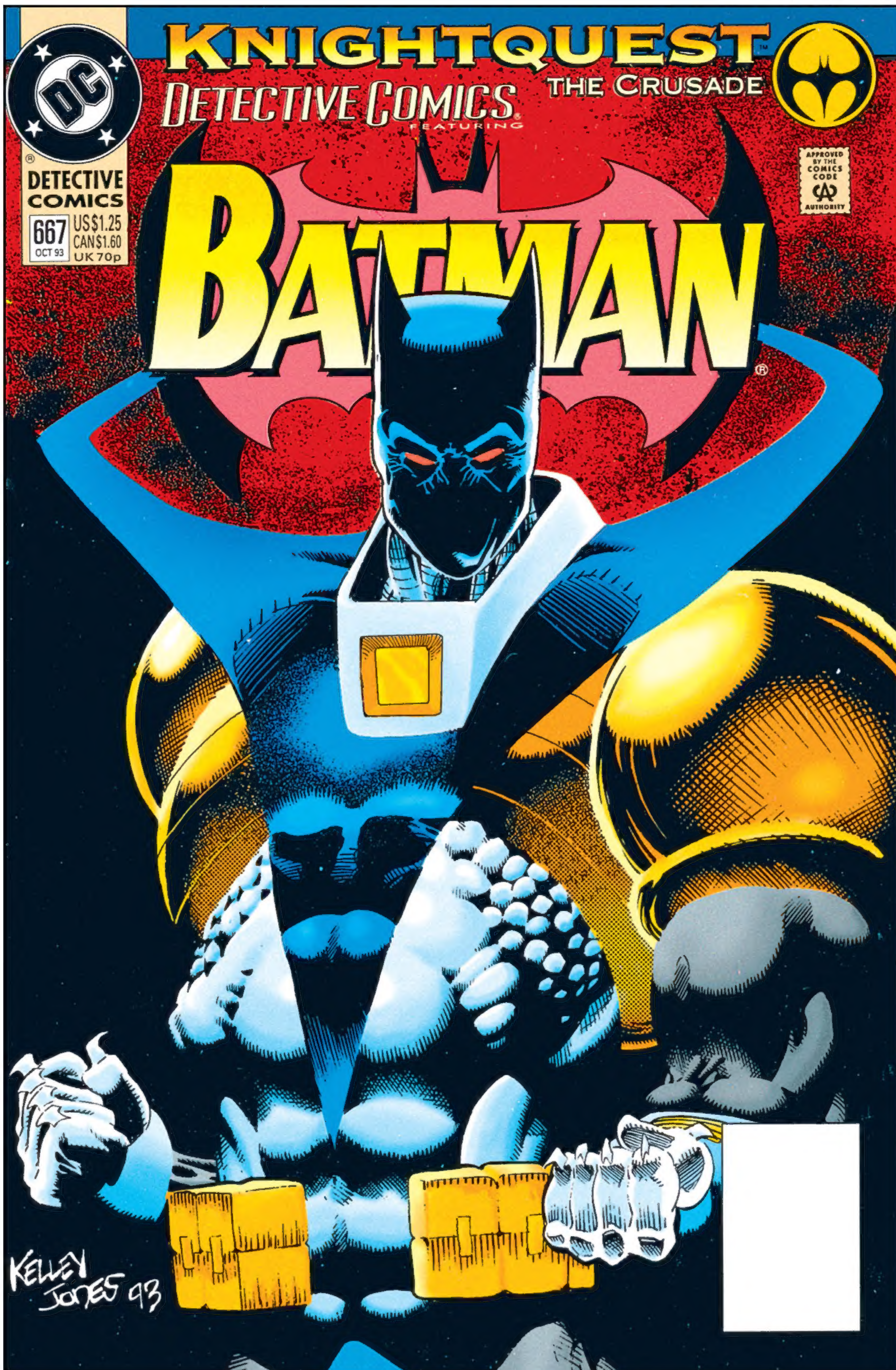
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THE STORY SO FAR...

In **BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL VOLUME 1**, the terrifyingly twisted Bane escaped from Pena Duro prison and immediately journeyed to Gotham to unleash his infinite fury. The hulking lunatic proceeded to free all of Arkham Asylum's many venal villains, creating havoc for an already weary Batman. After methodically taking down Mister Zsasz, Killer Croc, Scarecrow and a number of other crazies, Batman soon reached both his physical and mental breaking point. In an epic showdown with Bane, Batman was thrown off a Gotham skyscraper, and was left heartbroken and paralyzed. While slowly recovering with the help of Robin and the ever-faithful Alfred, Batman, worried for the state of Gotham, appointed Jean Paul Valley (a.k.a. Azreal) to stand in for him. Jean Paul proved to be a ferocious Dark Knight, but his refusal to compromise and his thirst for revenge led him down sinister mental corridors. With a vicious new Batman acting as sentinel of the dark days of Gotham, and with the fearsome Bane still at large, how can Gotham and the true Batman ever recover?



KELLEY
JONES 93

WILD, WILD EAST

THE MOVIE WAS FUN. THE DINNER TERRIFIC IF A LITTLE EXPENSIVE. BUT YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE.

AND IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT THEY DECIDED TO WALK THROUGH GOTHAM PARK ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE HOTEL.

RUN, ELLEN! HEAD FOR THE TREES!

THEY'RE FROM INDIANA.

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VINCENZO

SCOTT
editor

PETERSON

BATMAN created by BOB KANE



HE USED TO BE
PRETTY GOOD
WITH HIS HANDS.

BACK IN THE
SIXTH GRADE.



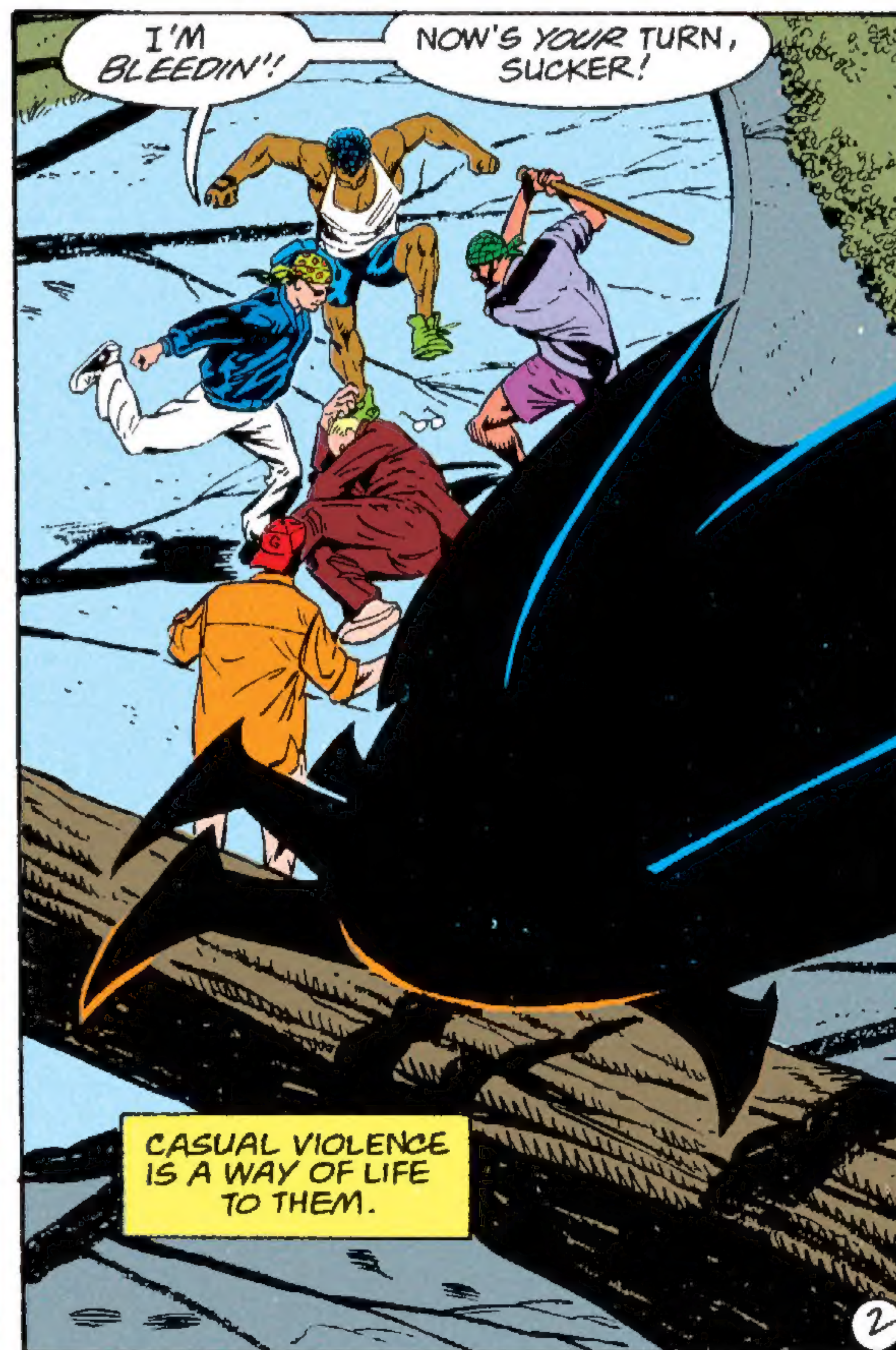
BUT HE CAN'T LET
THEM GET ELLEN
AND THE KIDS.

HE'S SCARED. HE'S
DAMN ANGRY TOO.



BUT THESE ARE
ANIMALS HE'S
UP AGAINST.

YOUNG AND
FAST AND
HUNGRY.



I'M
BLEEDIN'!

NOW'S YOUR TURN,
SUCKER!

CASUAL VIOLENCE
IS A WAY OF LIFE
TO THEM.



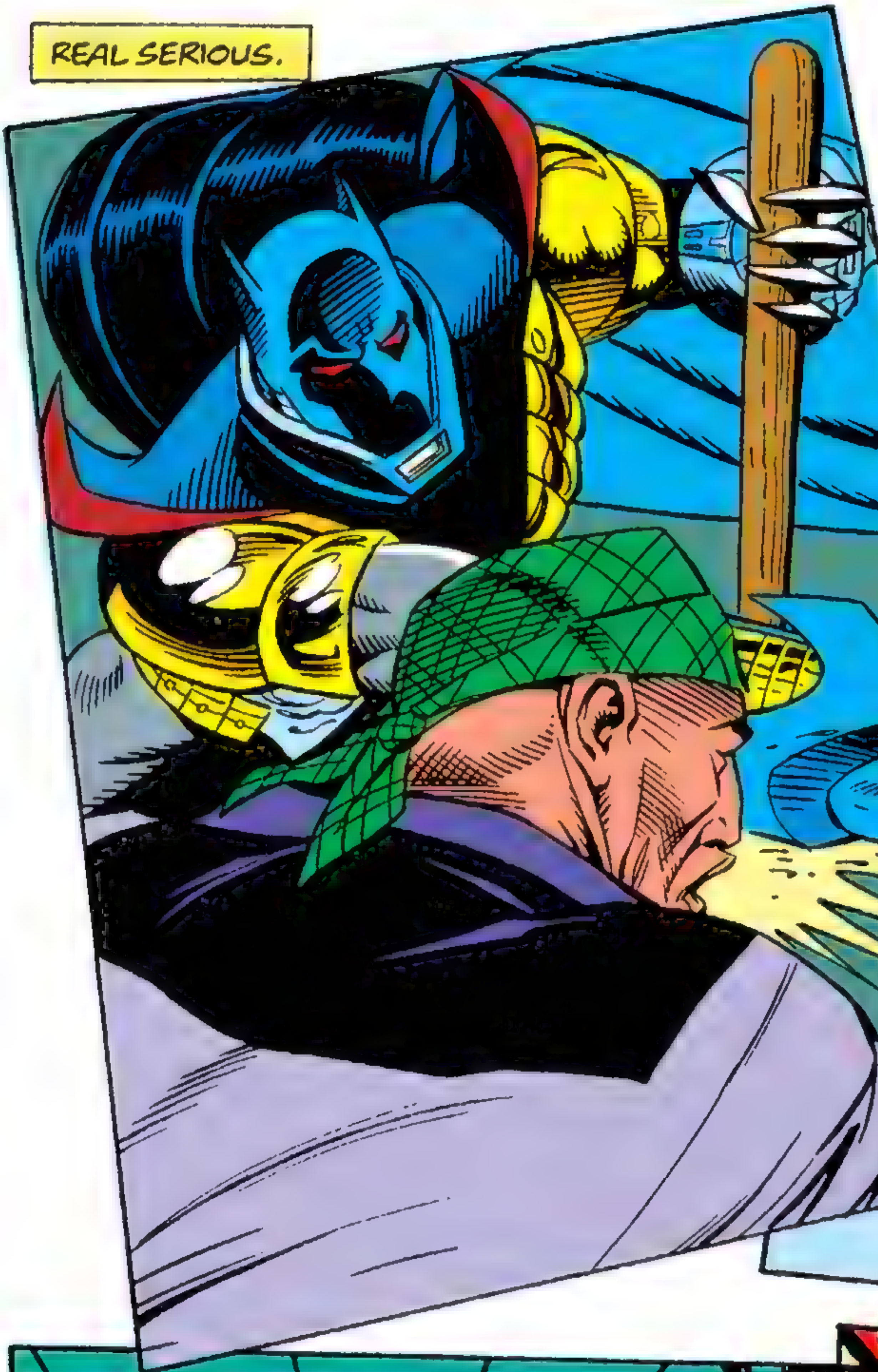
IT'S DONE
FOR FUN
AND PROFIT.

UNTIL
TONIGHT.

TONIGHT IT
GETS REAL.

WHAT
THE H--?

REAL SERIOUS.



REAL SCARY.

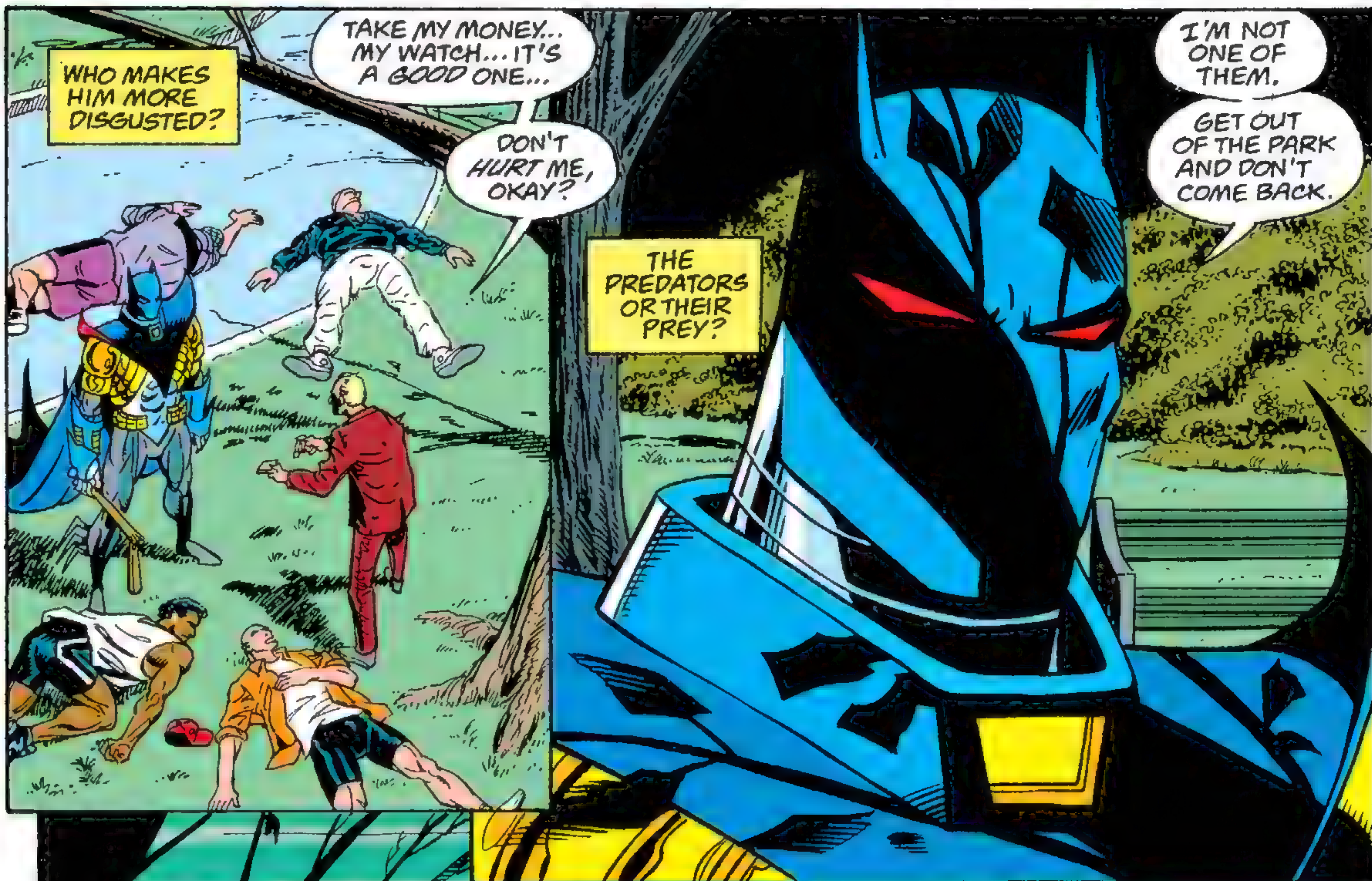


REAL PAINFUL.



REAL FAST.





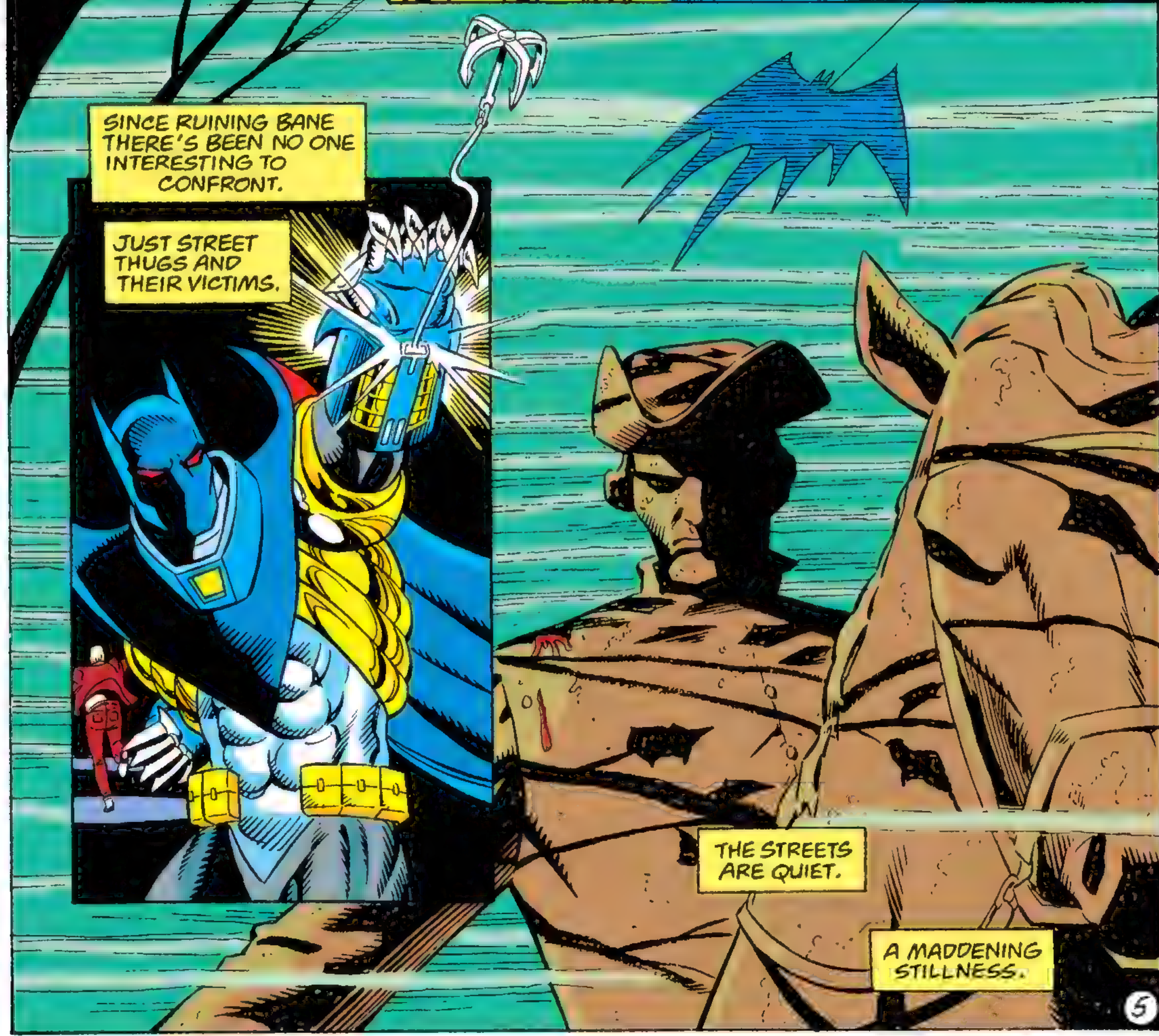
WHO MAKES HIM MORE DISGUSTED?

TAKE MY MONEY... MY WATCH... IT'S A GOOD ONE...

DON'T HURT ME, OKAY?

I'M NOT ONE OF THEM.
GET OUT OF THE PARK AND DON'T COME BACK.

THE PREDATORS OR THEIR PREY?

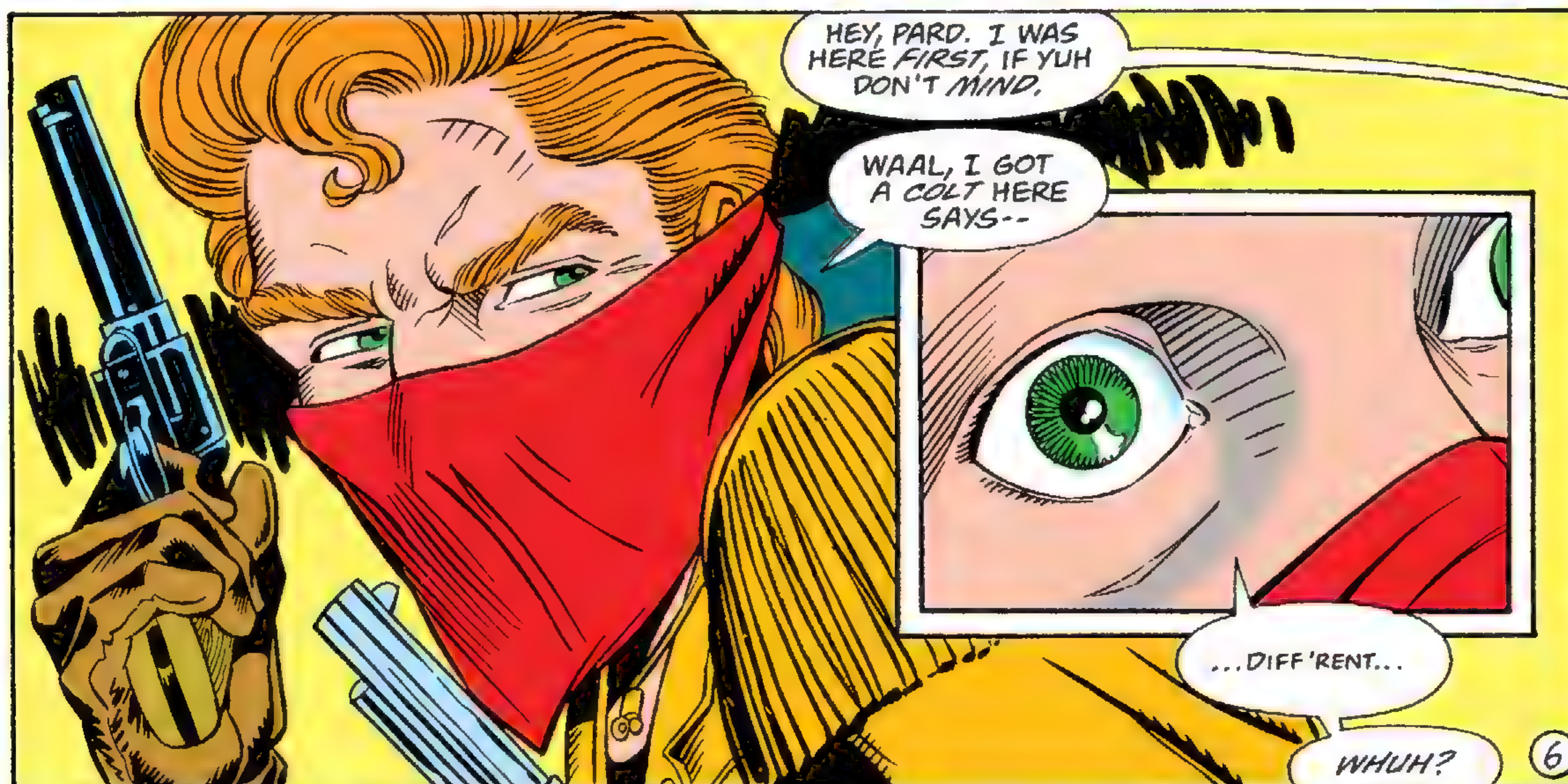
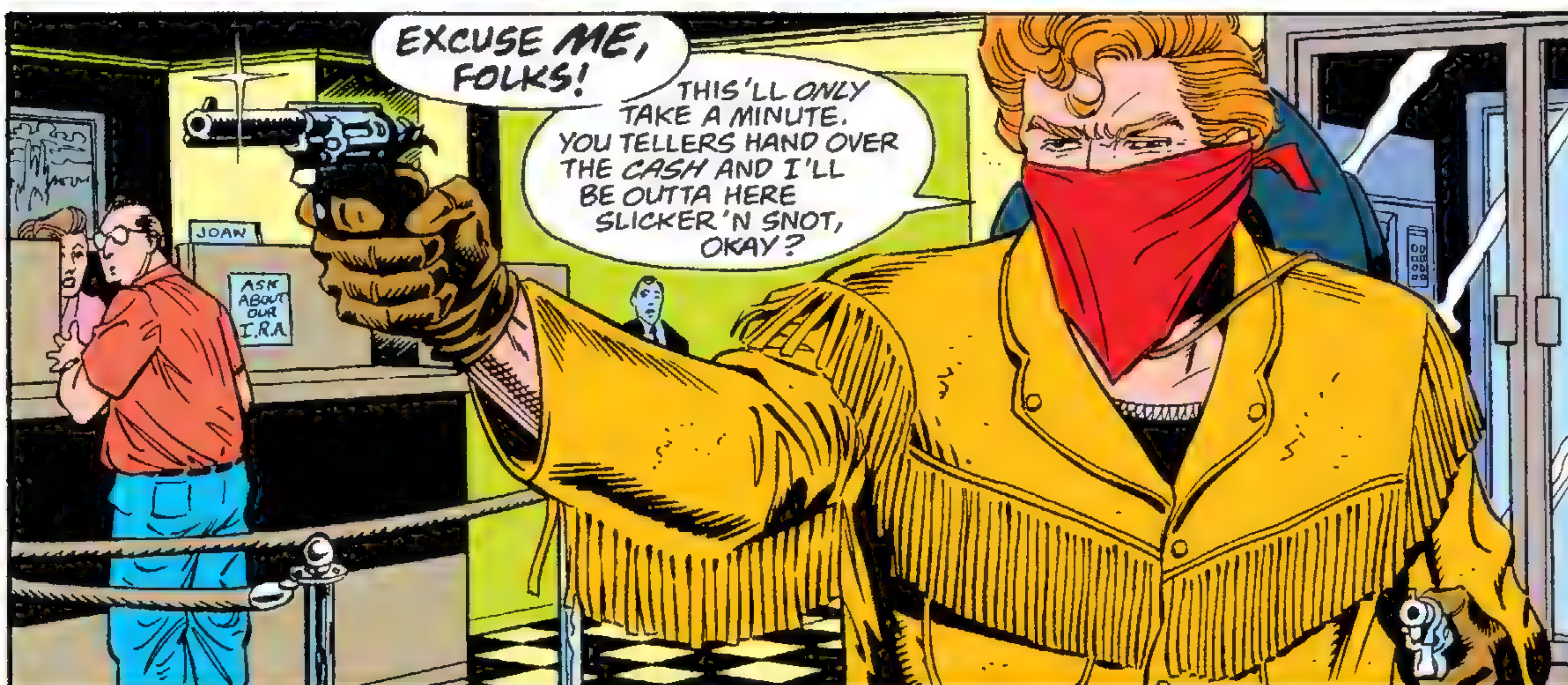
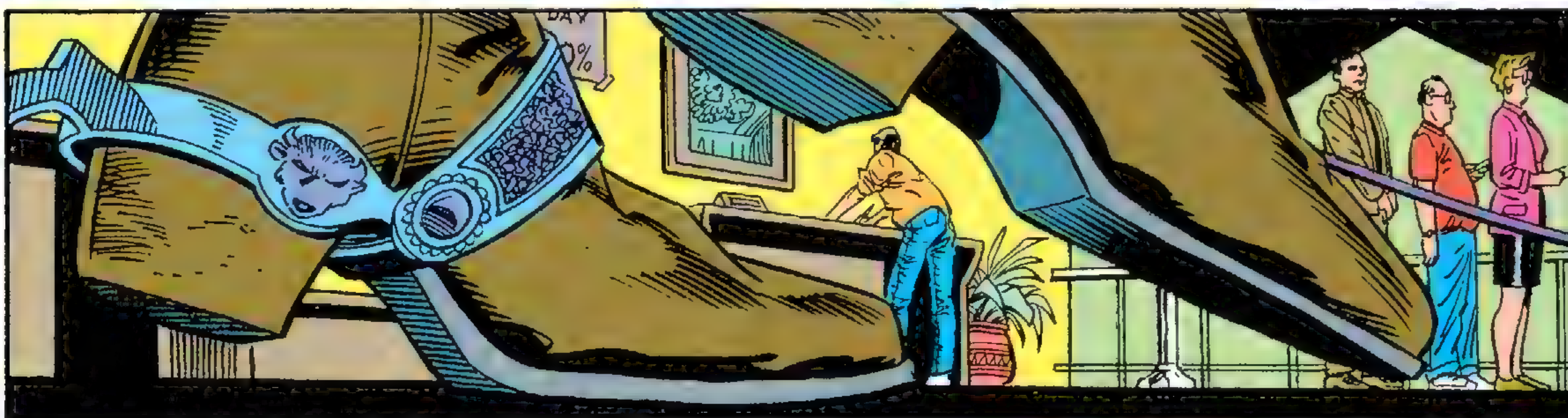


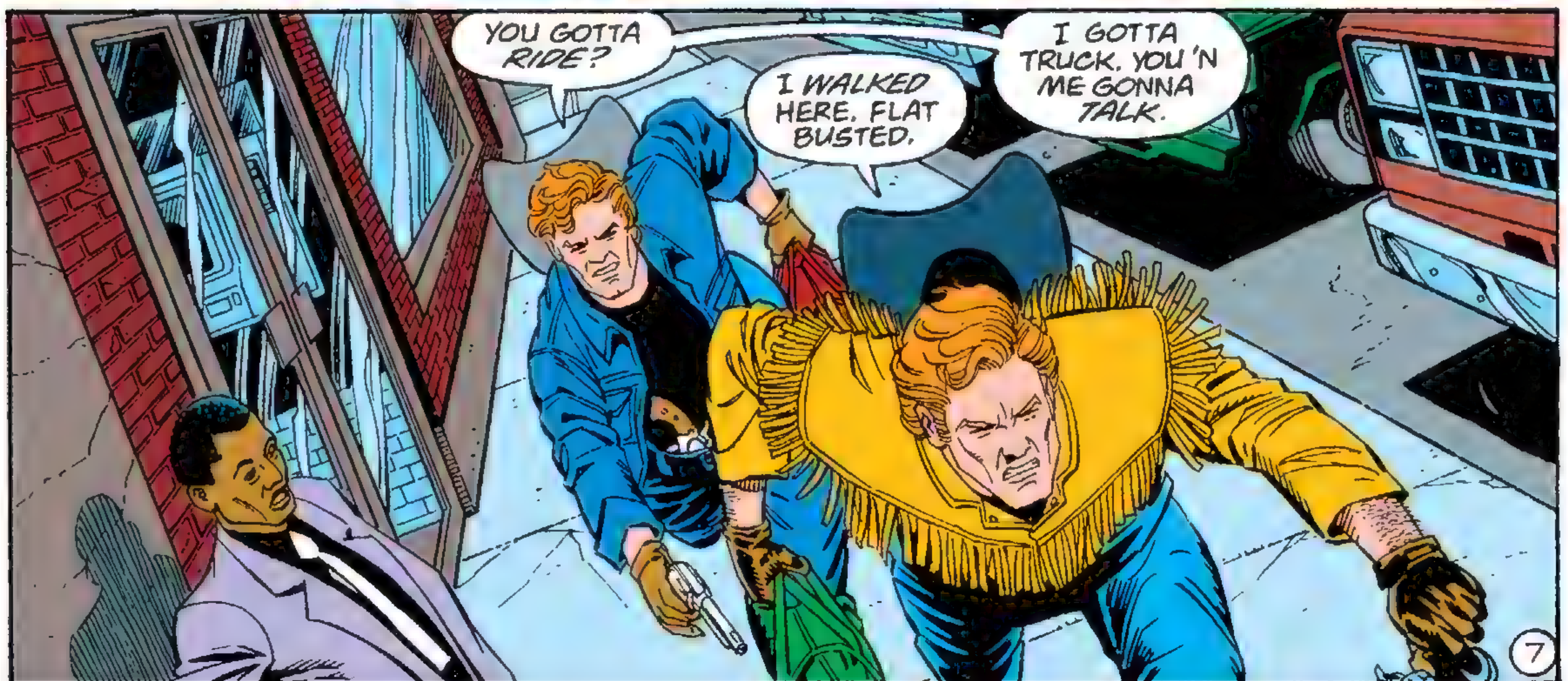
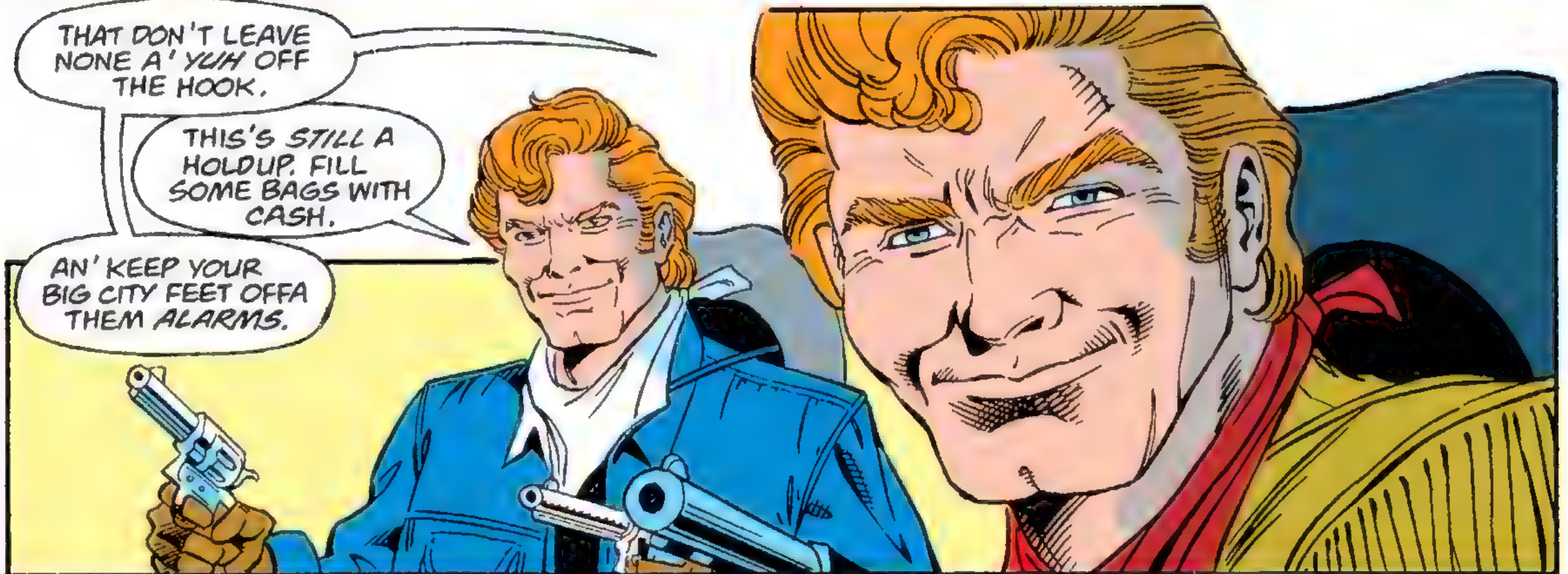
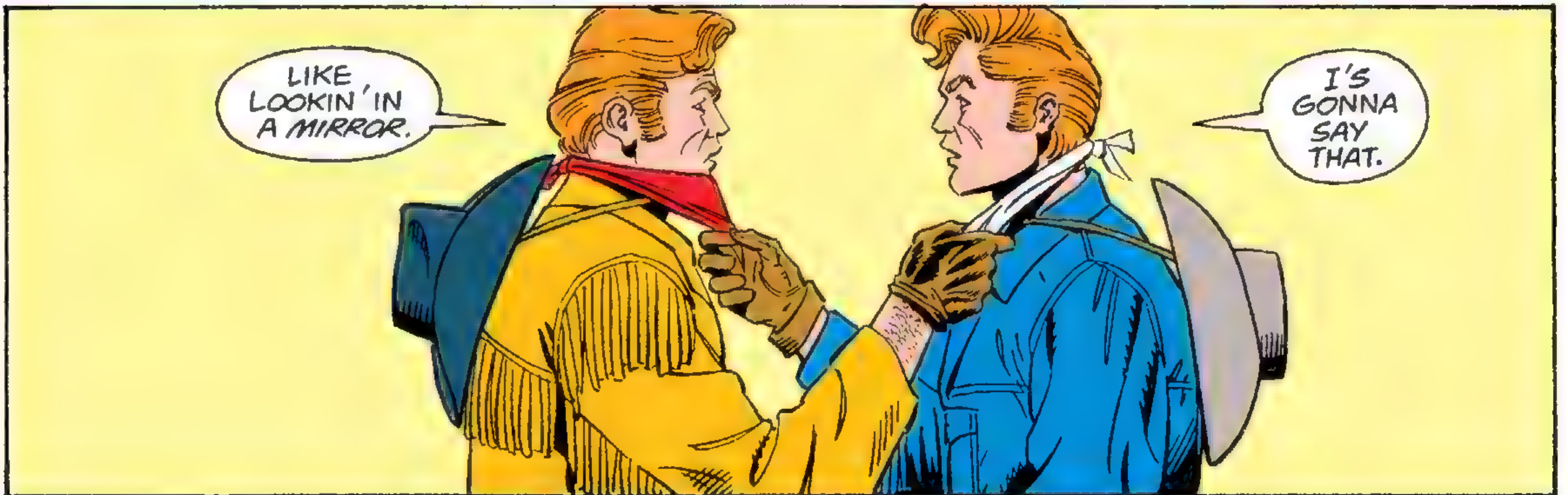
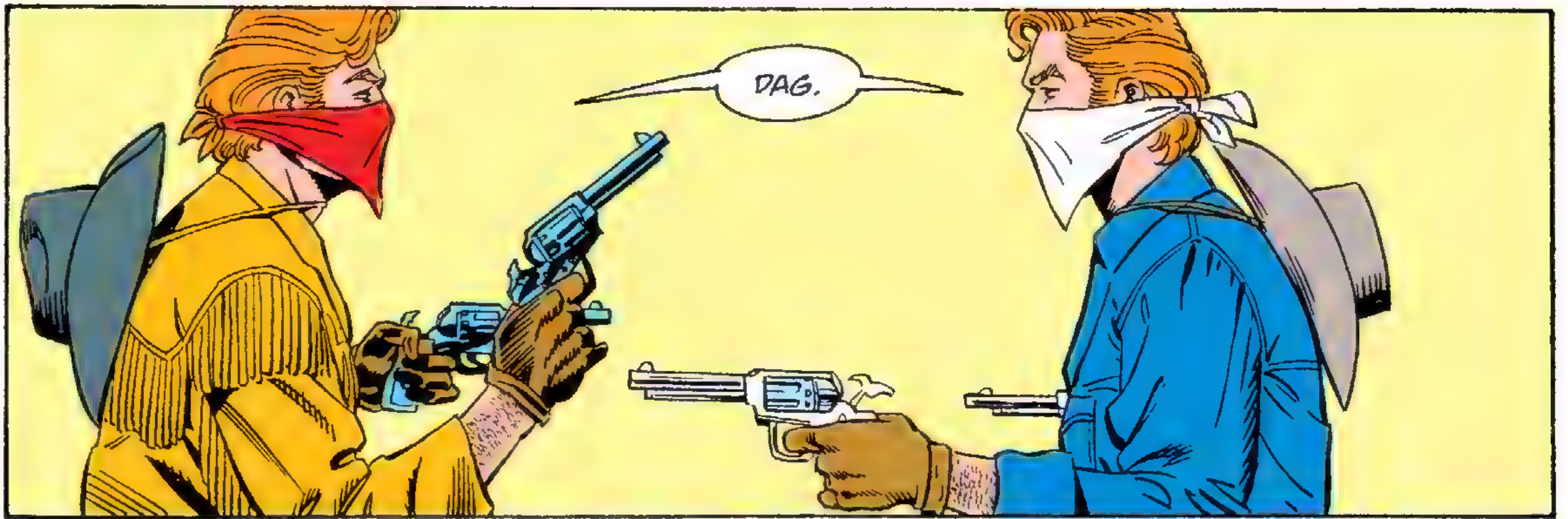
SINCE RUINING BANE THERE'S BEEN NO ONE INTERESTING TO CONFRONT.

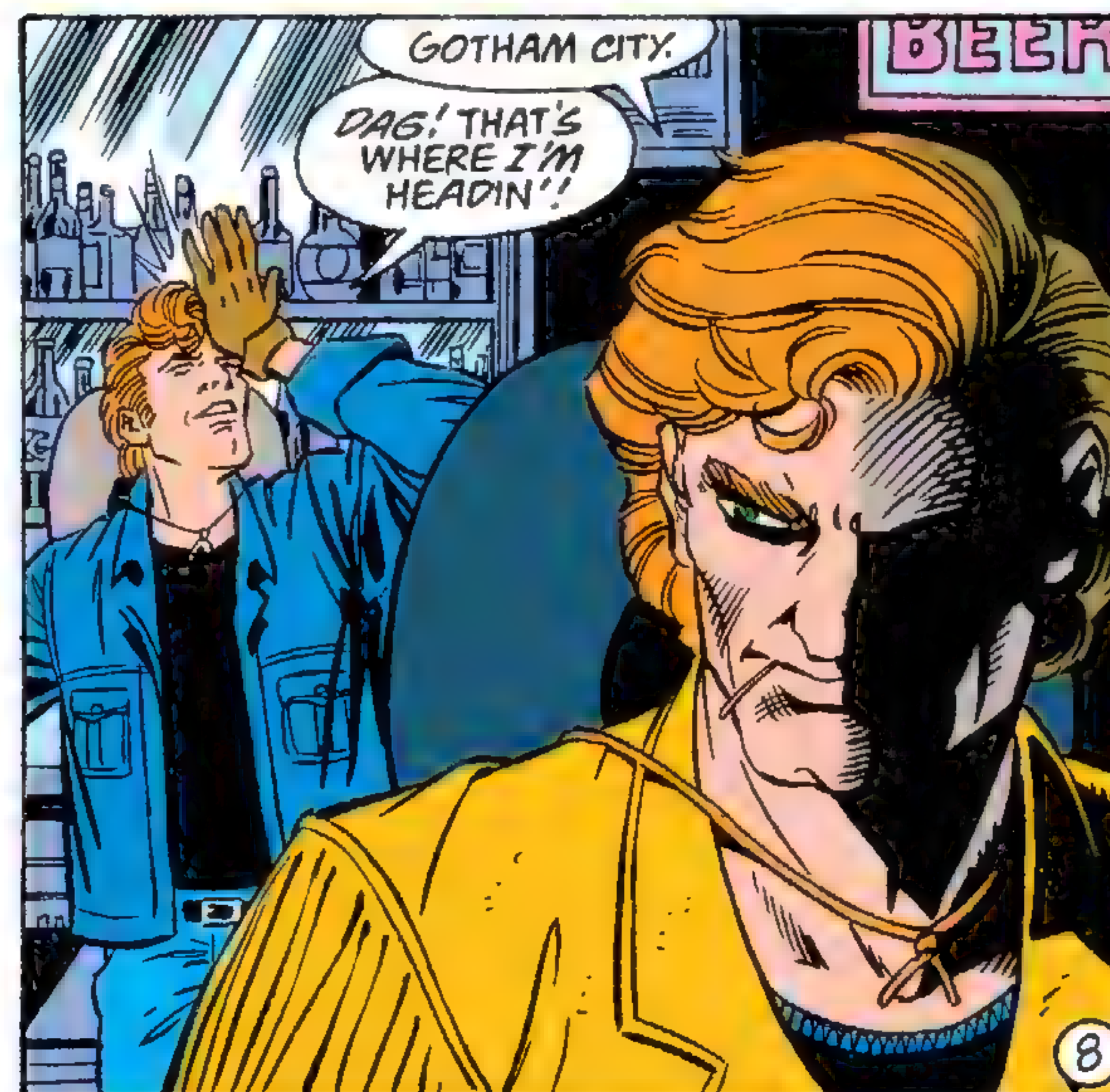
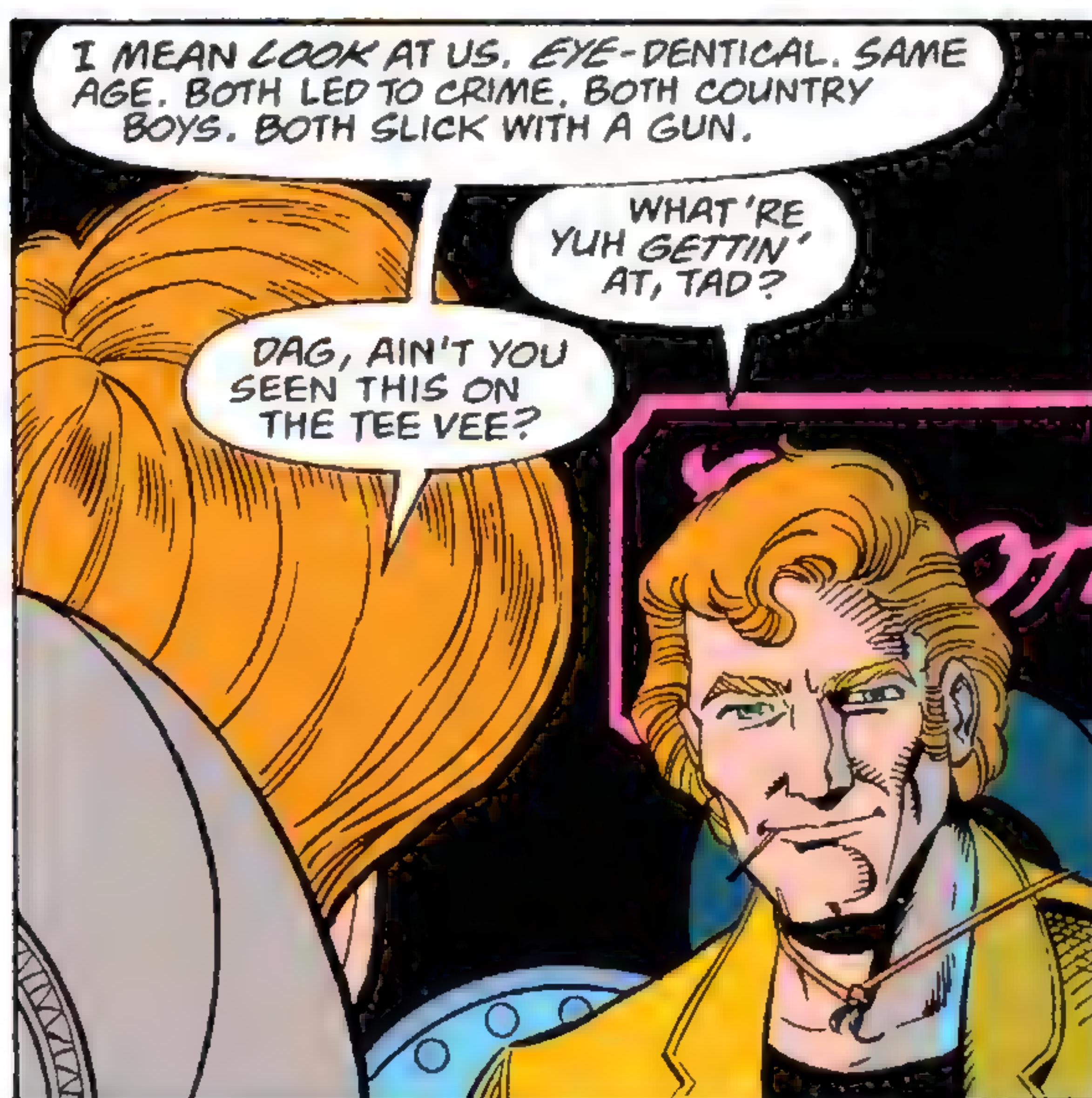
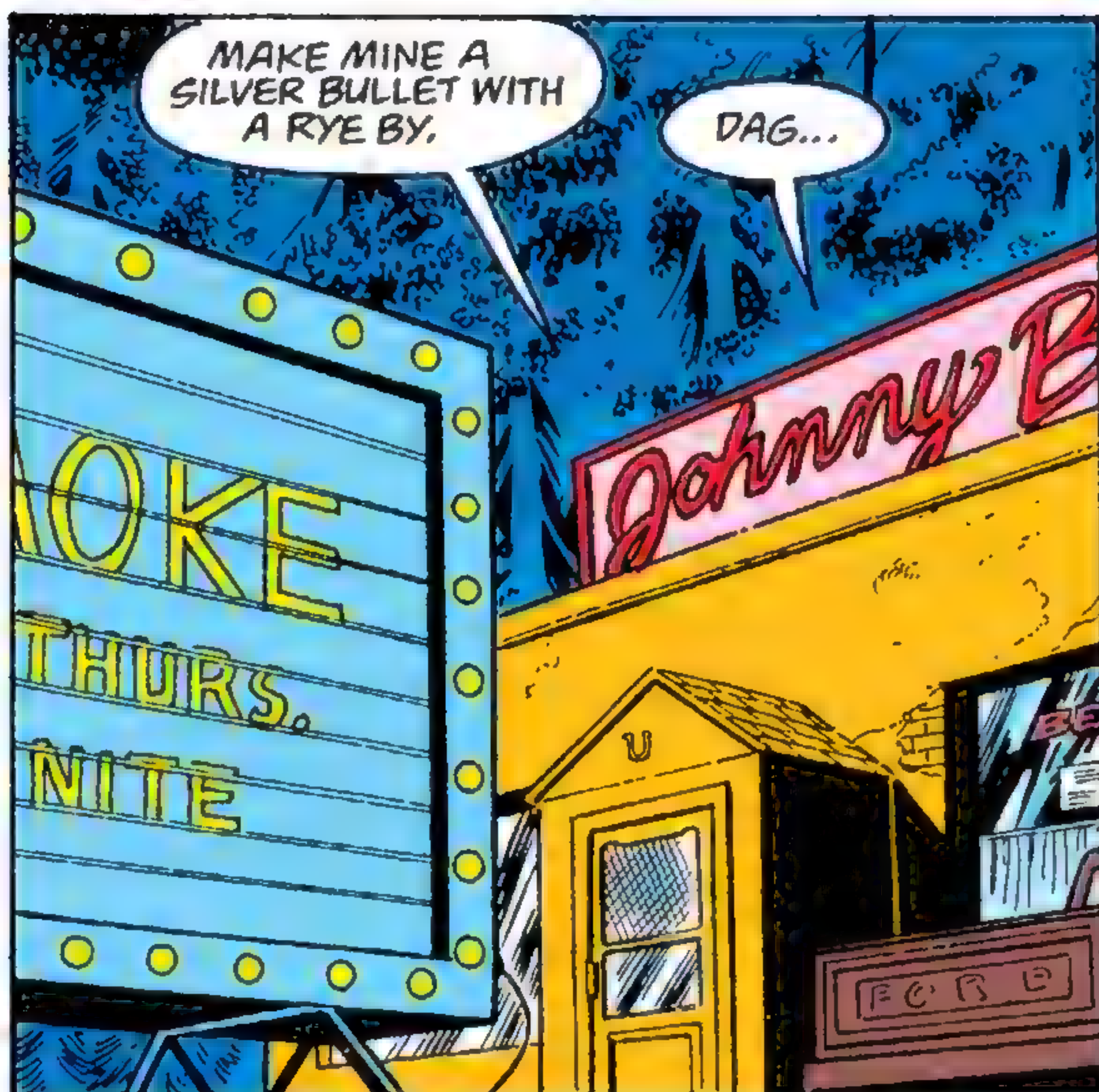
JUST STREET THUGS AND THEIR VICTIMS.

THE STREETS ARE QUIET.

A MADDENING STILLNESS.



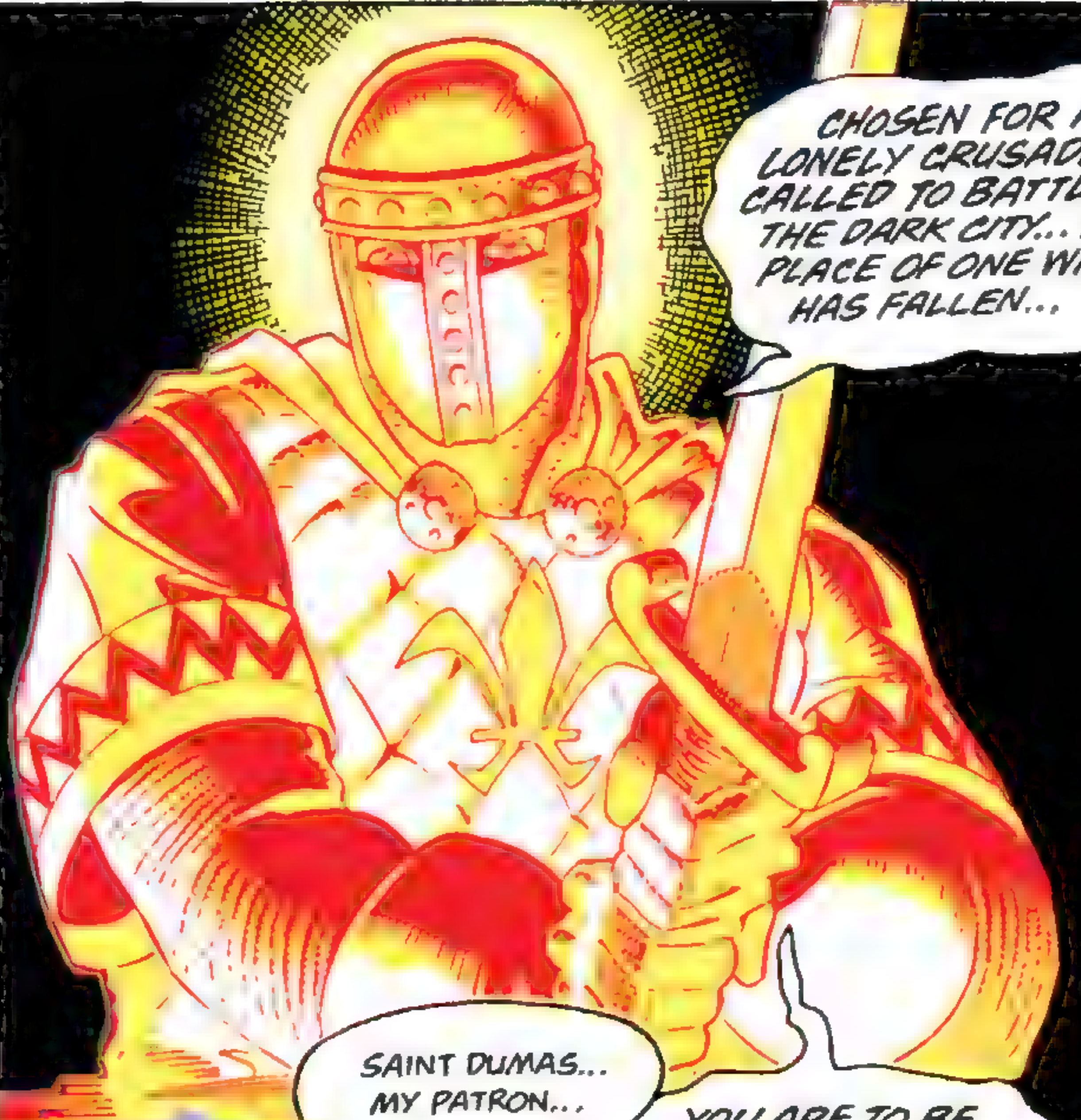






AZRAEL... YOU ARE
THE CHOSEN...

WHO--?



CHOSEN FOR A
LONELY CRUSADE...
CALLED TO BATTLE IN
THE DARK CITY... IN
PLACE OF ONE WHO
HAS FALLEN...

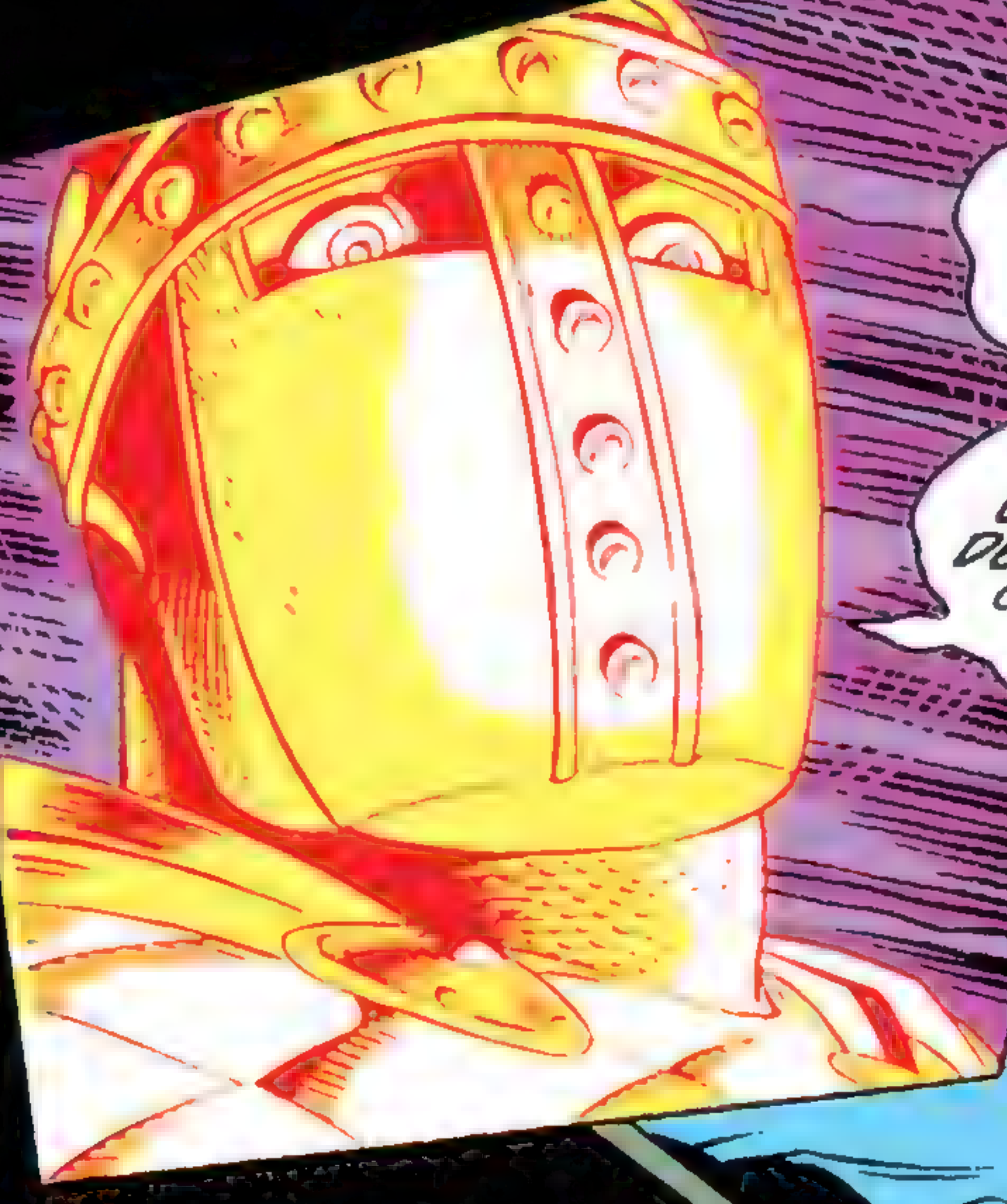
SAINT DUMAS...
MY PATRON...

YOU ARE TO BE
TRANSFORMED...
A NOBLE
TRANSFORMATION...



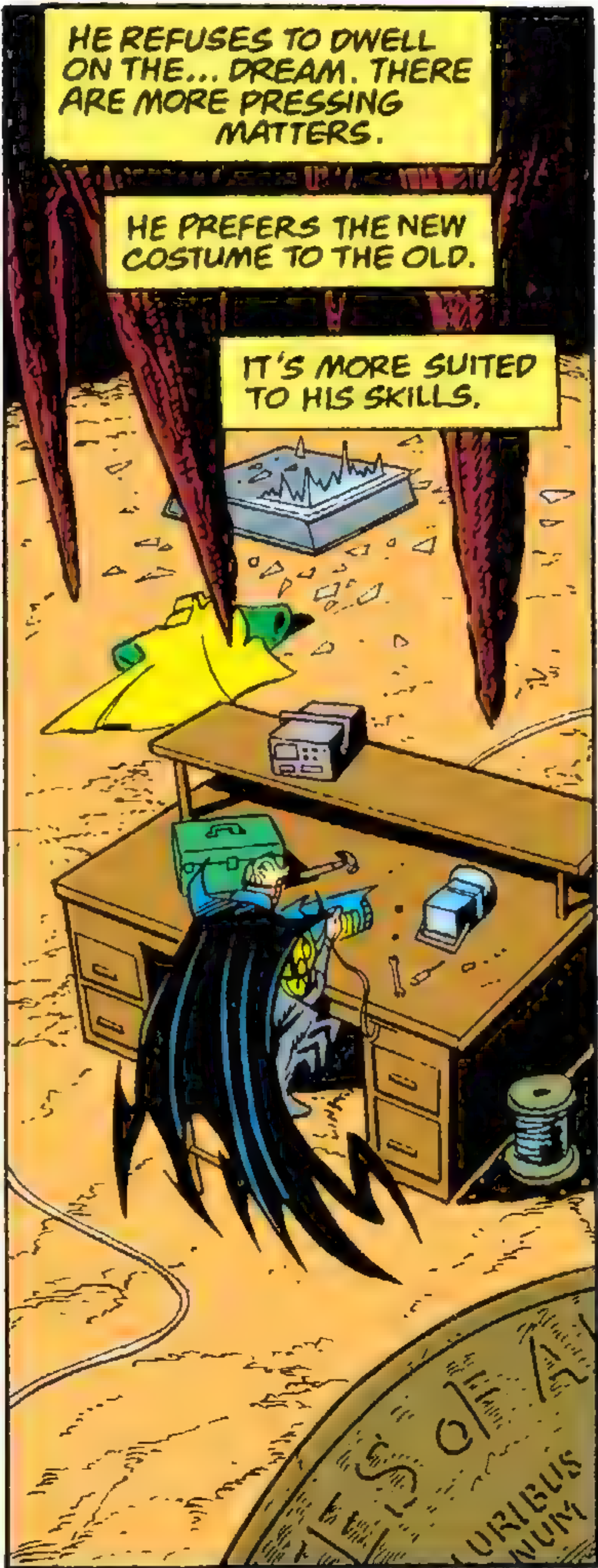
BUT I AM TRANSFORMED.
I AM THE **BATMAN**.

YOU ARE
NOTHING!



ONCE YOU
WERE AN
ANGEL...

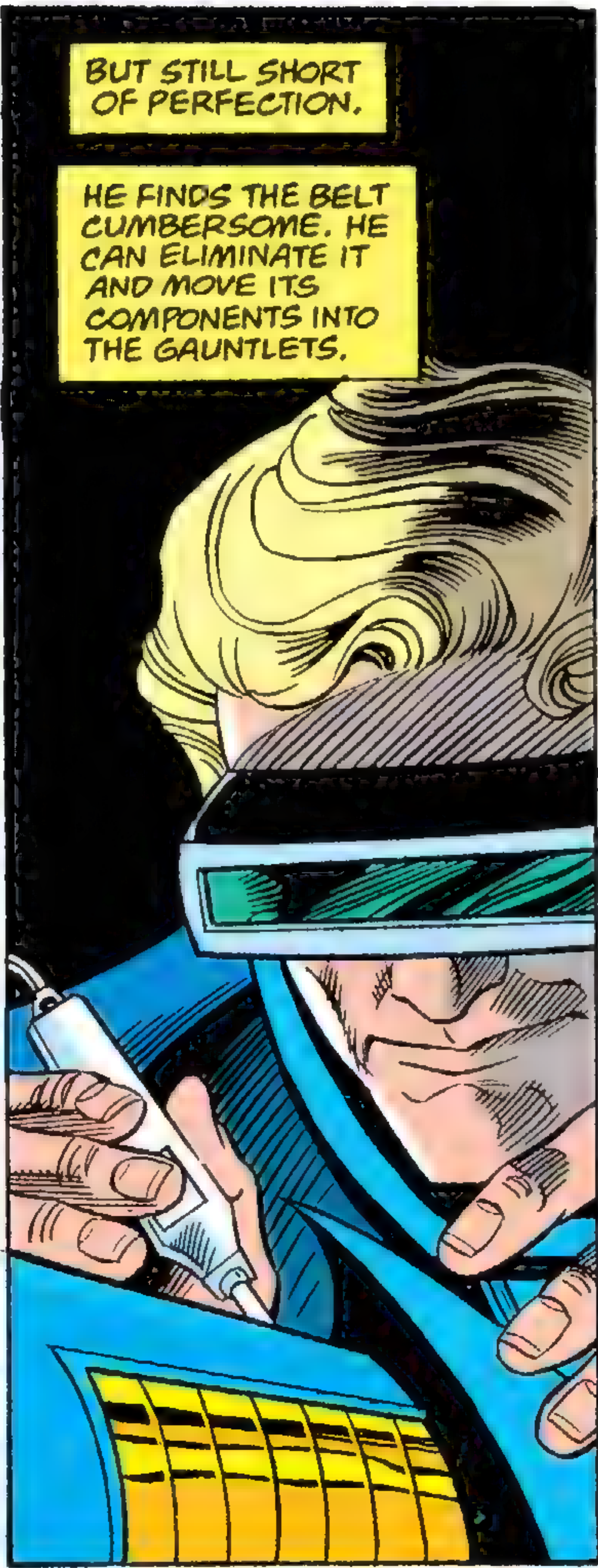
NOW YOU MUST
BECOME AS A
DEMON IF THE DARK
CITY IS TO BE
REDEEMED...



HE REFUSES TO DWELL
ON THE... DREAM. THERE
ARE MORE PRESSING
MATTERS.

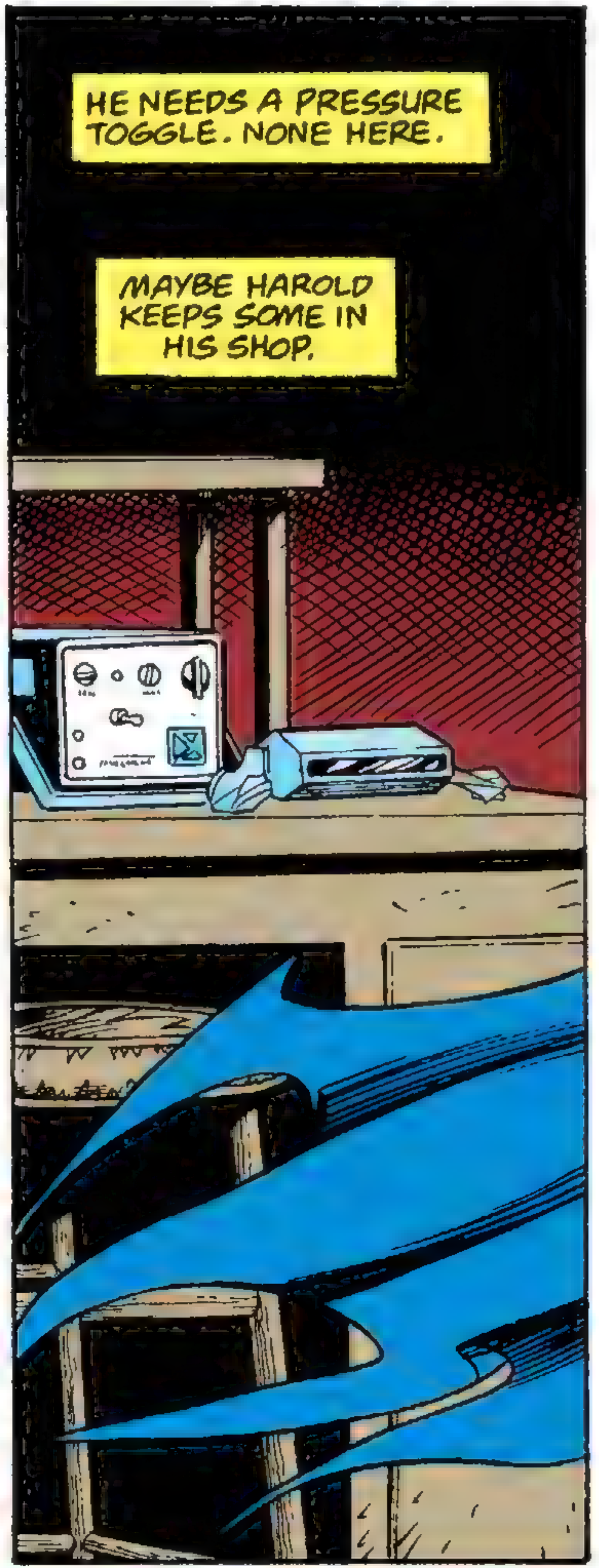
HE PREFERS THE NEW
COSTUME TO THE OLD.

IT'S MORE SUITED
TO HIS SKILLS.



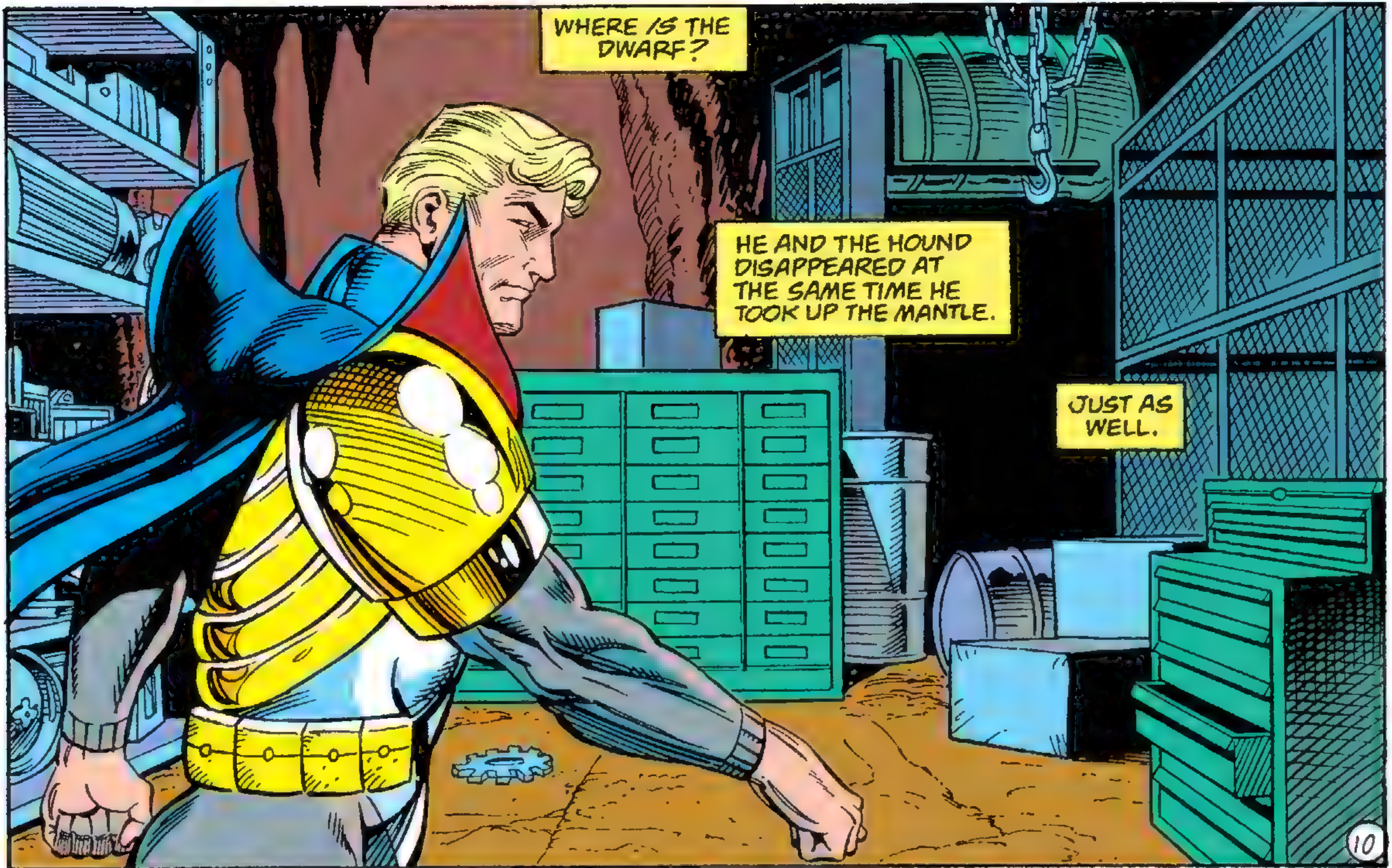
BUT STILL SHORT
OF PERFECTION.

HE FINDS THE BELT
CUMBERSOME. HE
CAN ELIMINATE IT
AND MOVE ITS
COMPONENTS INTO
THE GAUNTLETS.



HE NEEDS A PRESSURE
TOGGLE. NONE HERE.

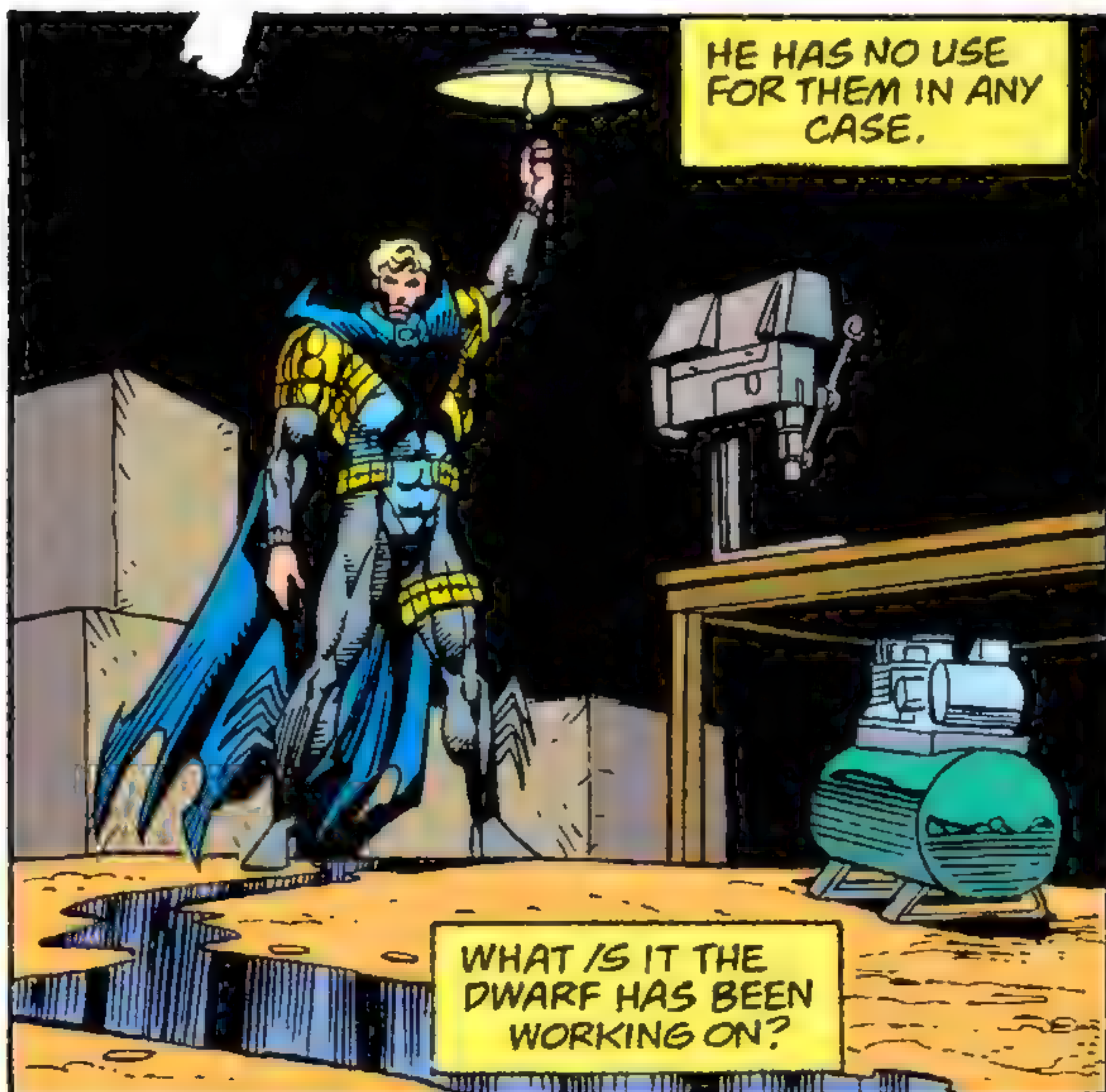
MAYBE HAROLD
KEEPS SOME IN
HIS SHOP.



WHERE IS THE
DWARF?

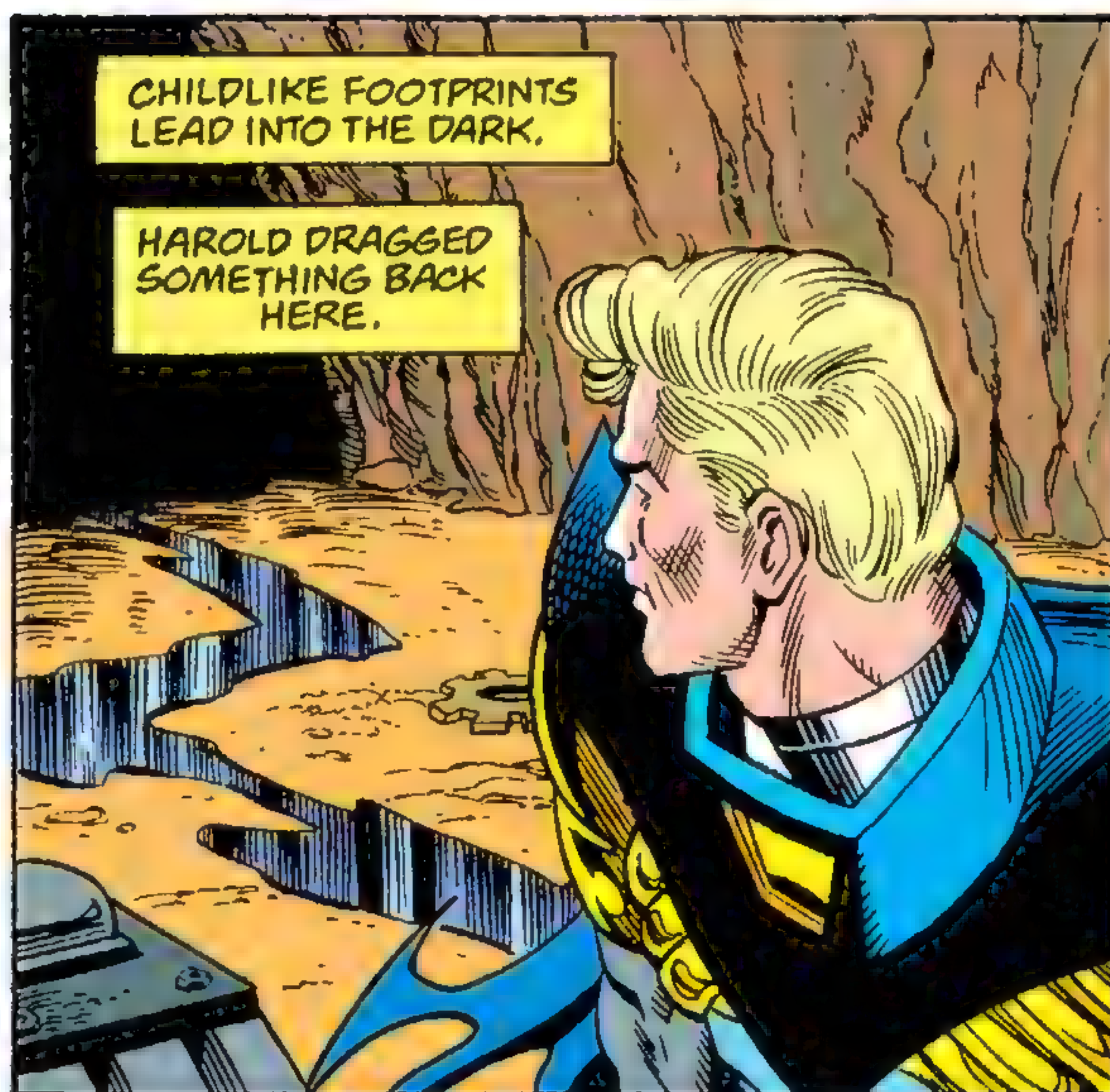
HE AND THE HOUND
DISAPPEARED AT
THE SAME TIME HE
TOOK UP THE MANTLE.

JUST AS
WELL.



HE HAS NO USE
FOR THEM IN ANY
CASE.

WHAT IS IT THE
DWARF HAS BEEN
WORKING ON?



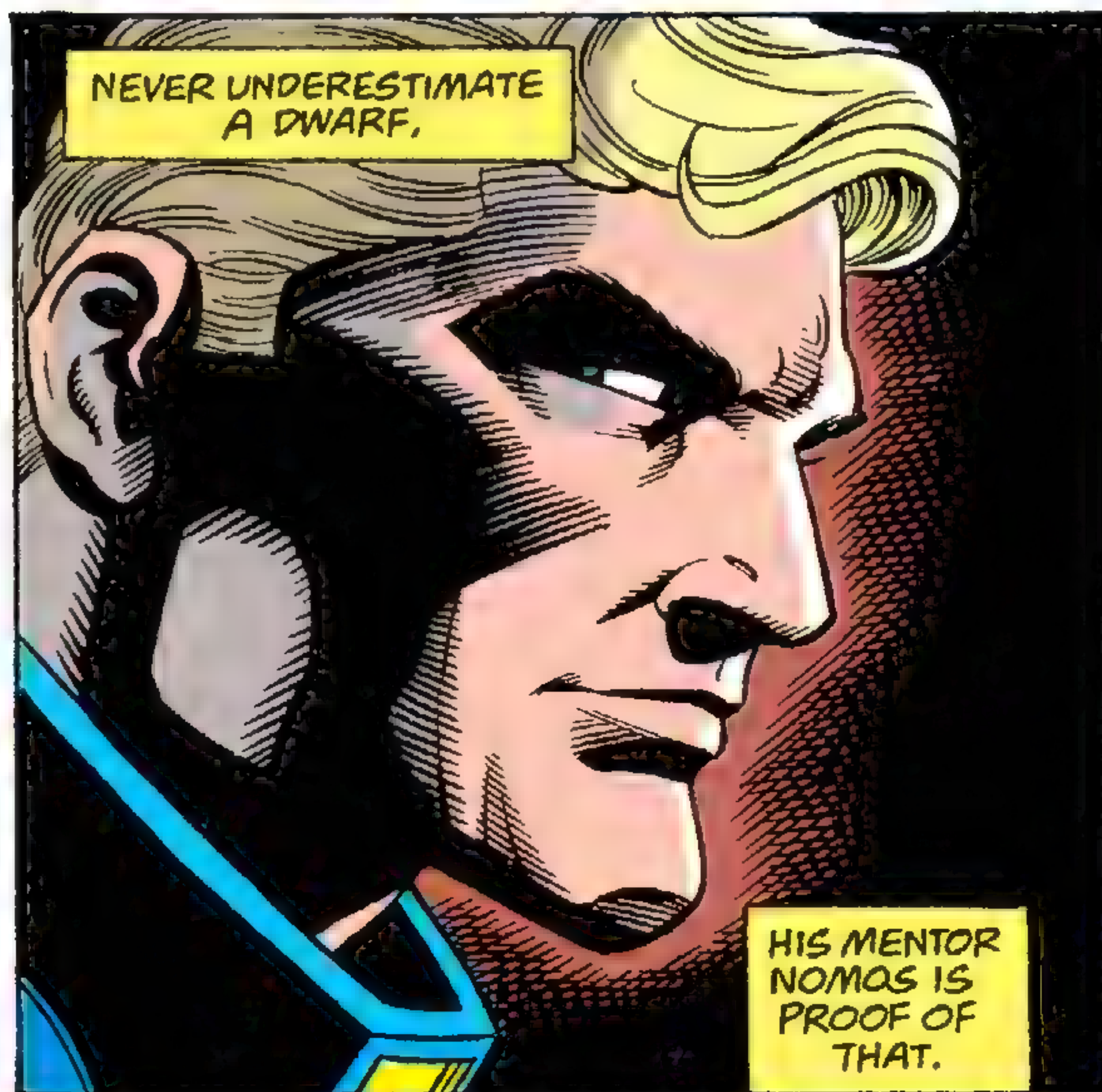
CHILDLIKE FOOTPRINTS
LEAD INTO THE DARK.

HAROLD DRAGGED
SOMETHING BACK
HERE.



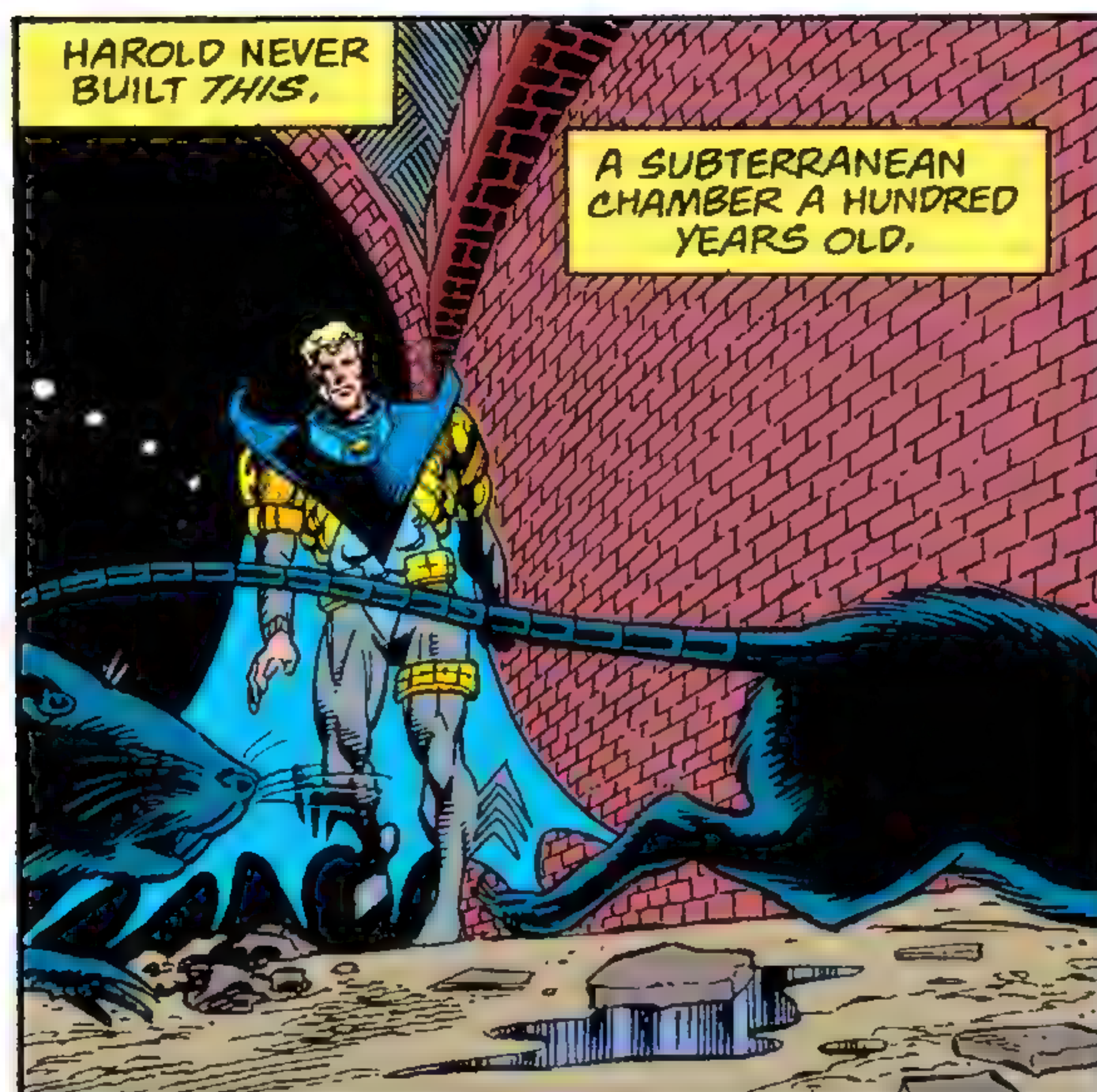
SOMETHING LARGE IF
THE HOIST AND CHAIN
ARE ANY INDICATION.

MAYBE HAROLD
IS MORE AMBITIOUS
THAN HE SEEMS.



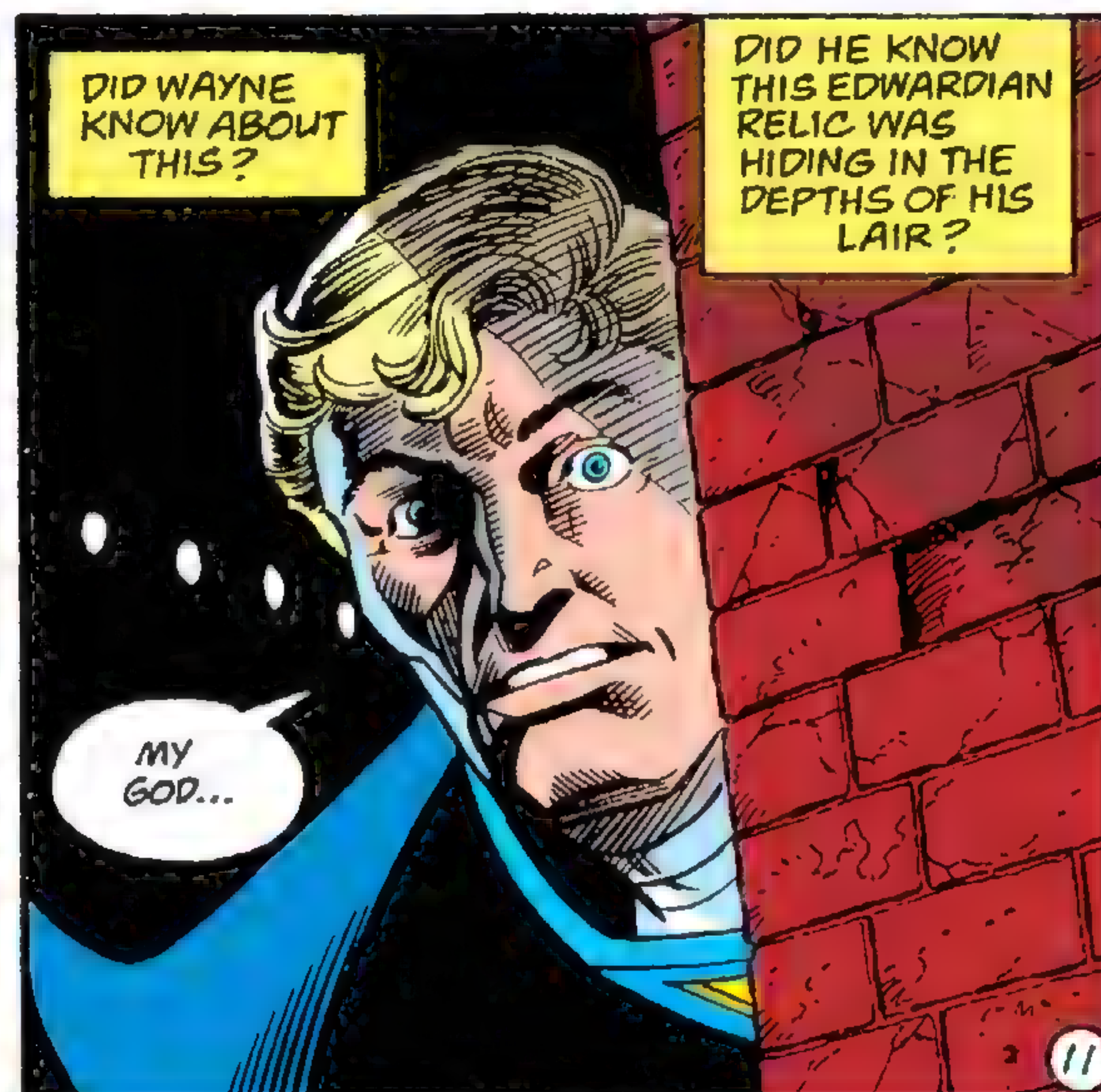
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE
A DWARF.

HIS MENTOR
NOMOS IS
PROOF OF
THAT.



HAROLD NEVER
BUILT THIS.

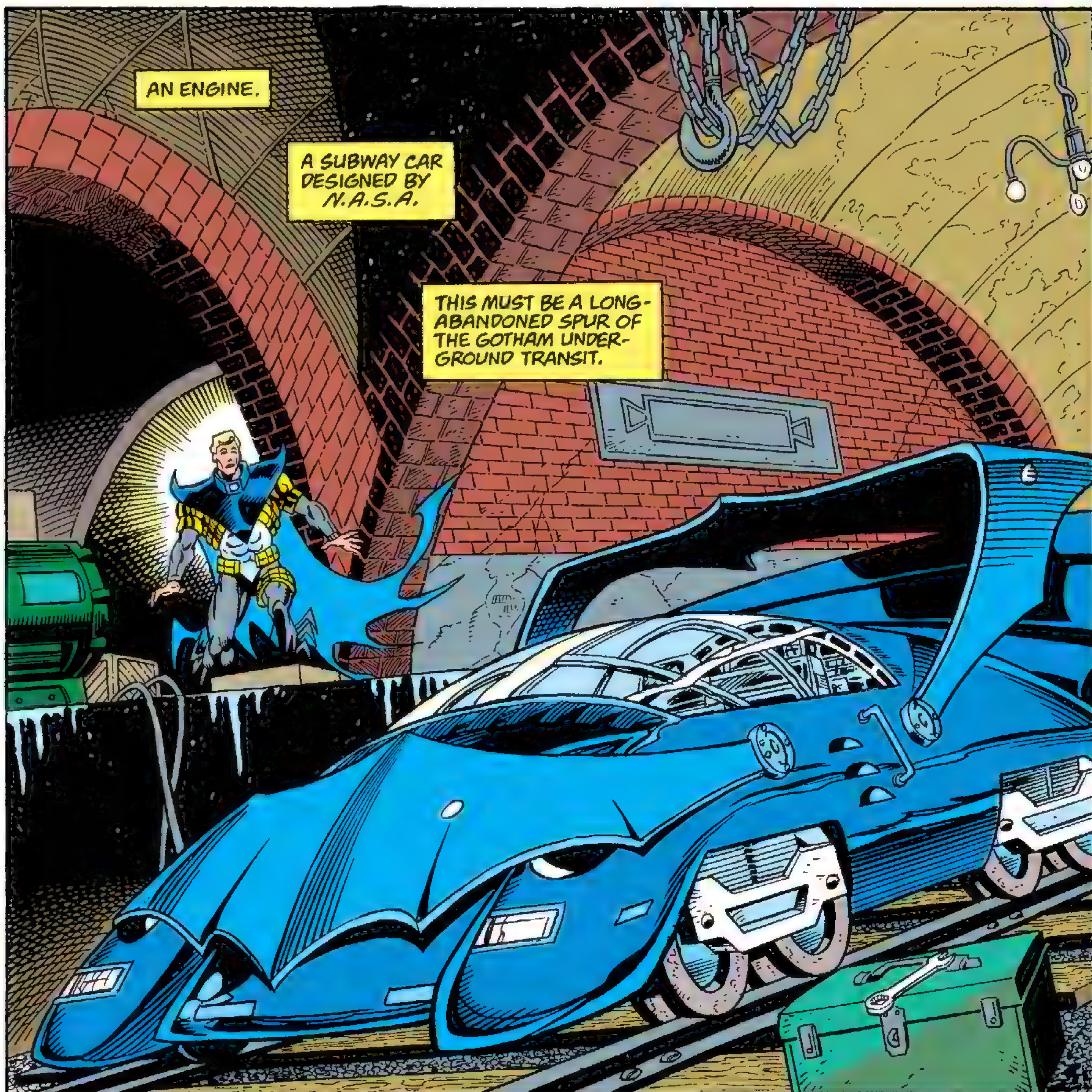
A SUBTERRANEAN
CHAMBER A HUNDRED
YEARS OLD.



DID WAYNE
KNOW ABOUT
THIS?

DID HE KNOW
THIS EDWARDIAN
RELIC WAS
HIDING IN THE
DEPTHS OF HIS
LAIR?

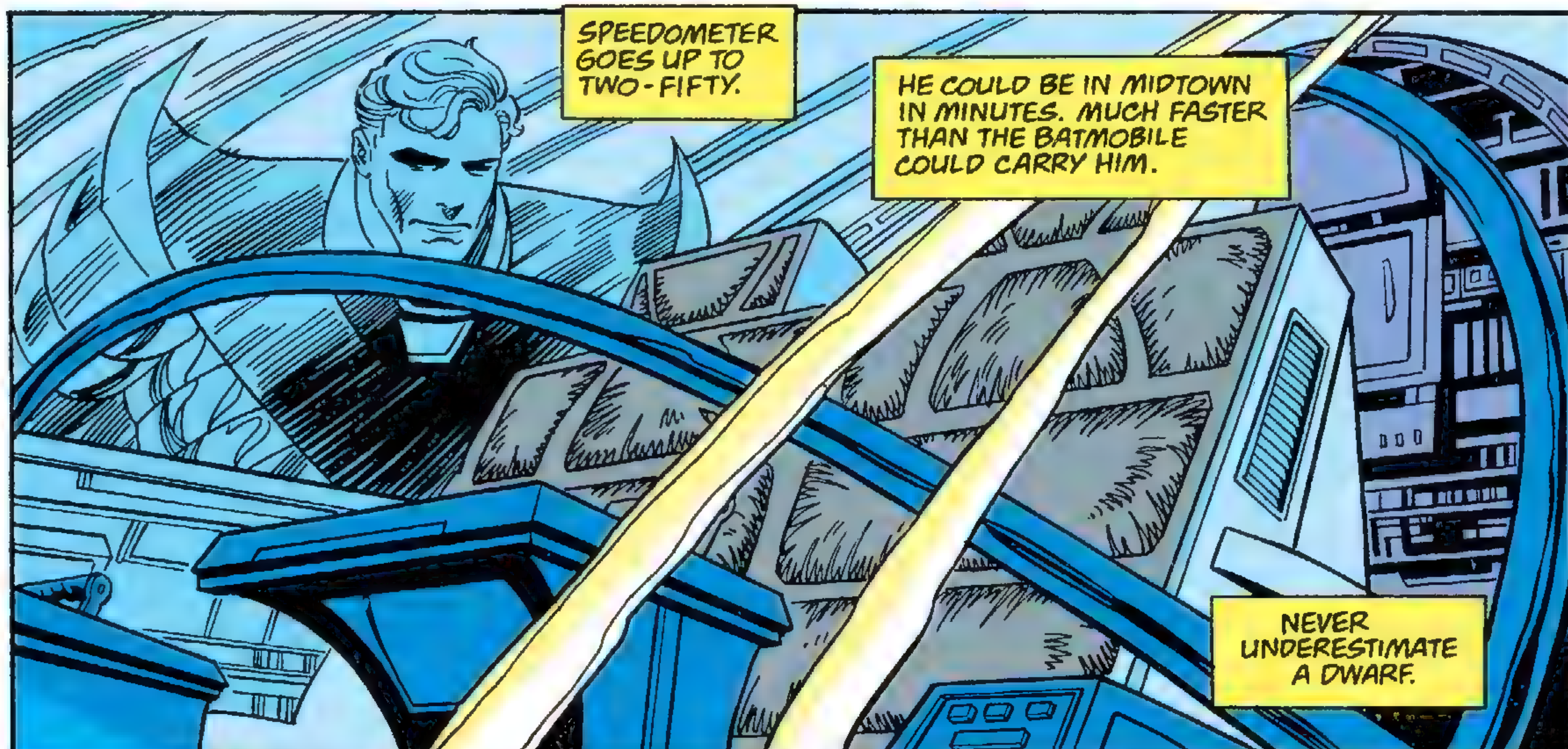
MY
GOD...



AN ENGINE.

A SUBWAY CAR
DESIGNED BY
N.A.S.A.

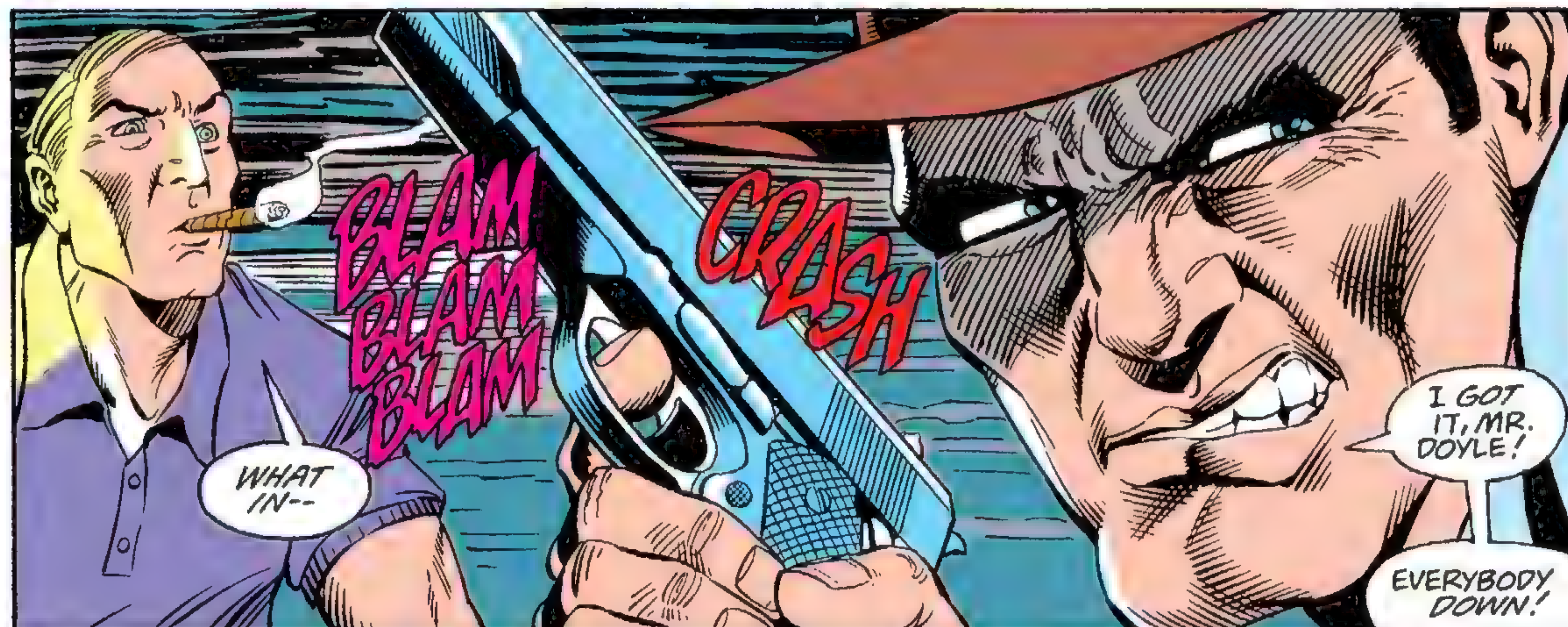
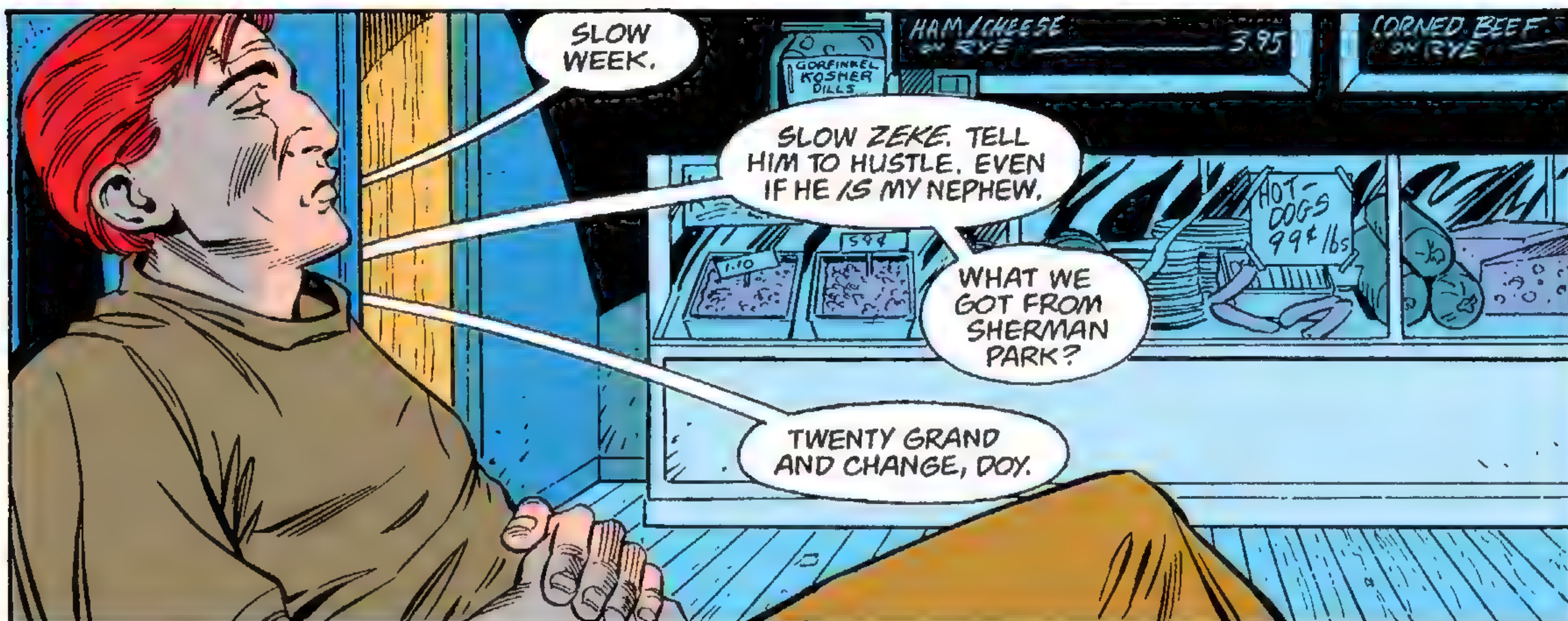
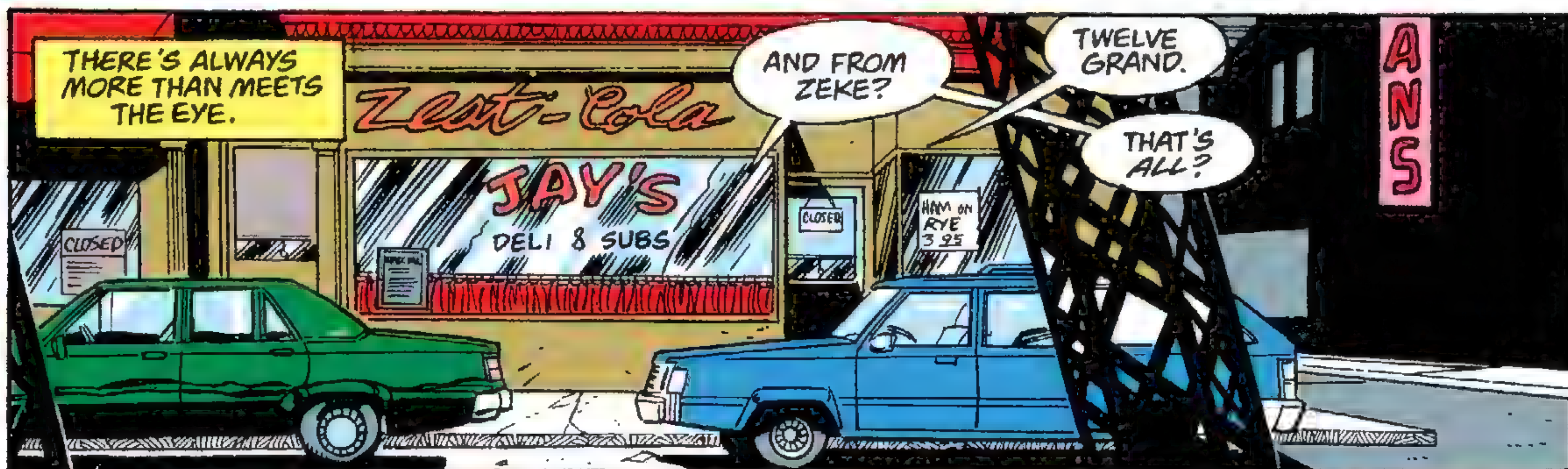
THIS MUST BE A LONG-
ABANDONED SPUR OF
THE GOTHAM UNDER-
GROUND TRANSIT.

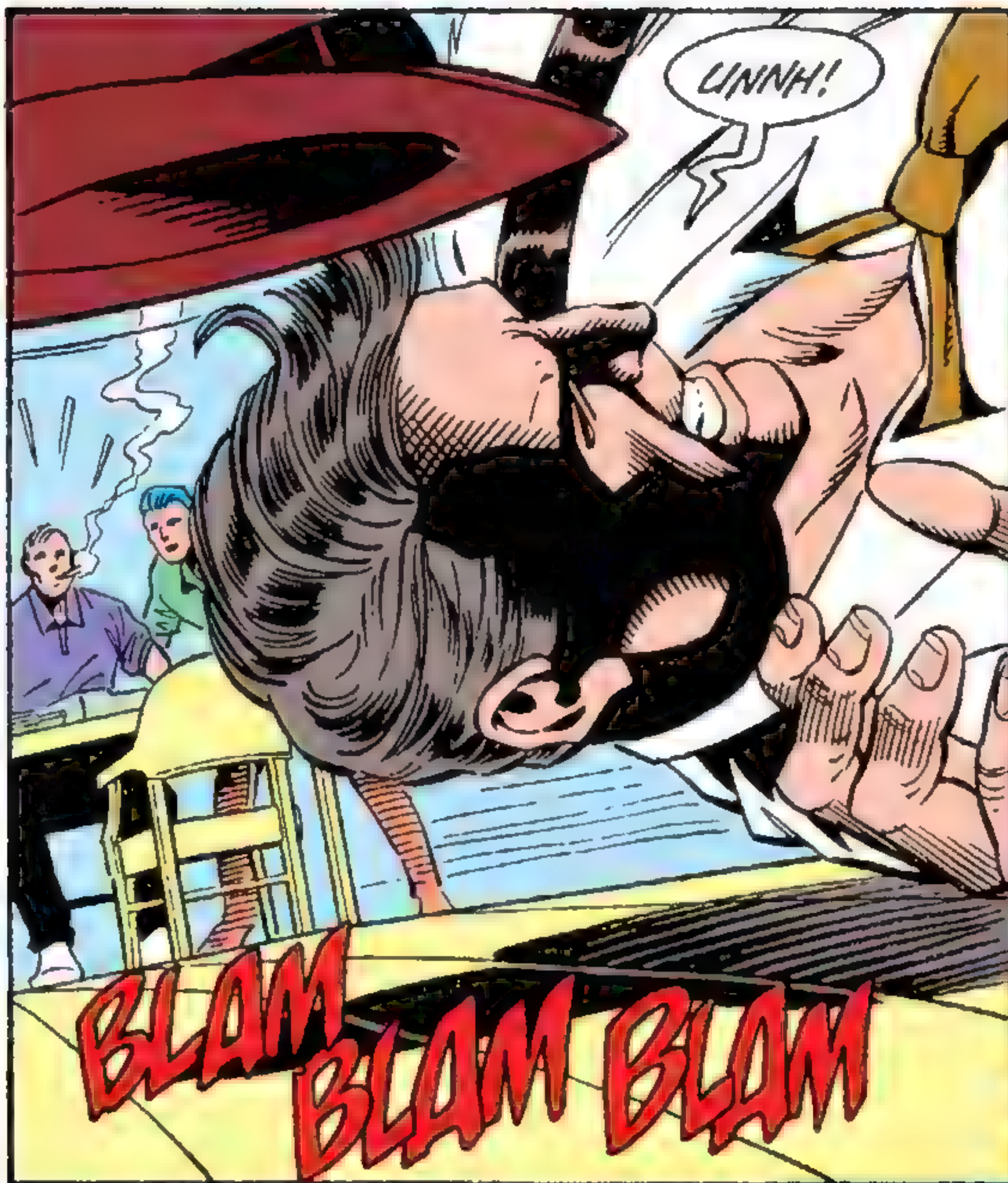


SPEEDOMETER
GOES UP TO
TWO-FIFTY.

HE COULD BE IN MIDTOWN
IN MINUTES. MUCH FASTER
THAN THE BATMOBILE
COULD CARRY HIM.

NEVER
UNDERESTIMATE
A DWARF.





UNNH!

BLAM
BLAM BLAM



KEEP 'EM WHERE WE
CAN SEE 'EM.

WOOO-EE! LOOKIT
ALL THAT CASH.
SHOULDA BROUGHT
A SHOPPIN' CART,
BROTHER.

SURE. JUST
KEEP THEM COLTS
TRAINED ON
THESE OLD BOYS.



YOU TWO HAYSEEDS
GOT SOME NERVE
TAKING ME OFF.

I TOLD YUH "DIRTY" DAN DOYLE'D HAVE
MORE CASH THAN A BANK. NUMBERS KING
OF EAST GOTHAM IS WHAT
THEY CALL HIM.

AND HE CAN'T
CALL THE COPS ON US.



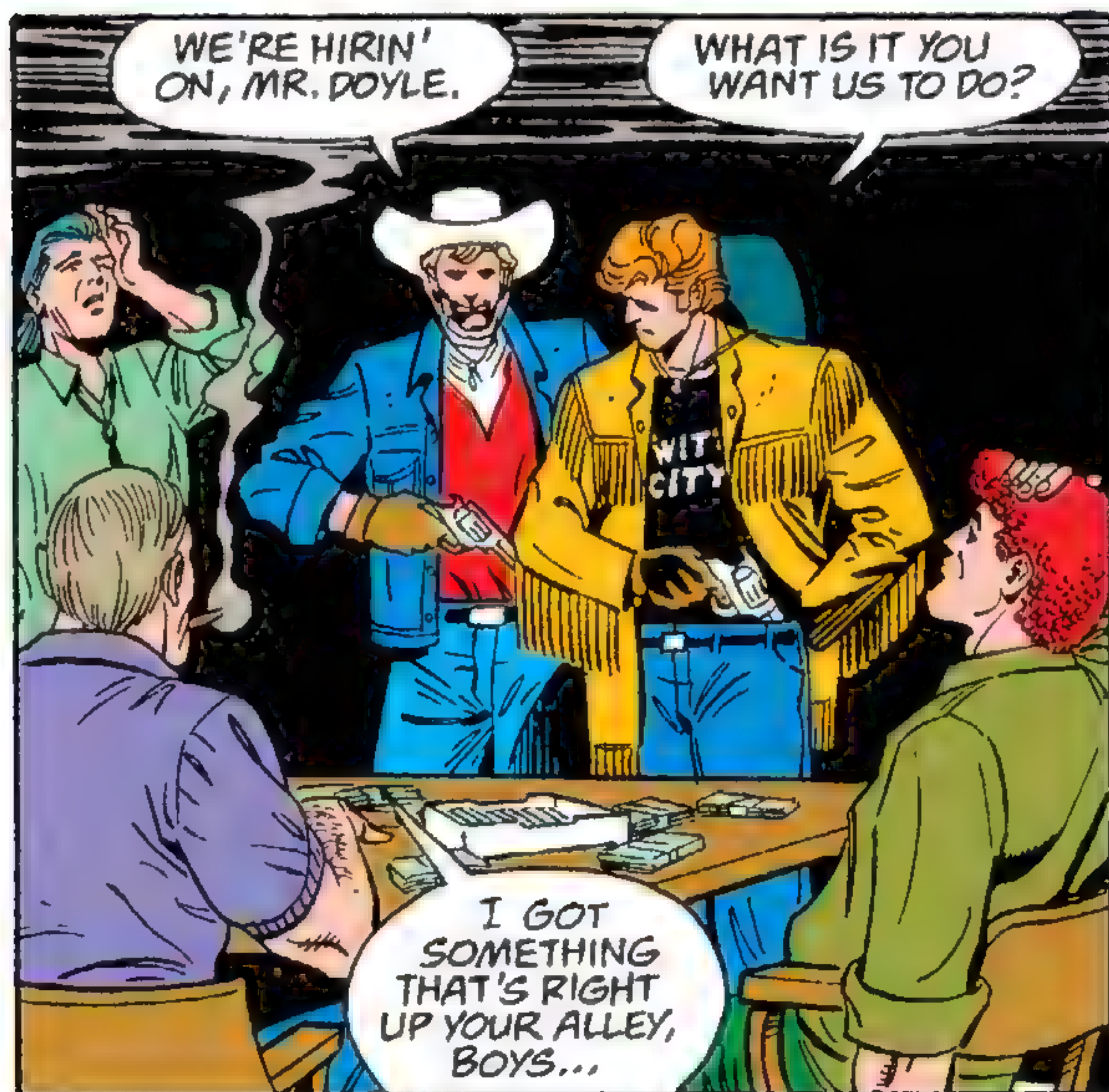
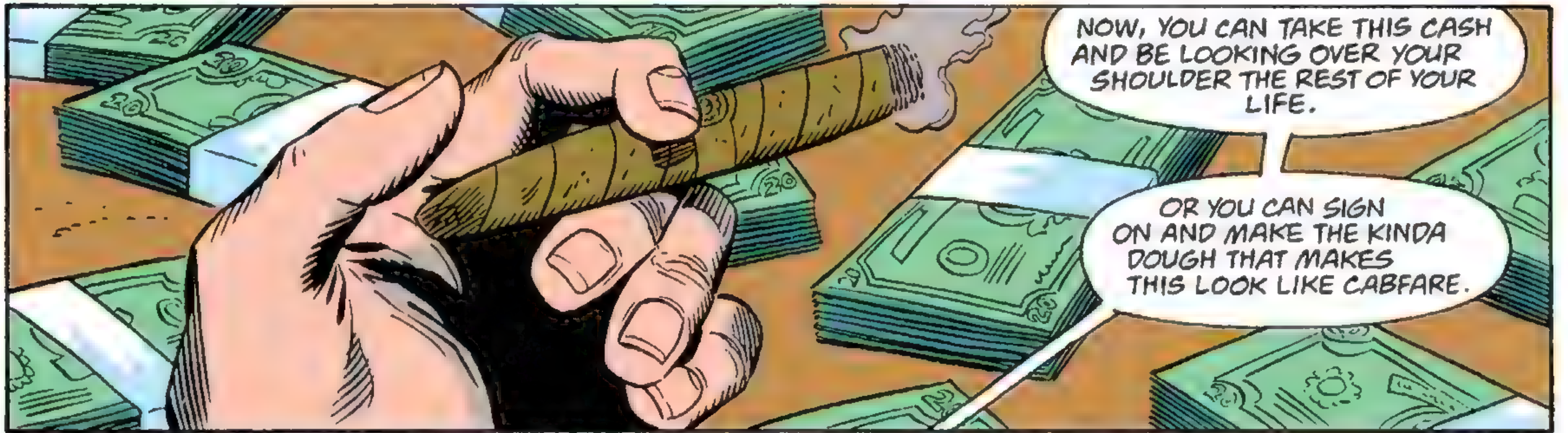
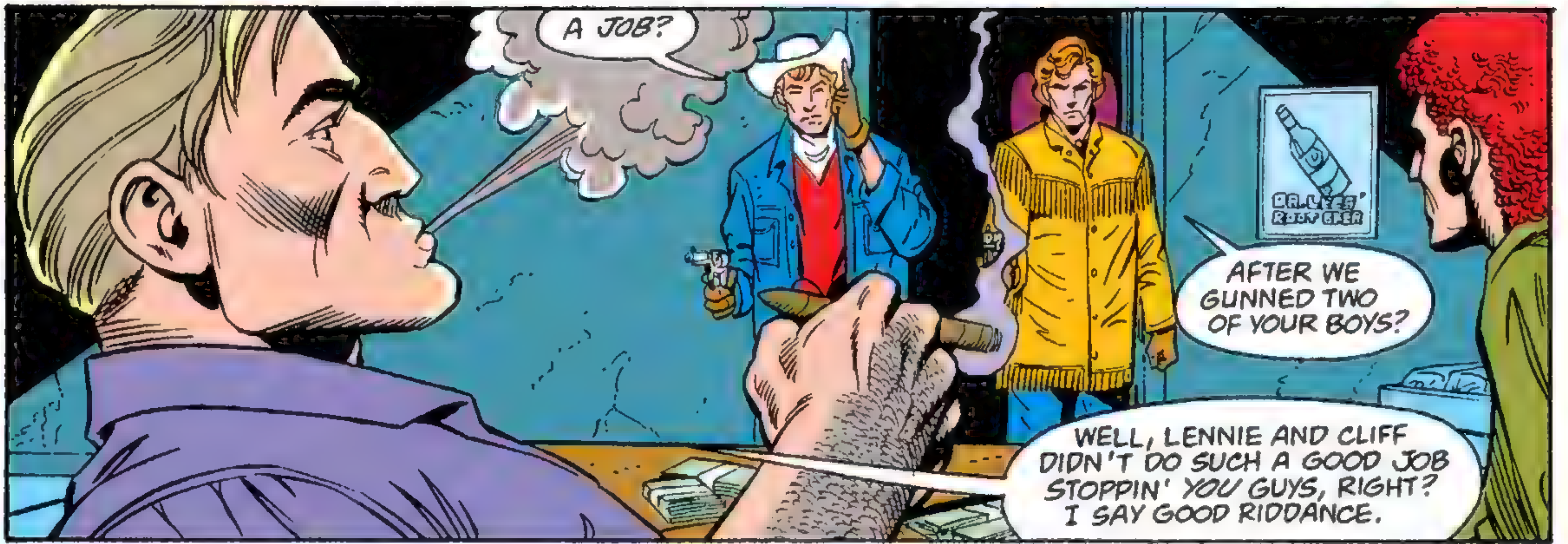
THE PEOPLE I COULD CALL YOU WOULDN'T
LIKE. MAKE THE COPS LOOK LIKE PUNKS.

THEY'LL HUNT YOU DOWN
AND THERE'S NOWHERE
YOU CAN HIDE.



BUT THERE'S ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE.
ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY, RIGHT?

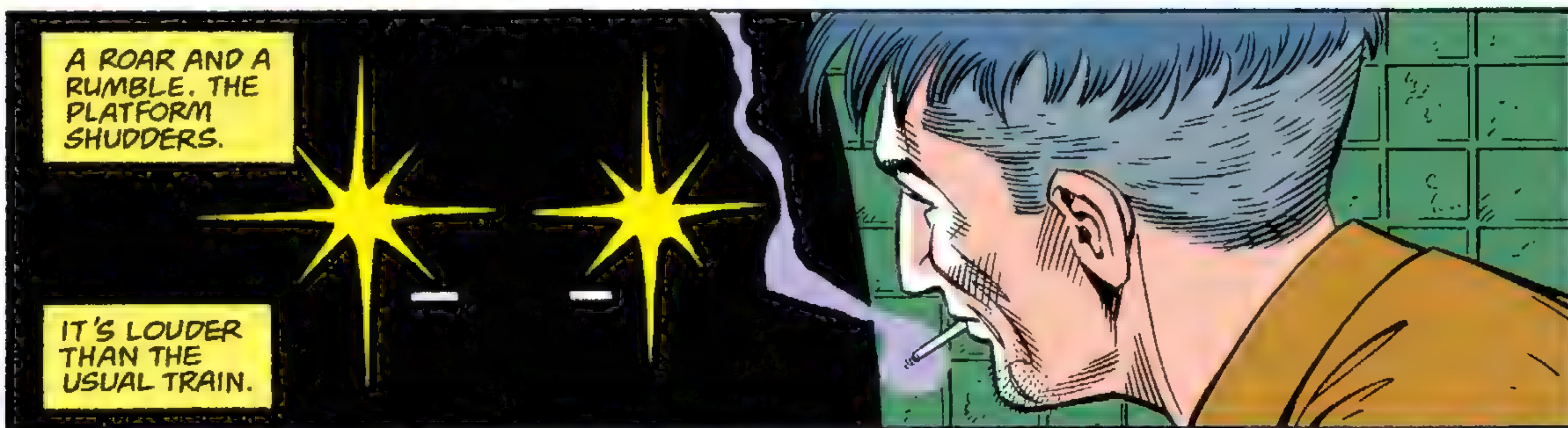
HOW'D
YOU GUYS
LIKE A JOB?





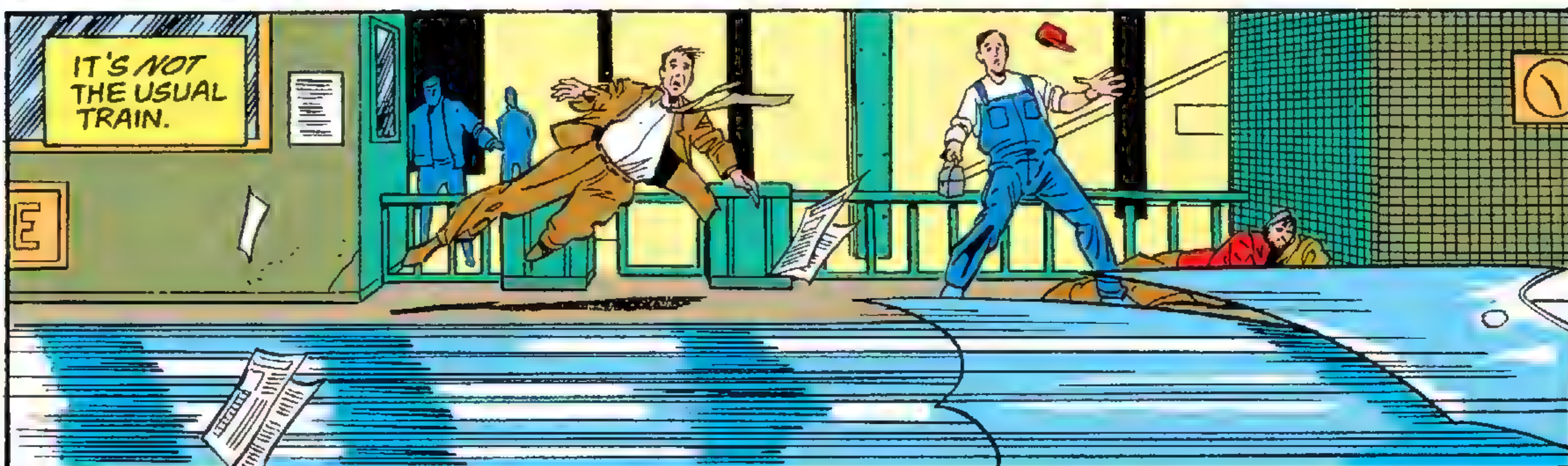
LATE NIGHT CROWD ON THE
"A" LINE OUT OF DANNING
HILLS.

WORN-OUT BAR CRAWLERS
AND FOLKS COMING OFF
SECOND SHIFT.

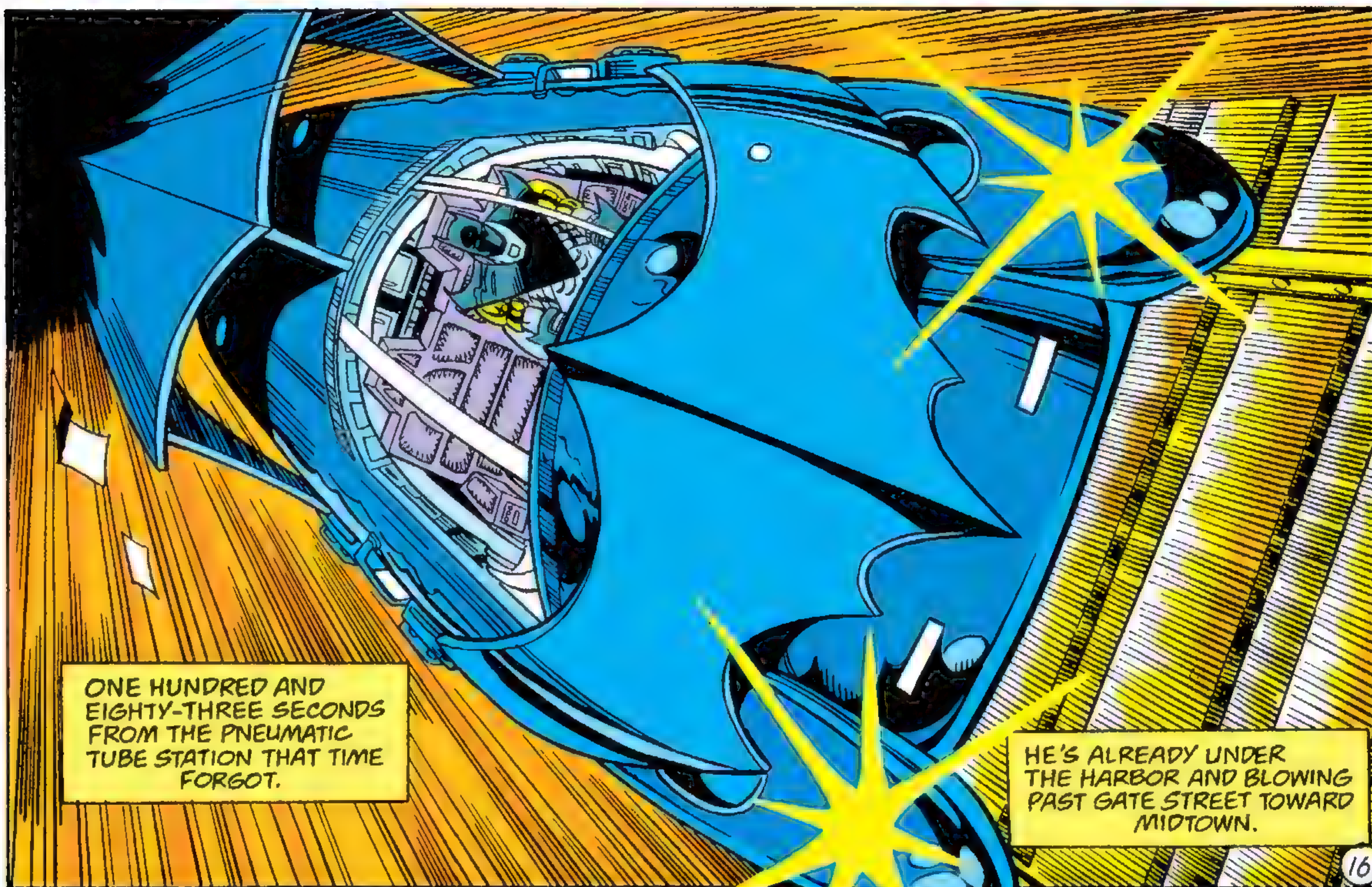


A ROAR AND A
RUMBLE. THE
PLATFORM
SHUDDERS.

IT'S LOUDER
THAN THE
USUAL TRAIN.

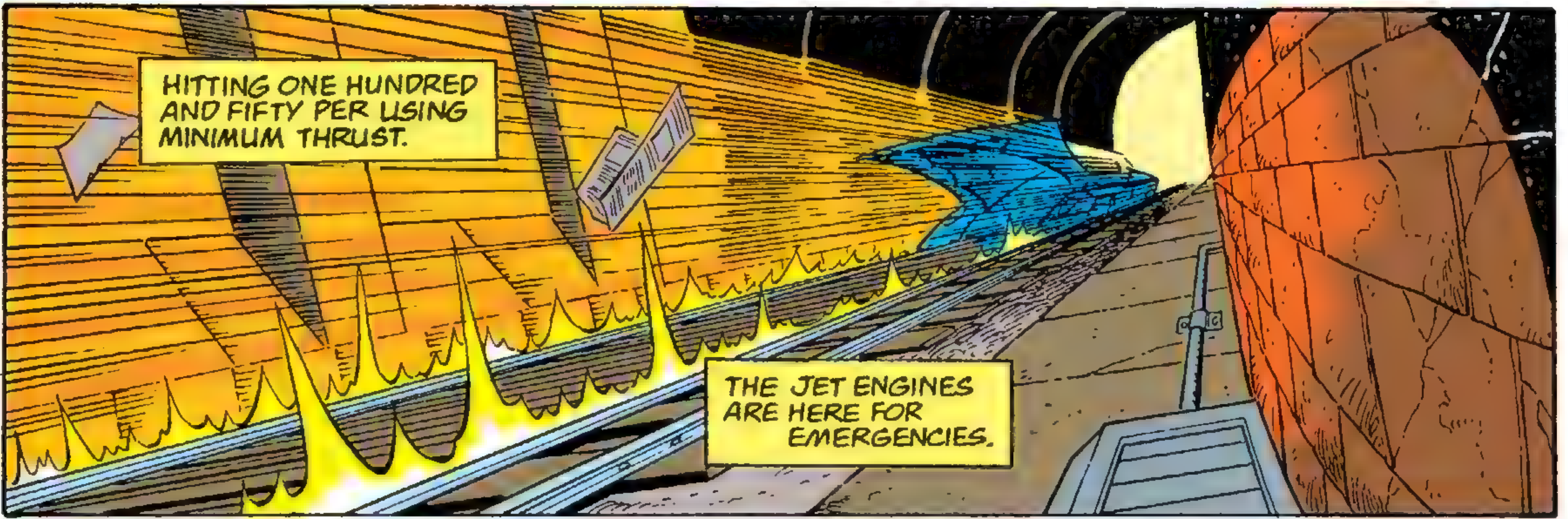


IT'S NOT
THE USUAL
TRAIN.



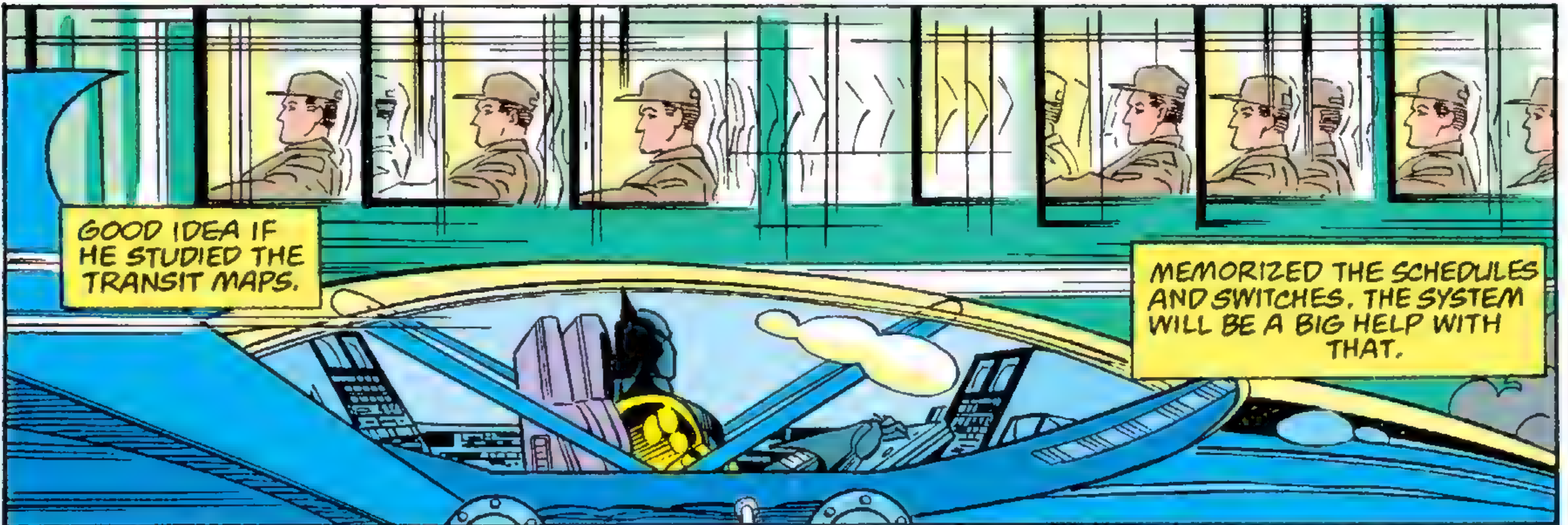
ONE HUNDRED AND
EIGHTY-THREE SECONDS
FROM THE PNEUMATIC
TUBE STATION THAT TIME
FORGOT.

HE'S ALREADY UNDER
THE HARBOR AND BLOWING
PAST GATE STREET TOWARD
MIDTOWN.



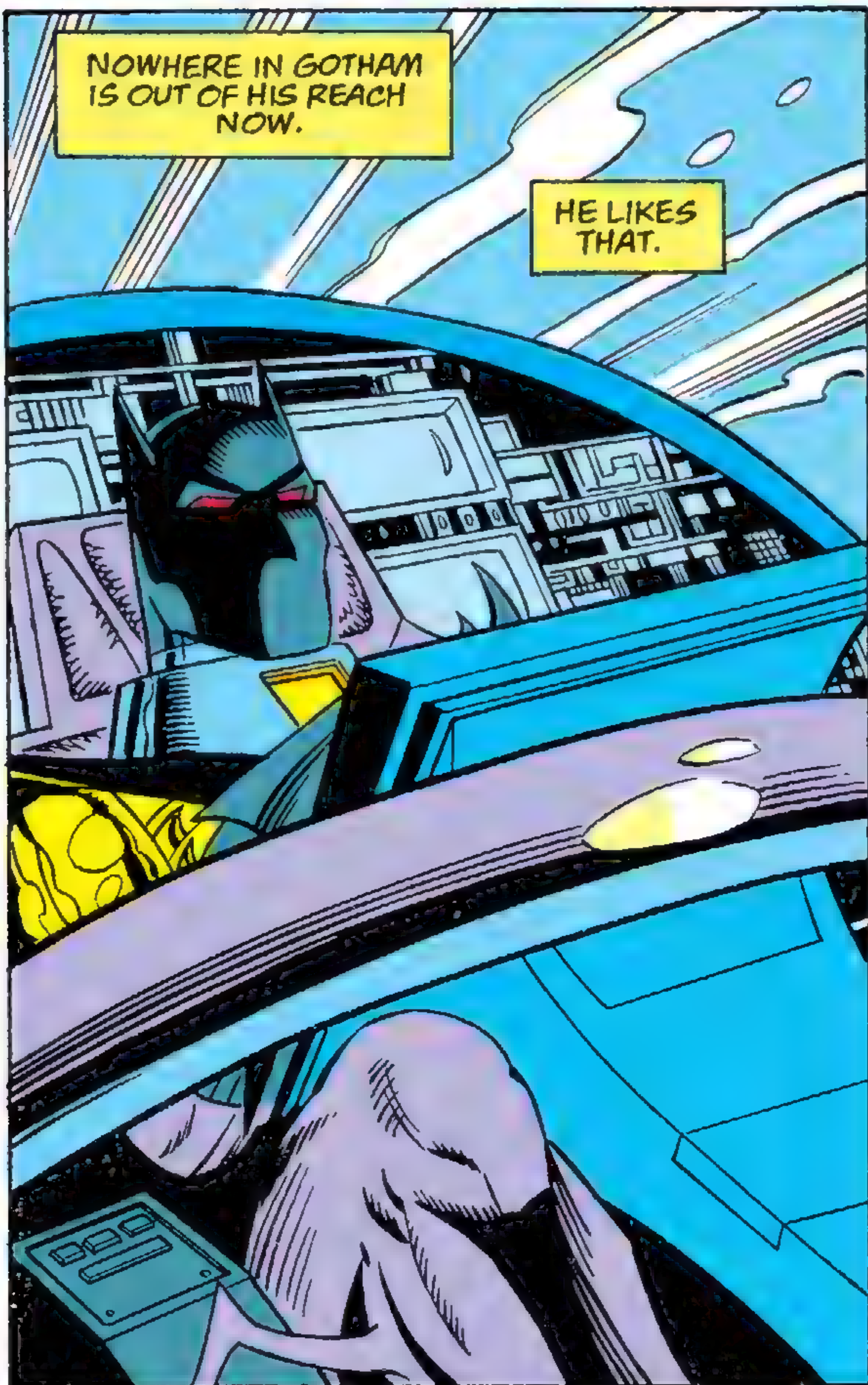
HITTING ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PER USING MINIMUM THRUST.

THE JET ENGINES ARE HERE FOR EMERGENCIES.



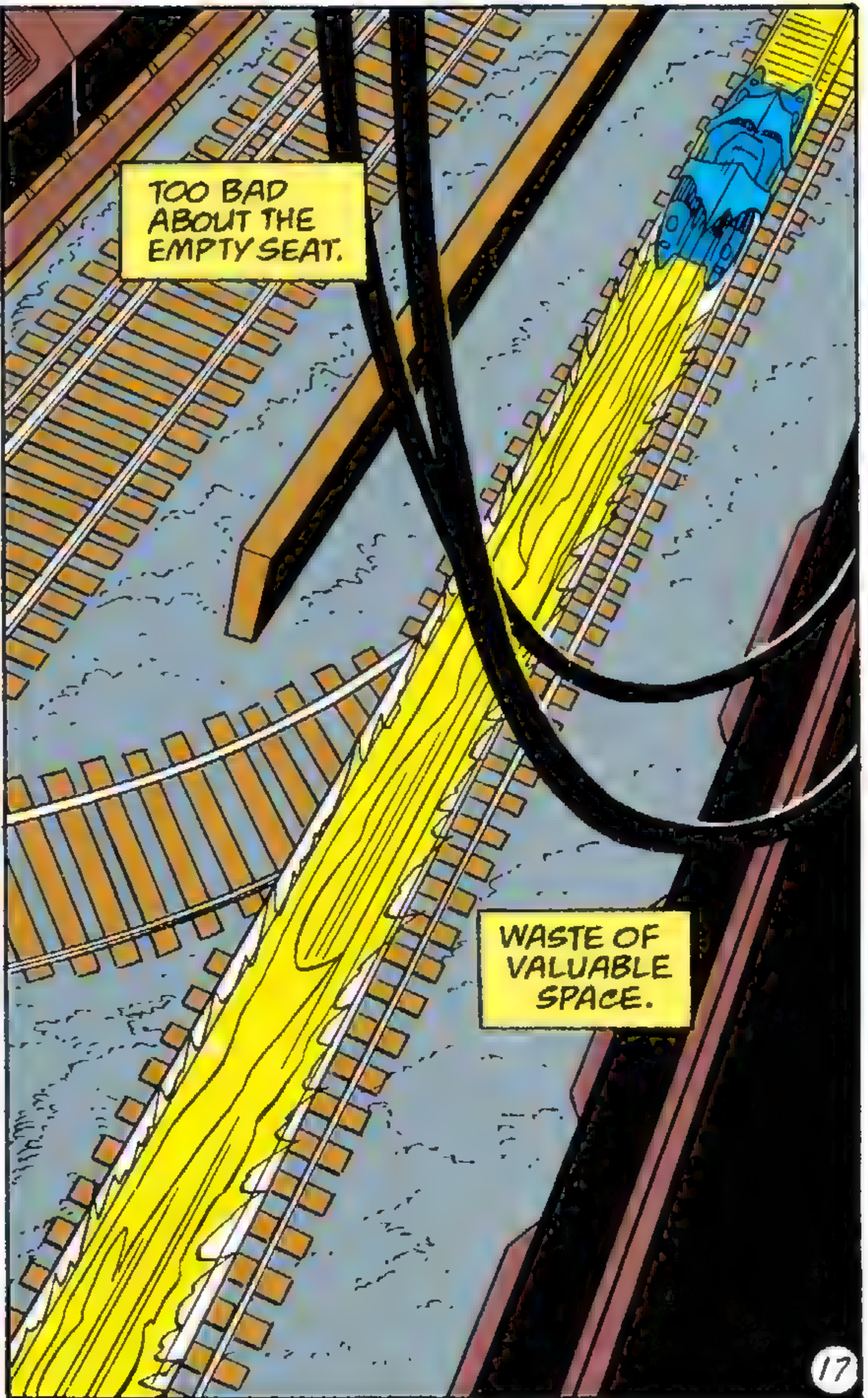
GOOD IDEA IF HE STUDIED THE TRANSIT MAPS.

MEMORIZED THE SCHEDULES AND SWITCHES. THE SYSTEM WILL BE A BIG HELP WITH THAT.



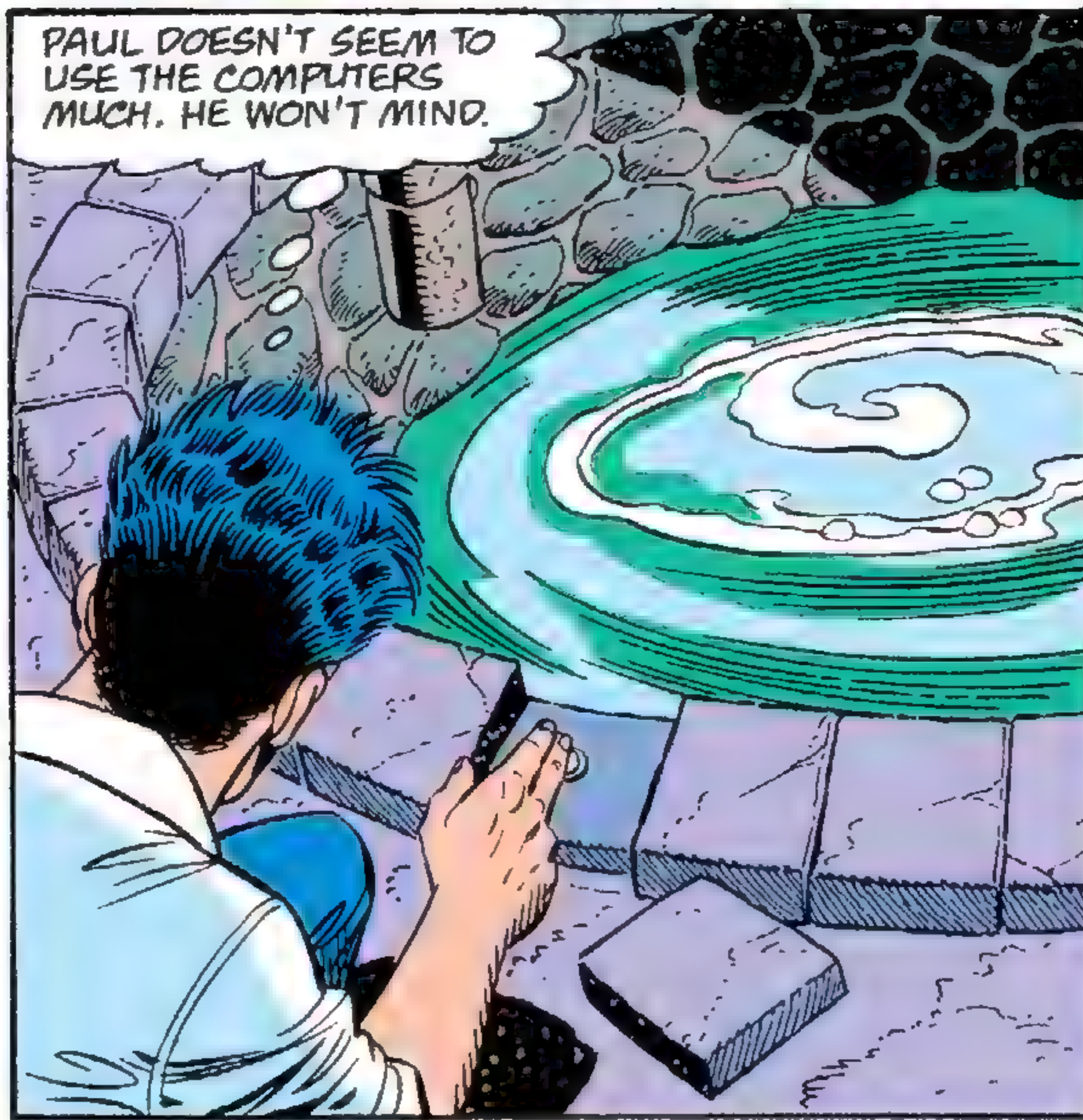
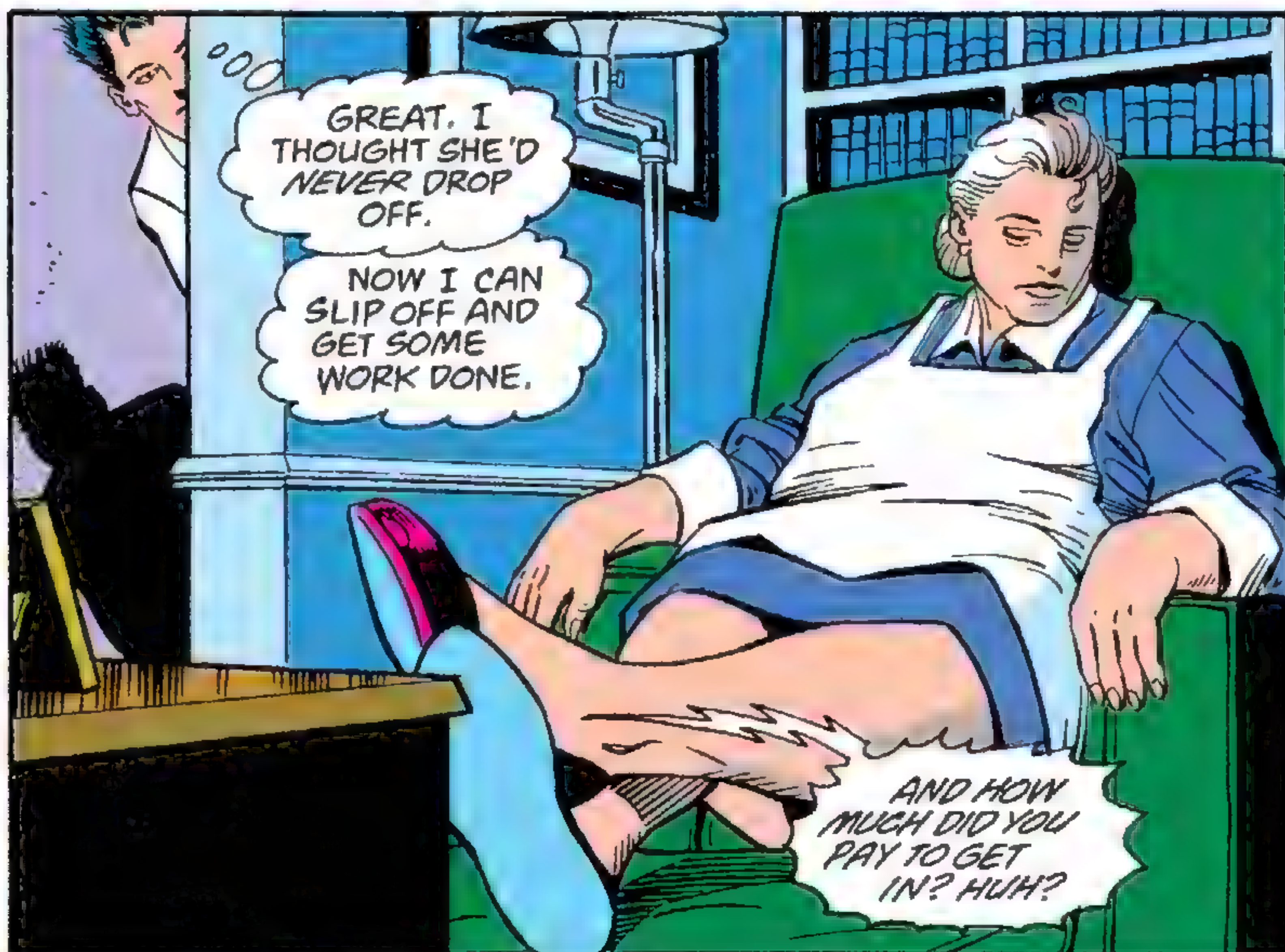
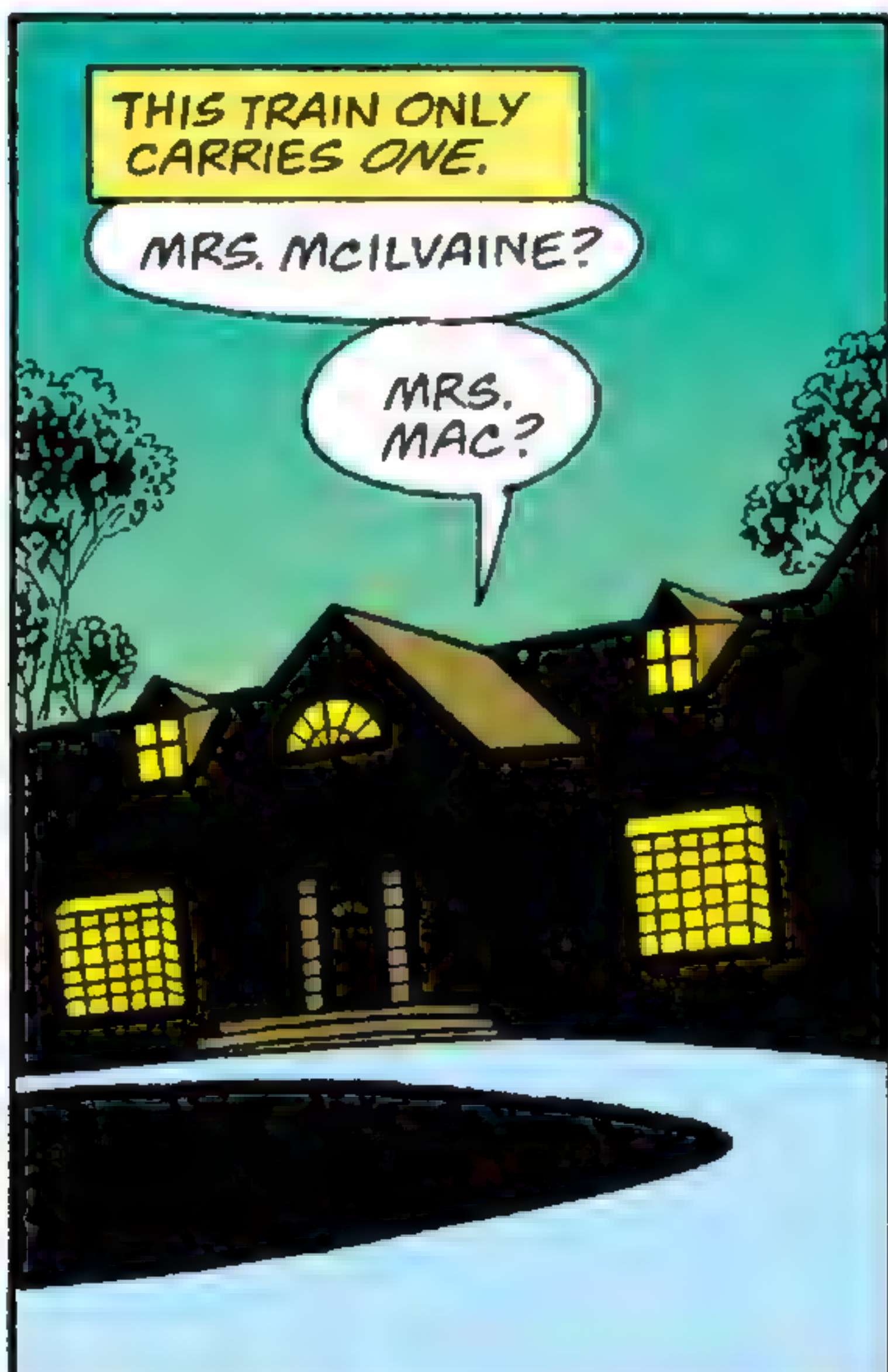
NOWHERE IN GOTHAM IS OUT OF HIS REACH NOW.

HE LIKES THAT.



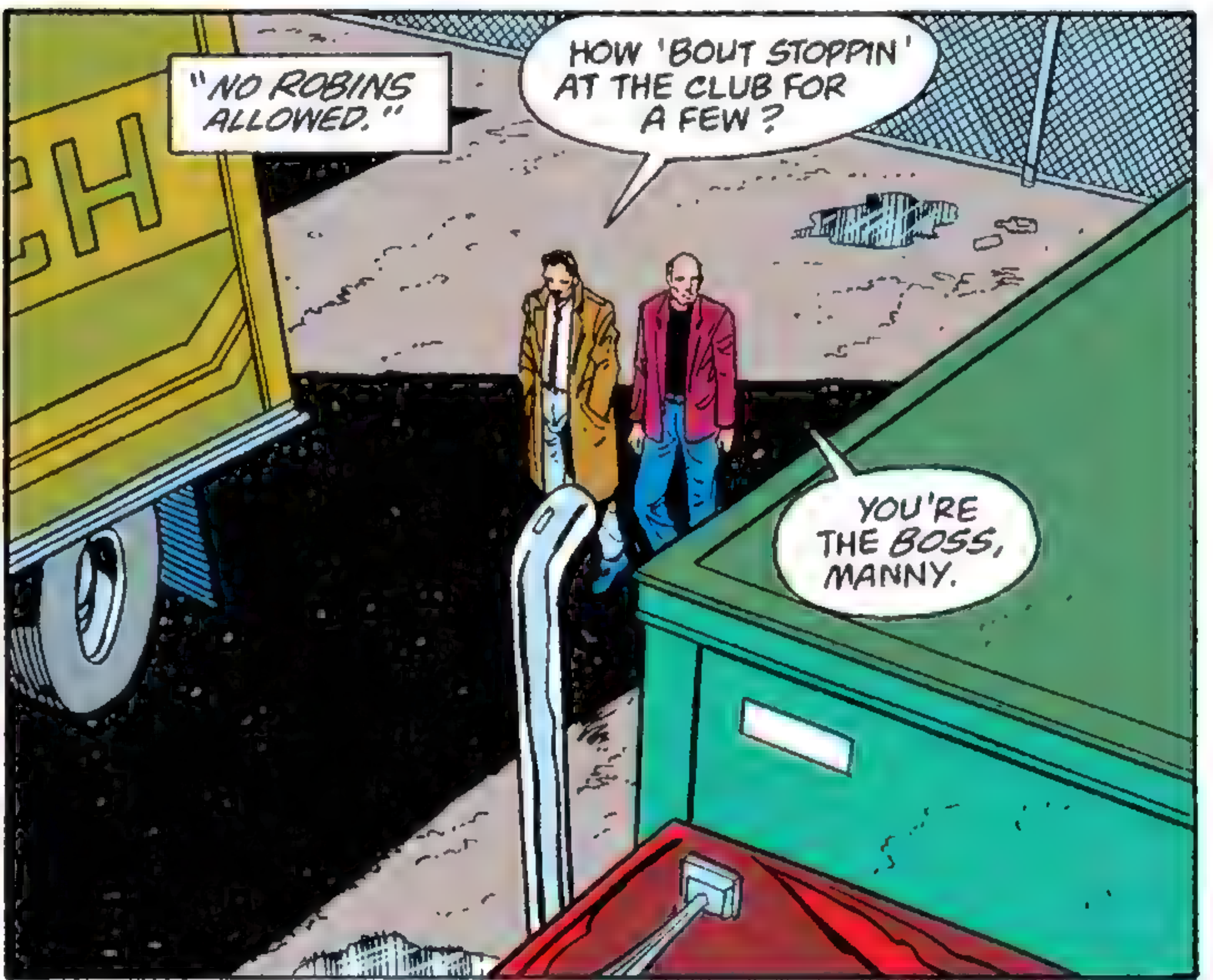
TOO BAD ABOUT THE EMPTY SEAT.

WASTE OF VALUABLE SPACE.





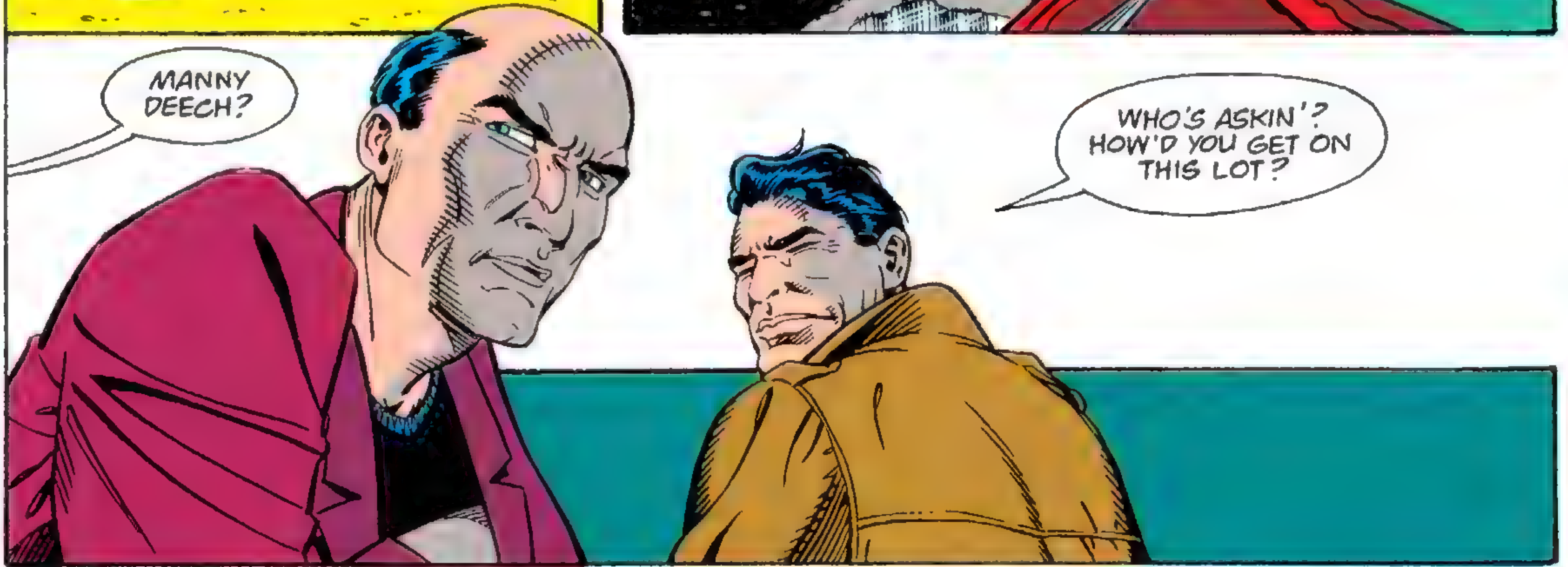
GUESS THERE'S
NO MISTAKE ABOUT
WHAT THIS MEANS.



"NO ROBINS
ALLOWED."

HOW 'BOUT STOPPIN'
AT THE CLUB FOR
A FEW?

YOU'RE
THE BOSS,
MANNY.



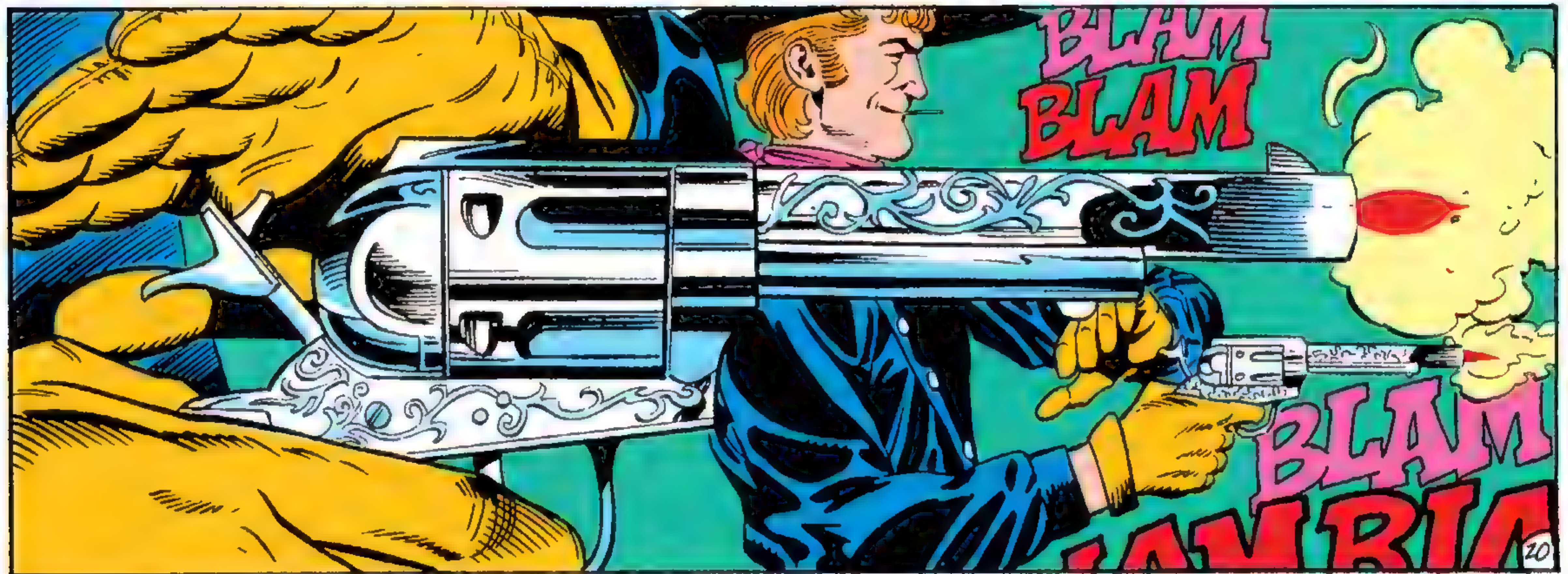
MANNY
DEECH?

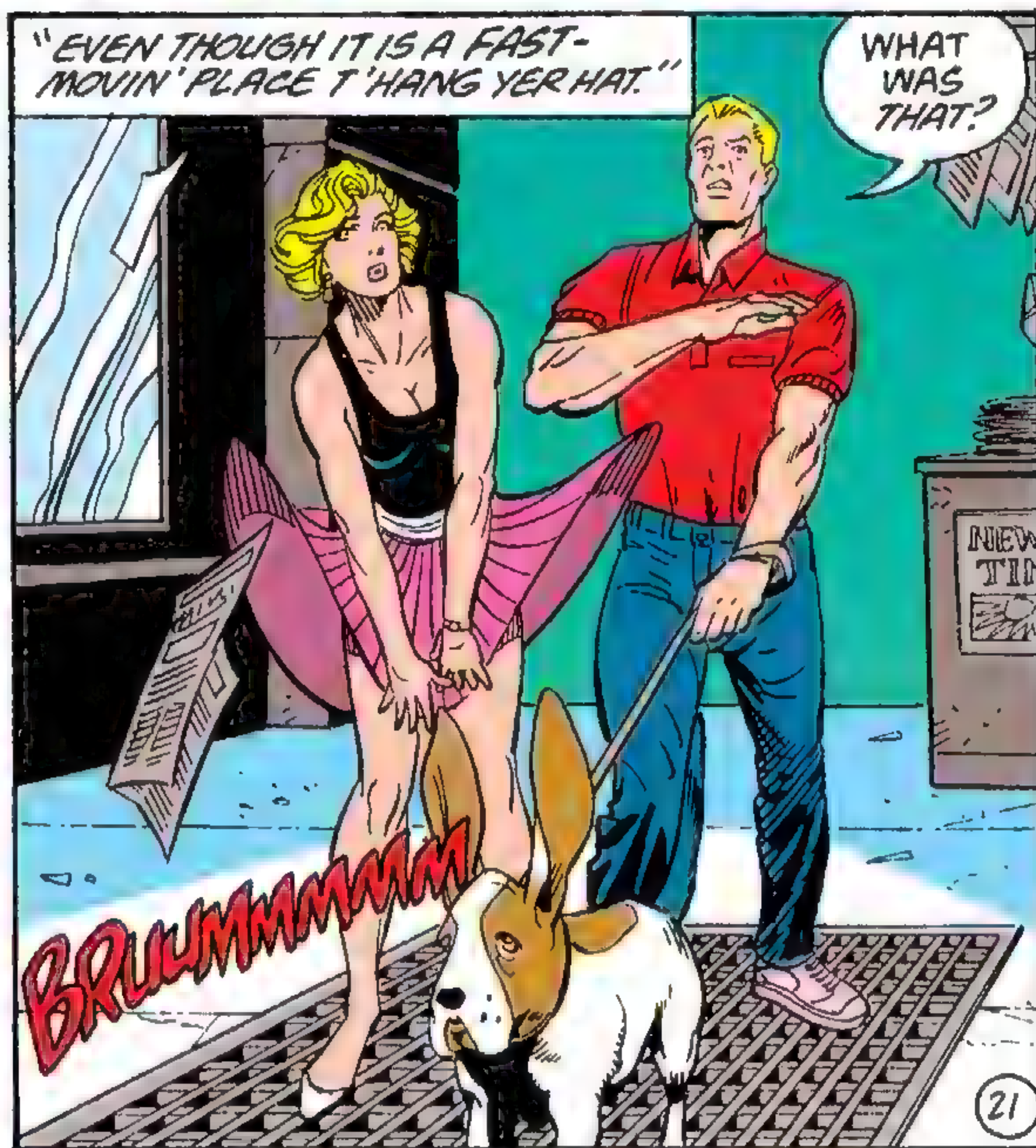
WHO'S ASKIN'?
HOW'D YOU GET ON
THIS LOT?

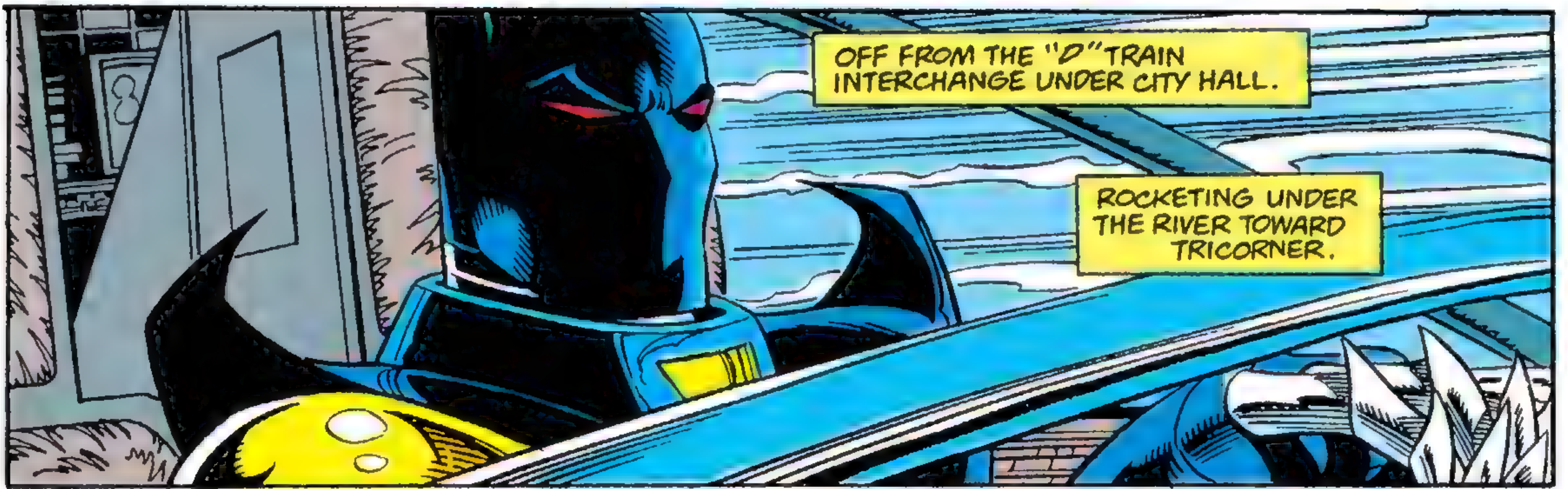


DRAW.

THIS A
JOKE?

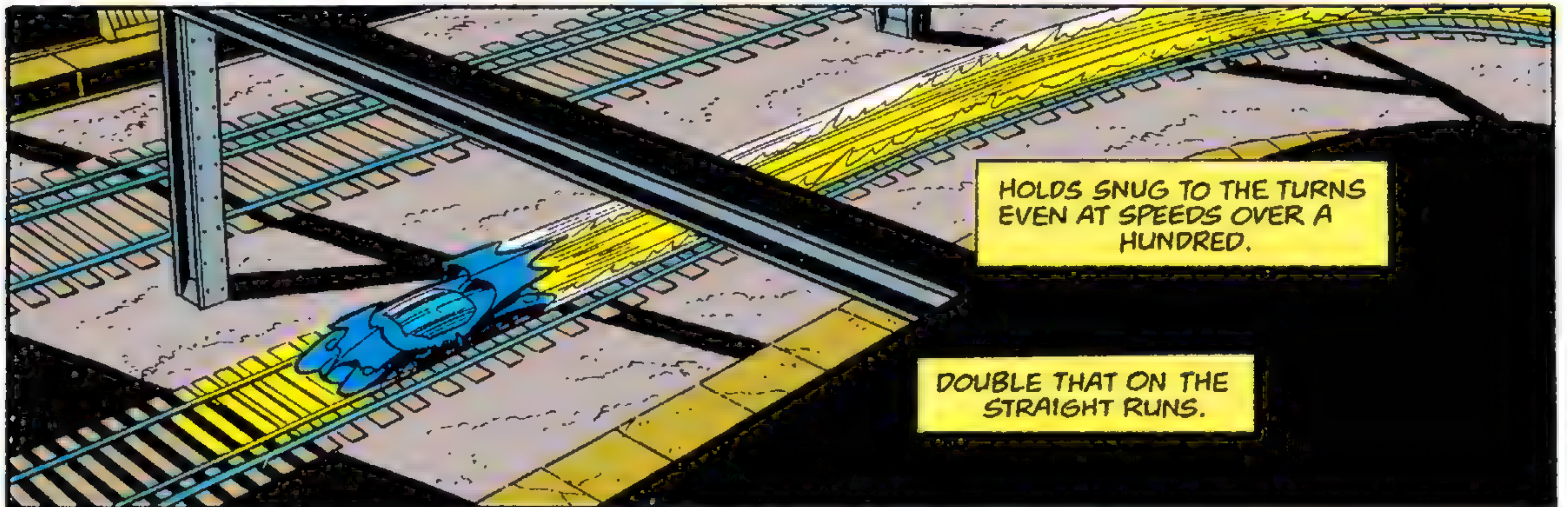






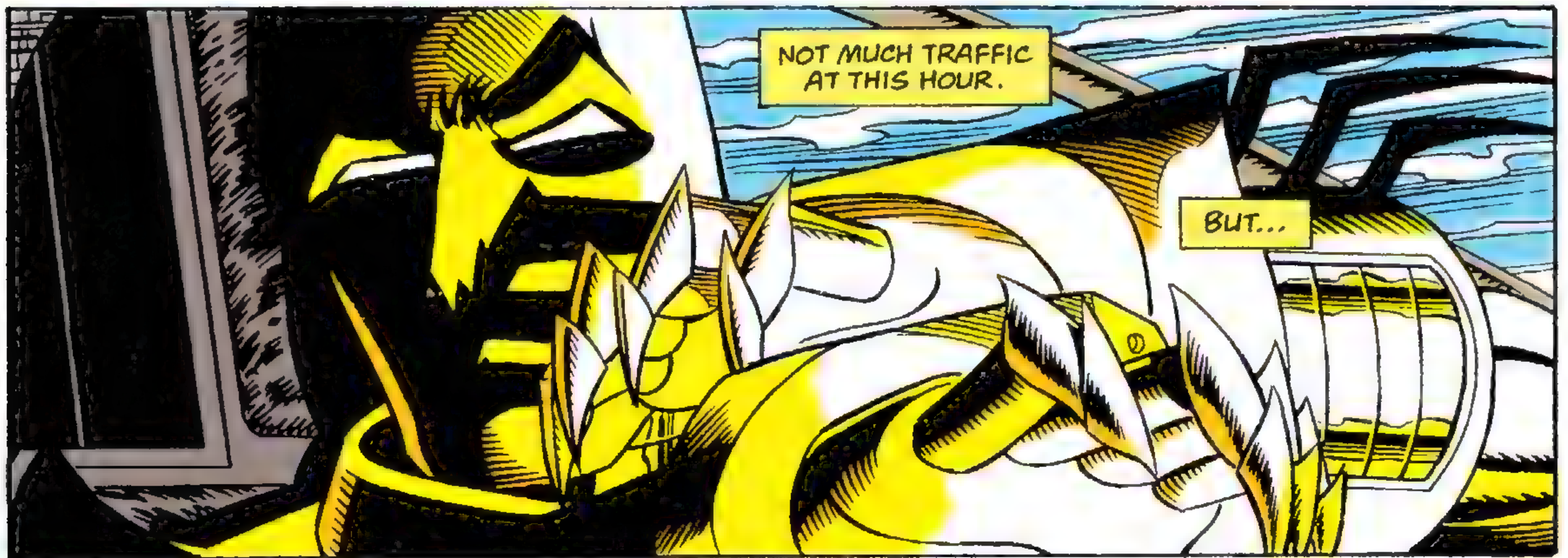
OFF FROM THE "D" TRAIN
INTERCHANGE UNDER CITY HALL.

ROCKETING UNDER
THE RIVER TOWARD
TRICORNER.



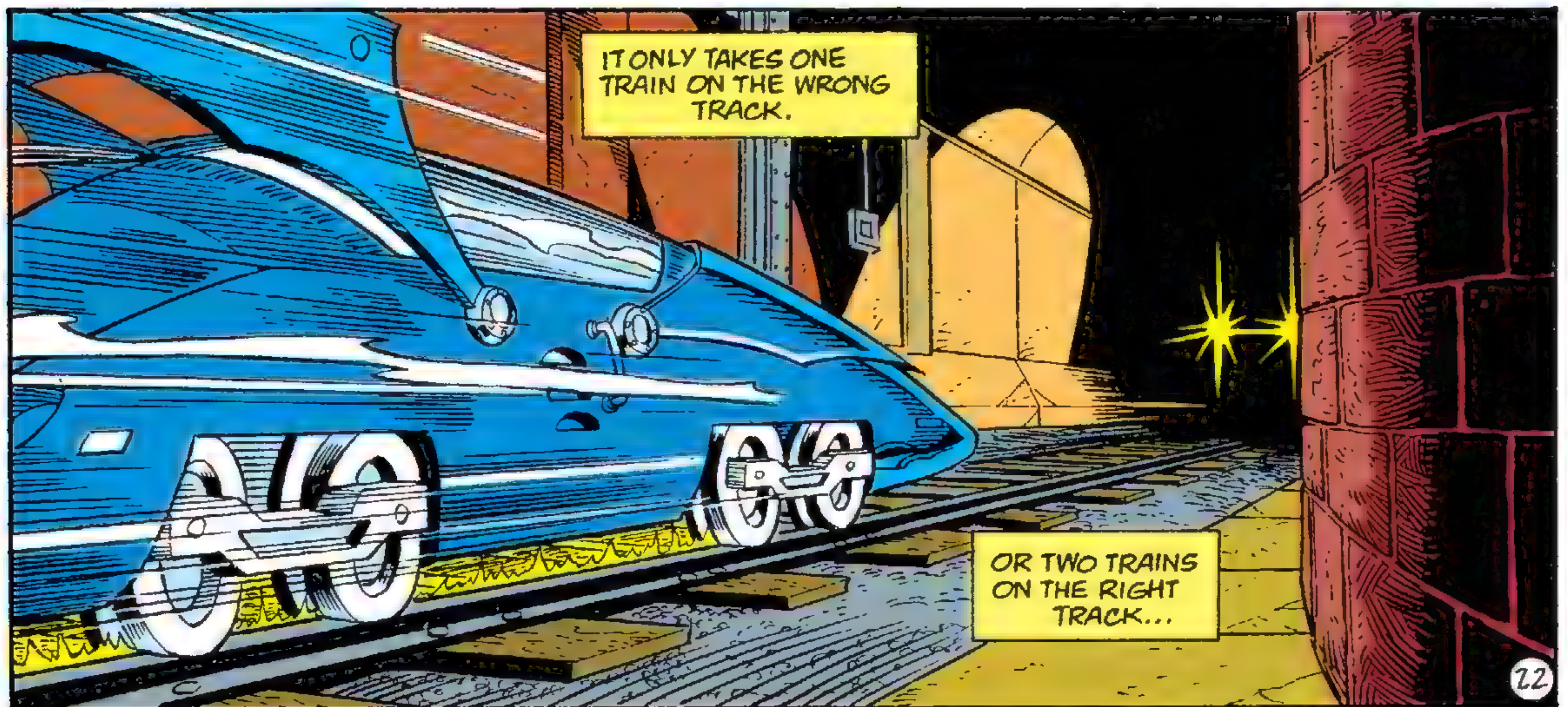
HOLDS SNUG TO THE TURNS
EVEN AT SPEEDS OVER A
HUNDRED.

DOUBLE THAT ON THE
STRAIGHT RUNS.



NOT MUCH TRAFFIC
AT THIS HOUR.

BUT...



IT ONLY TAKES ONE
TRAIN ON THE WRONG
TRACK.

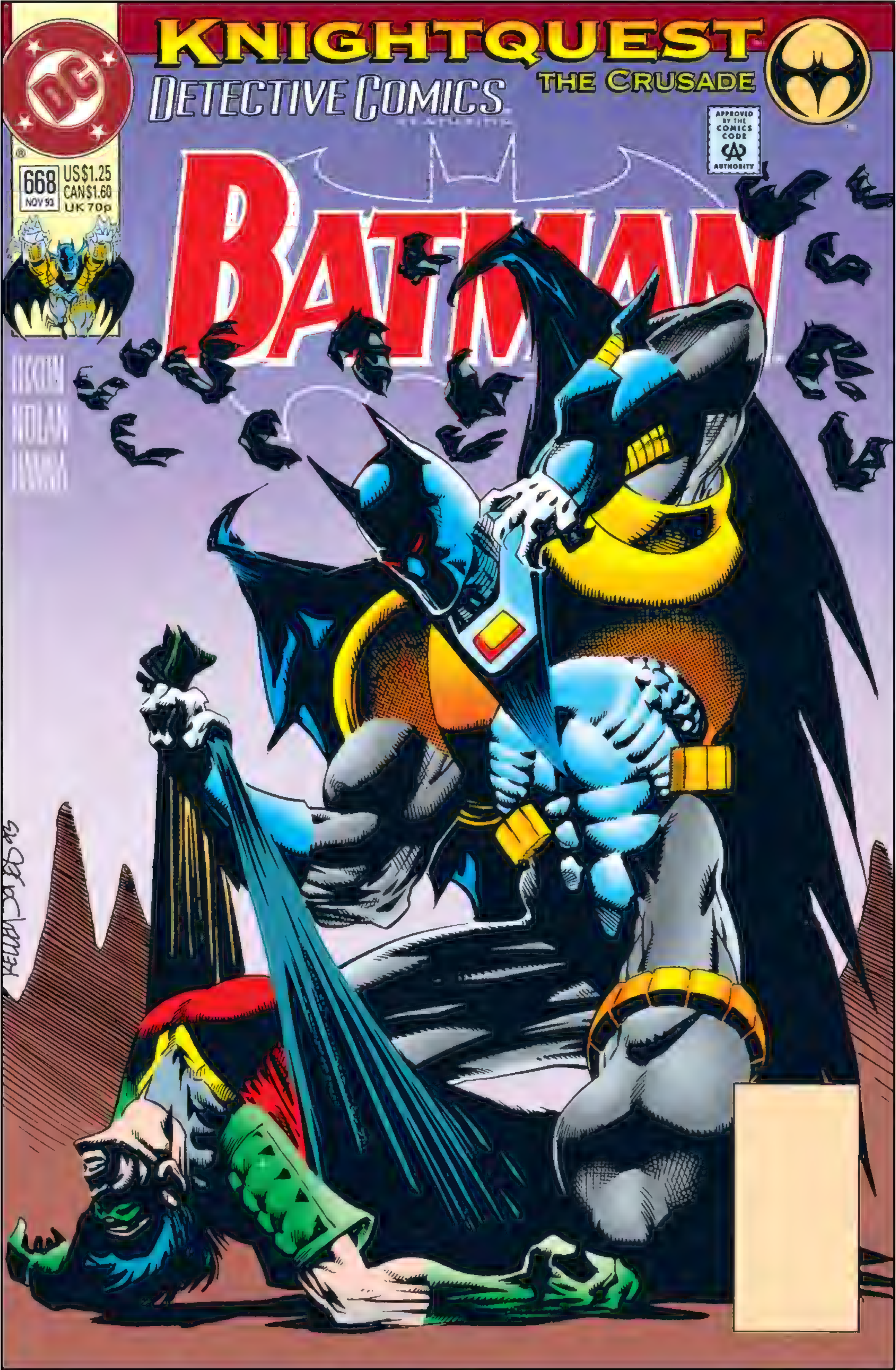
OR TWO TRAINS
ON THE RIGHT
TRACK...

...HEADING TOWARD EACH
OTHER AT A COMBINED SPEED
OF THREE HUNDRED MILES
PER HOUR.



HE CALCULATES IT
WILL BE ONE SECOND
TO IMPACT.

TO BE CONTINUED...



RUNAWAY

CHUCK DIXON, GRAHAM NOLAN
Writer penciler
ADRIENNE ROY, JOHN COSTANZA, DARREN VINCENZO
colorist letterer asst. editor
SCOTT PETERSON, editor
BATMAN created by BOB KANE

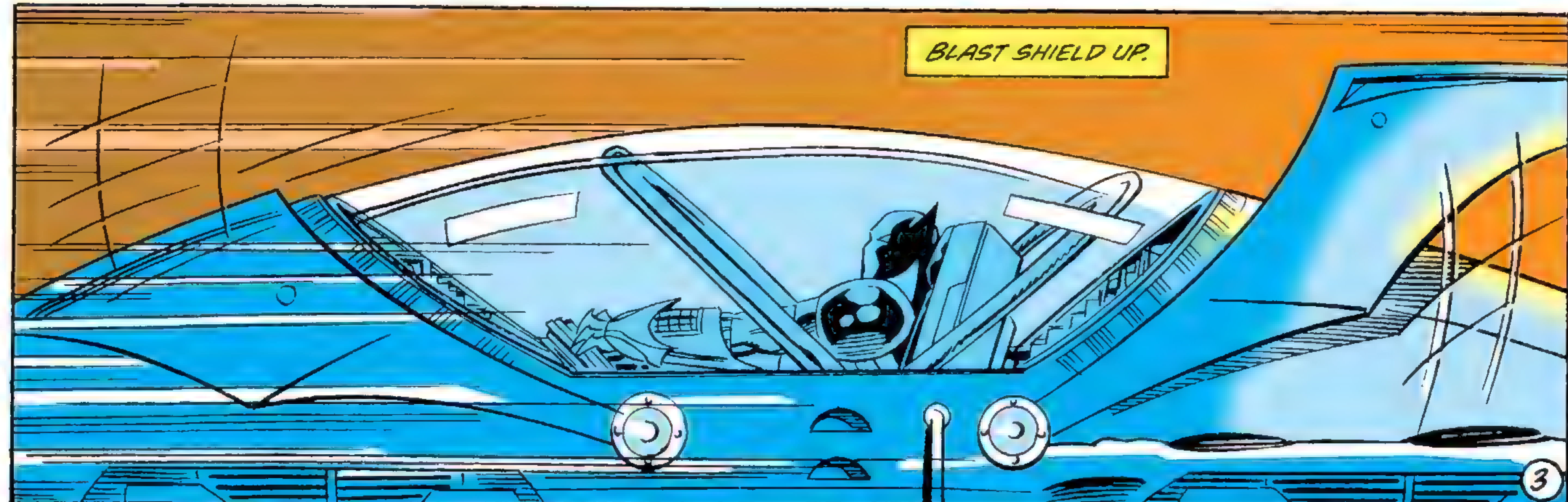
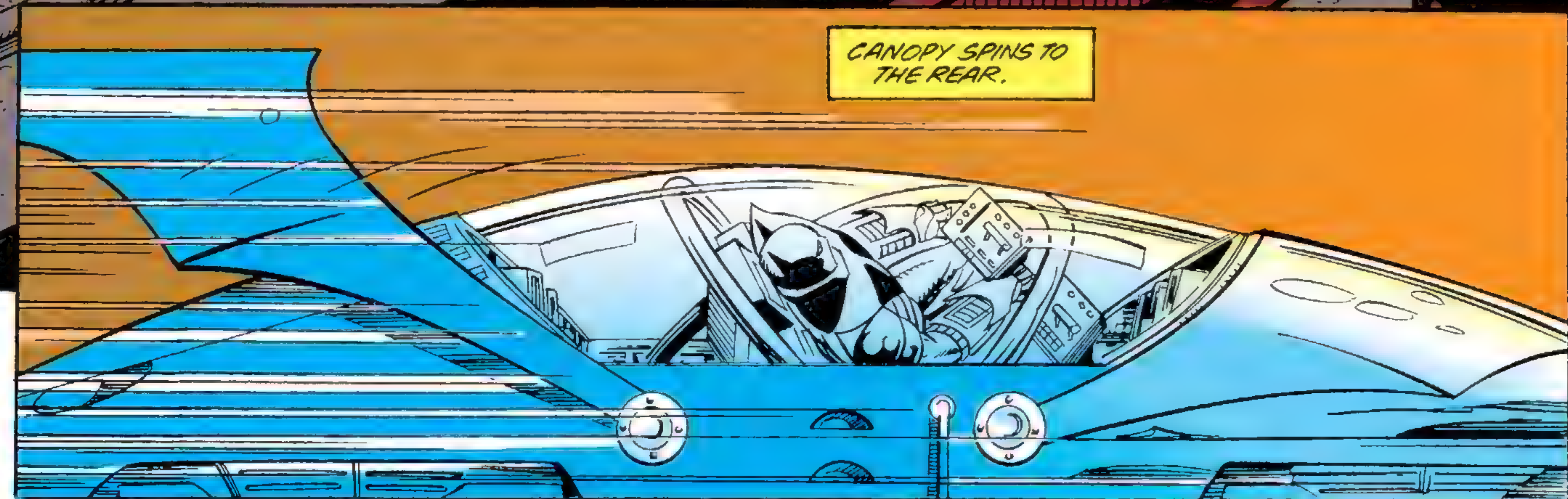
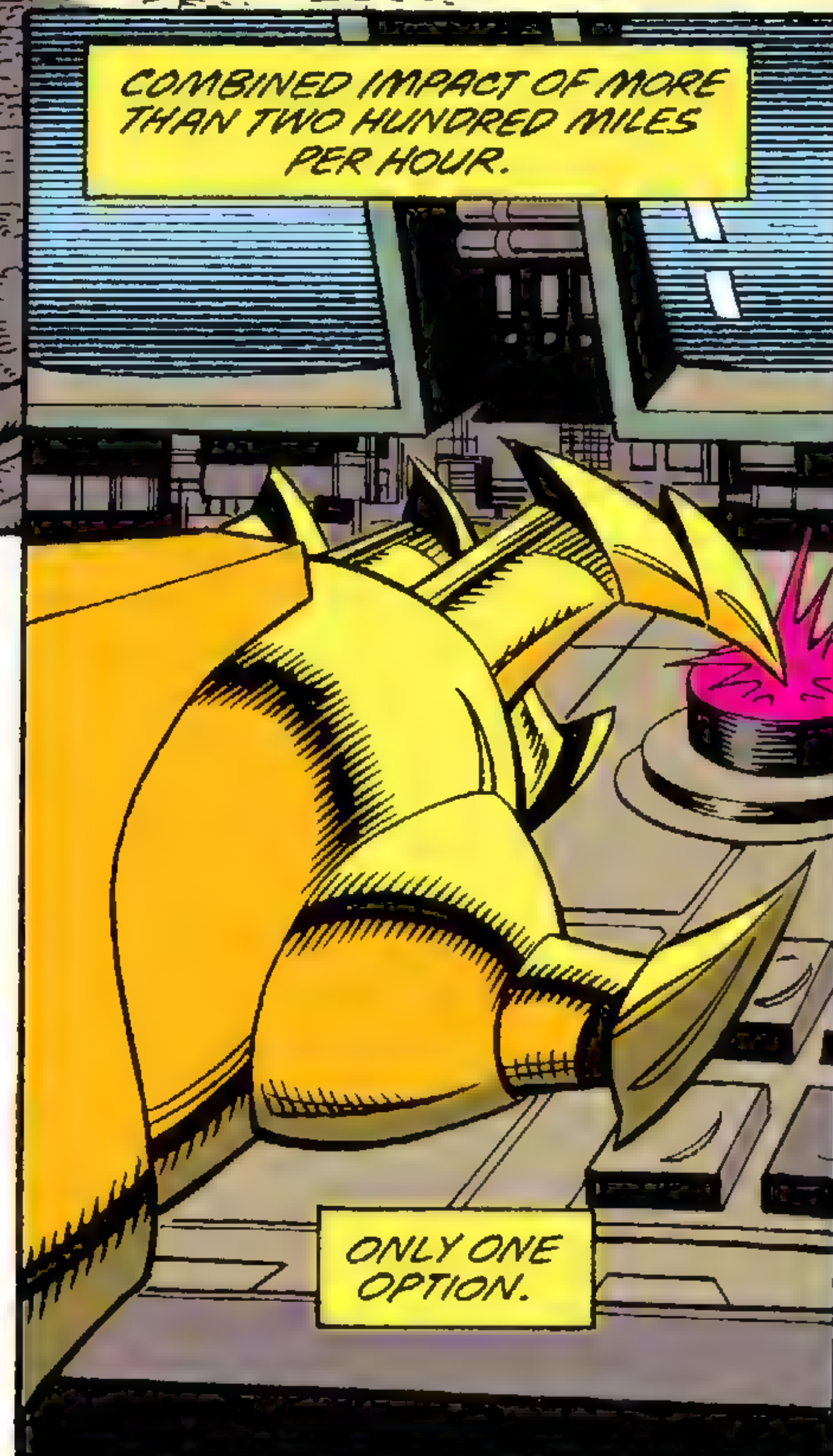
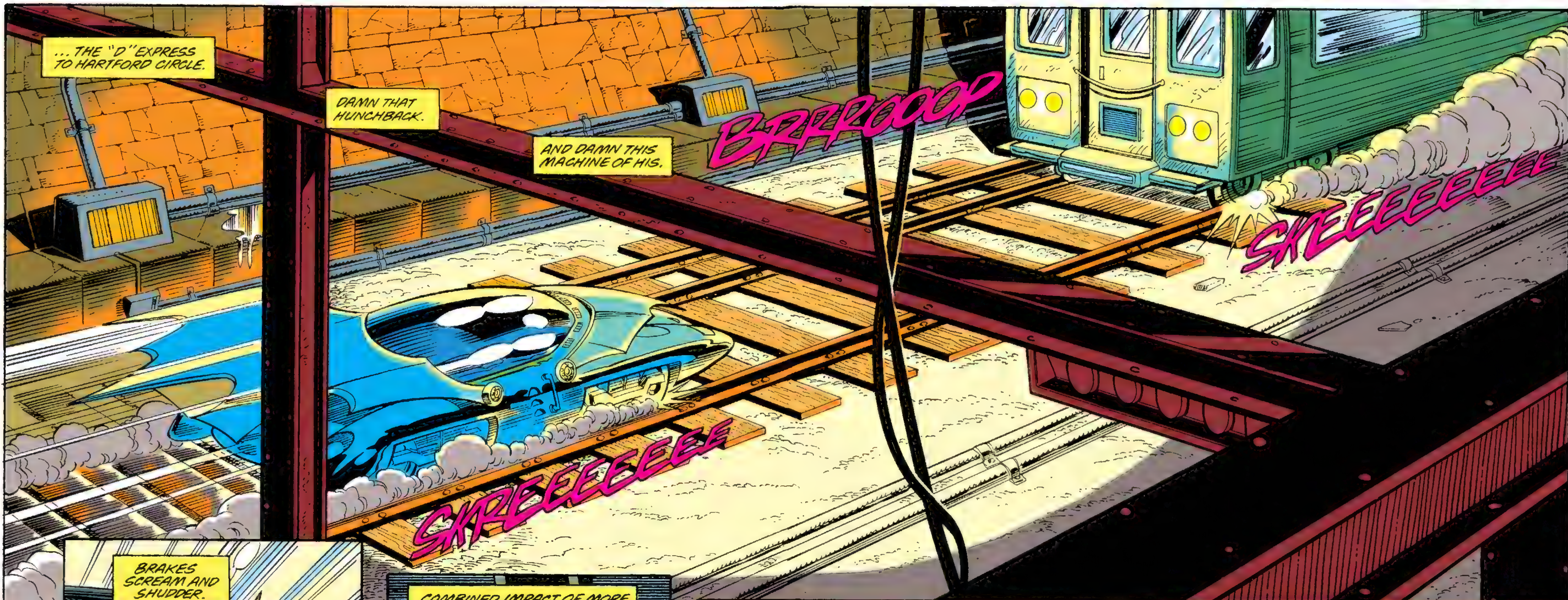
BANE.

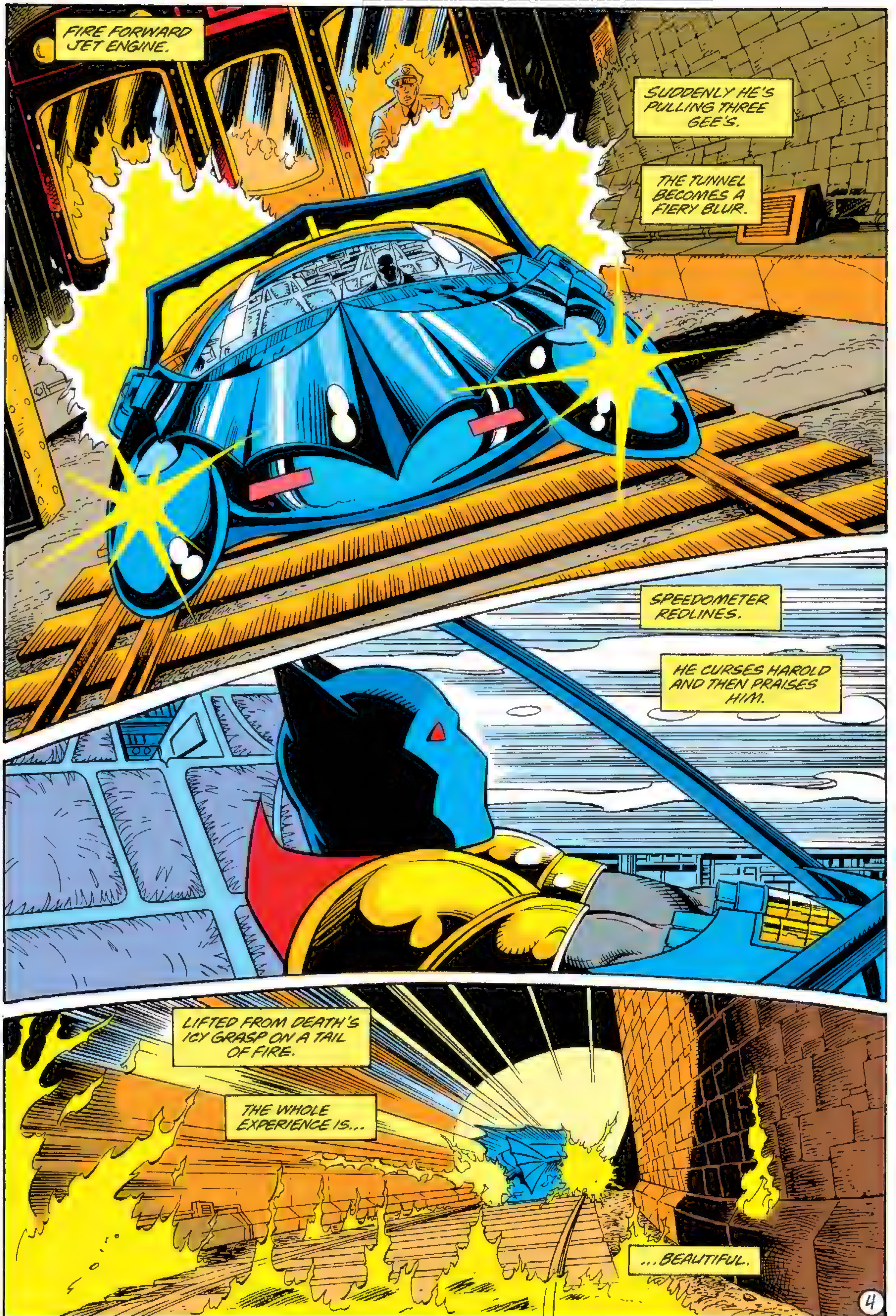
HIS HENCHMEN.

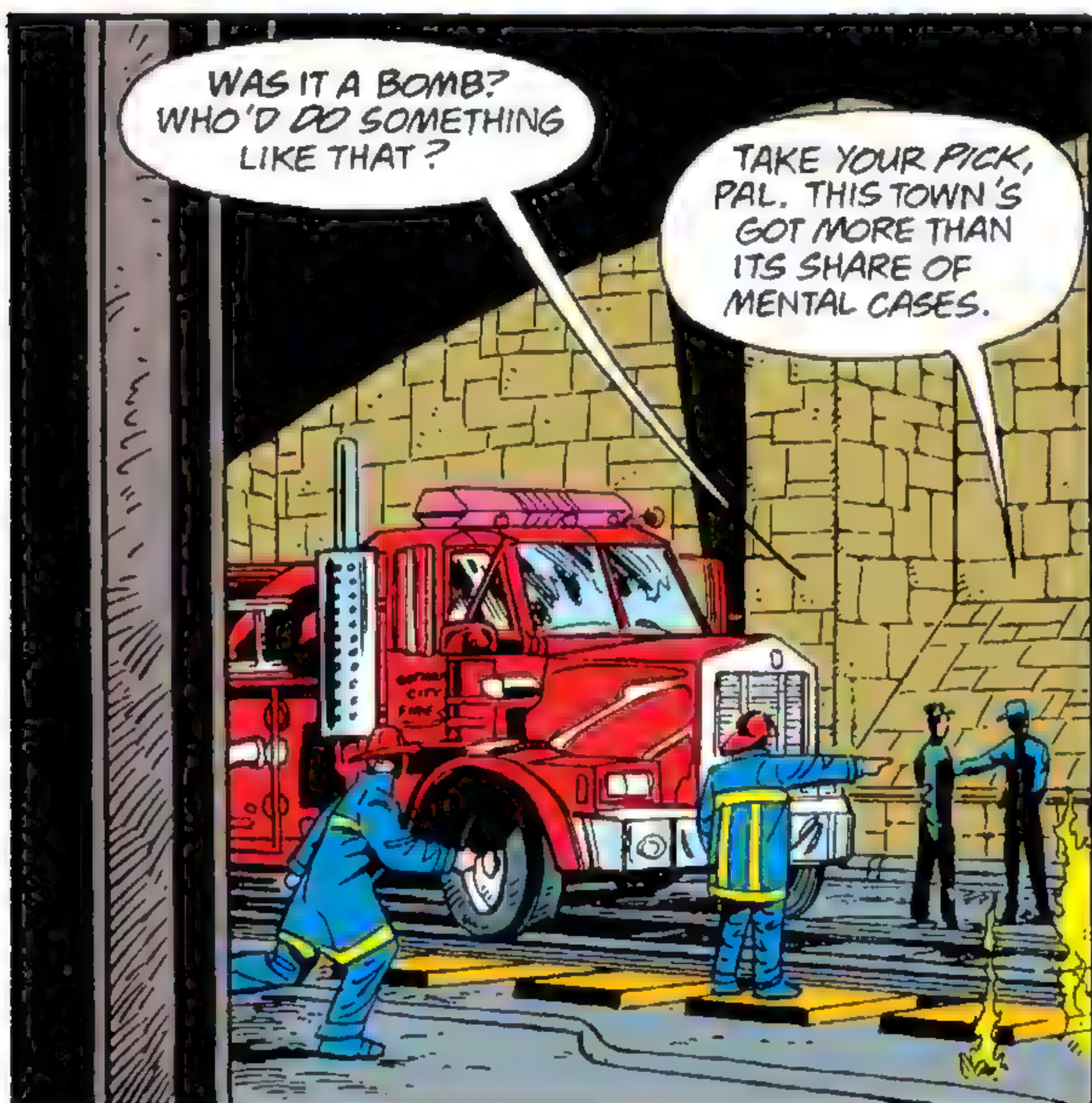
LEHAH.

THE DEMON BIIIS.

SINCE LEARNING HIS TRUE
IDENTITY AND TAKING UP
THE MANTLE OF THE BAT
HE'S FACED THEM ALL.
ONLY TO BE DEFEATED BY...

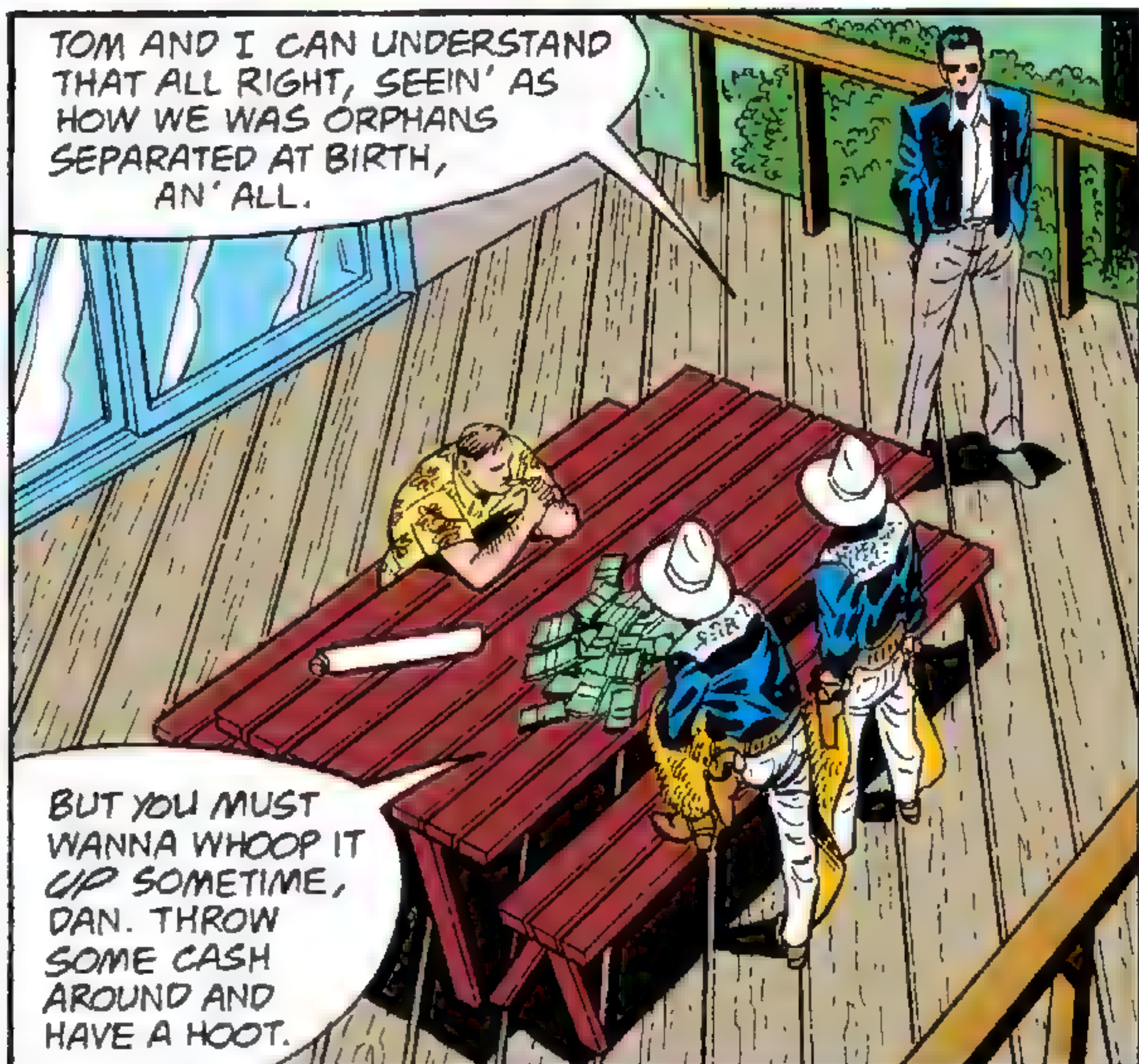
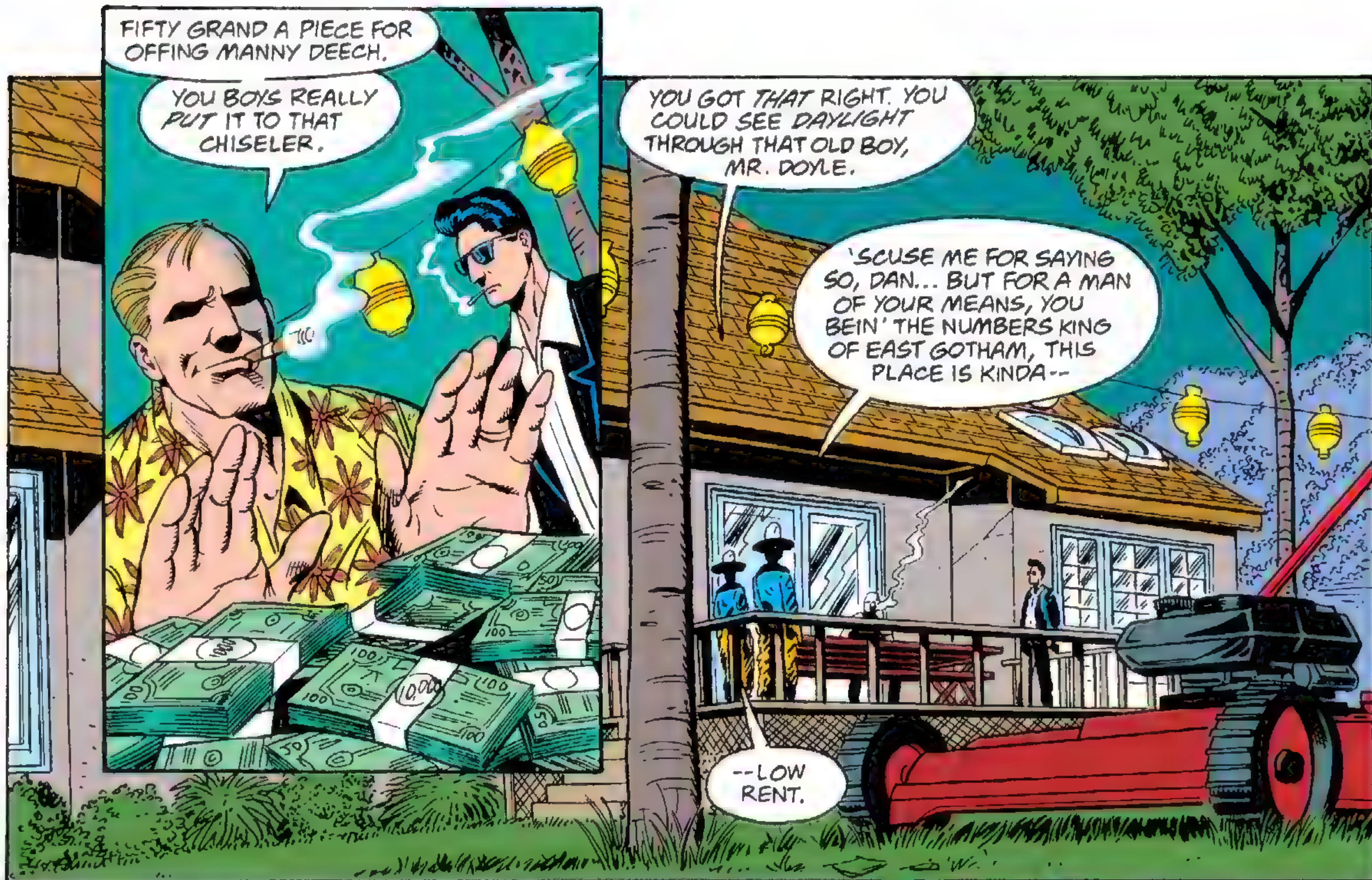


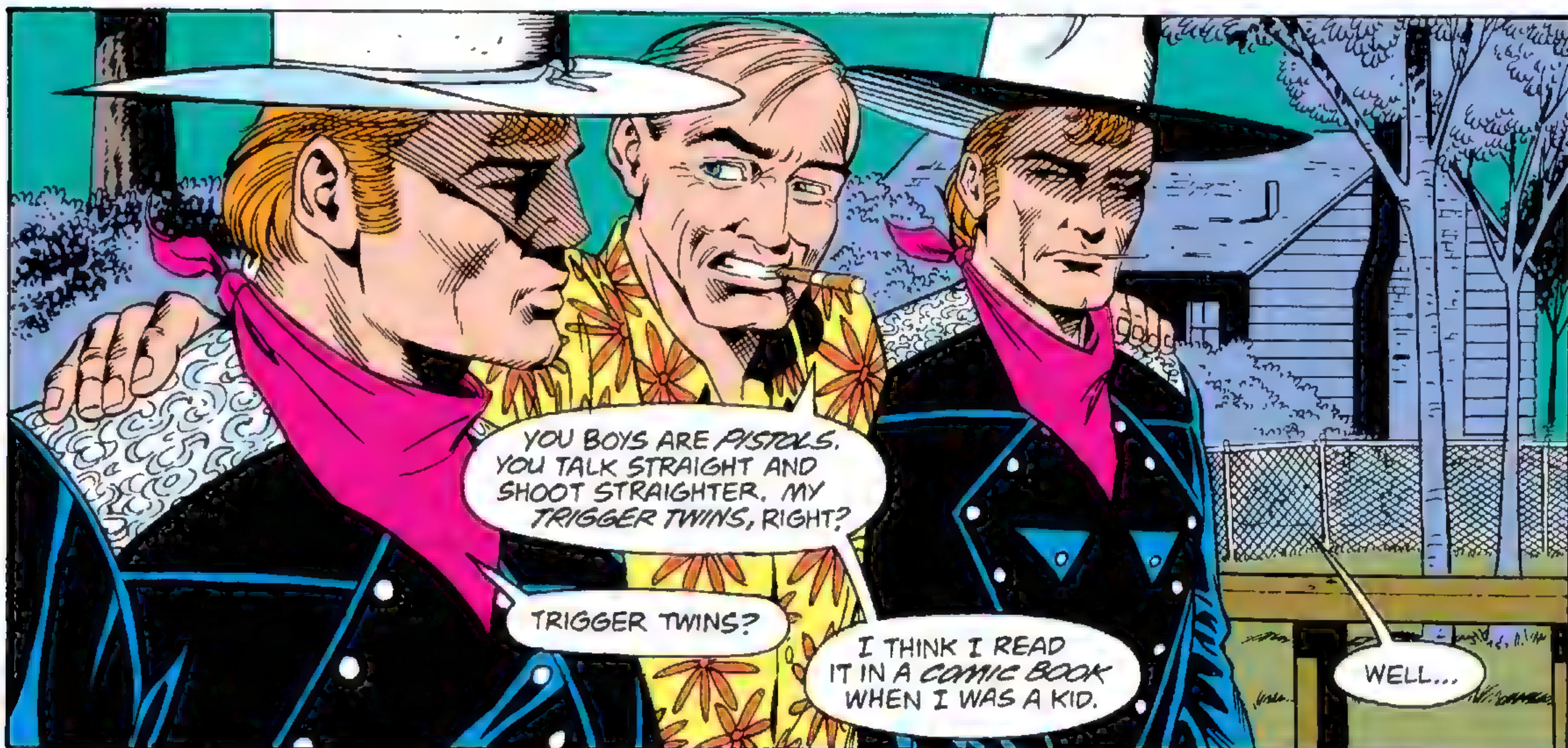












YOU BOYS ARE *PISTOLS*.
YOU TALK STRAIGHT AND
SHOOT STRAIGHTER. MY
TRIGGER TWINS, RIGHT?

TRIGGER TWINS?

I THINK I READ
IT IN A *COMIC BOOK*
WHEN I WAS A KID.

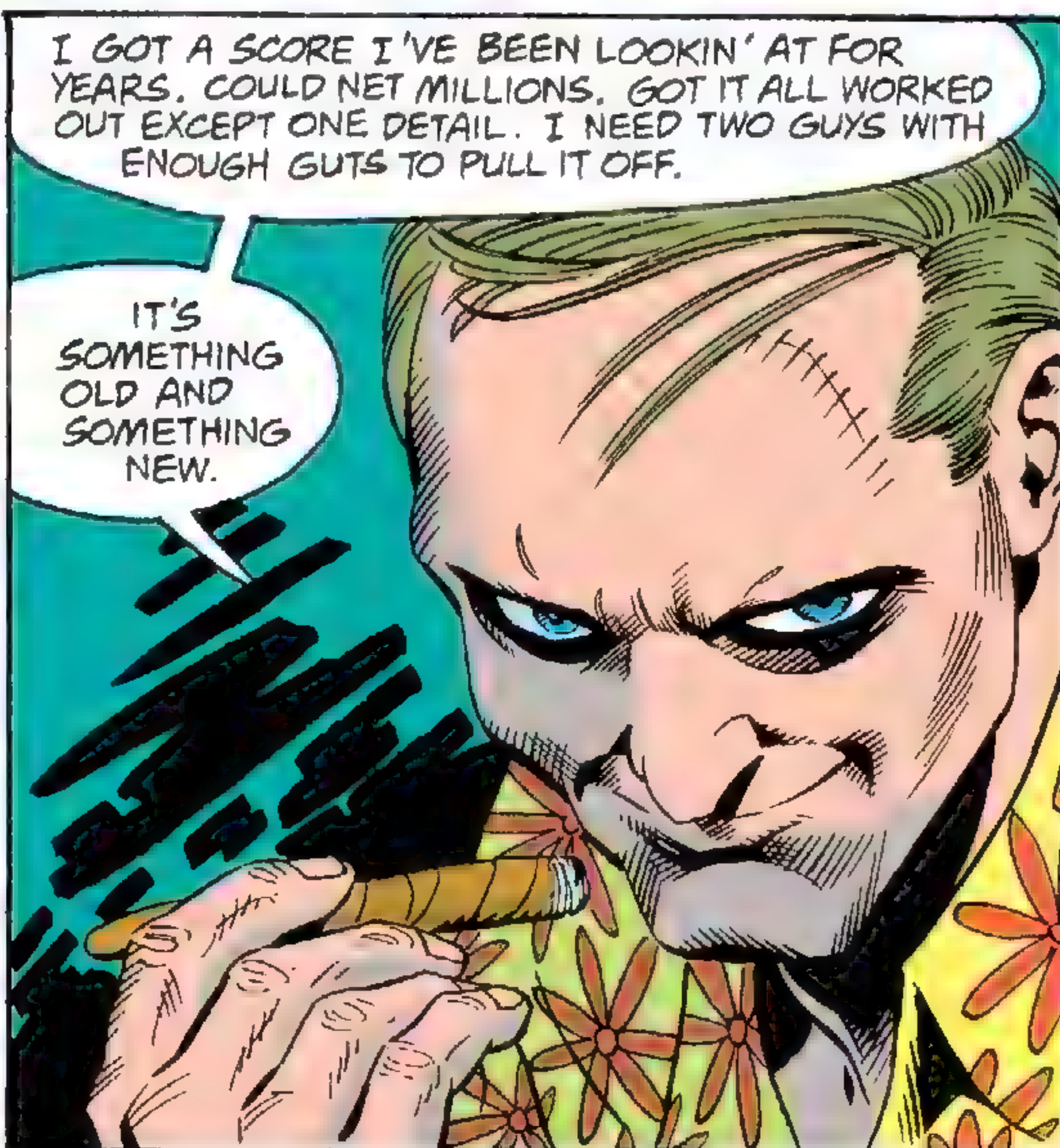
WELL...



YOU GUYS NEED *ACTION*. AND
MAYBE I'D LIKE A SHOT OF
CASH. SOME "*WHOOO IT
UP*" MONEY, CAPICE?

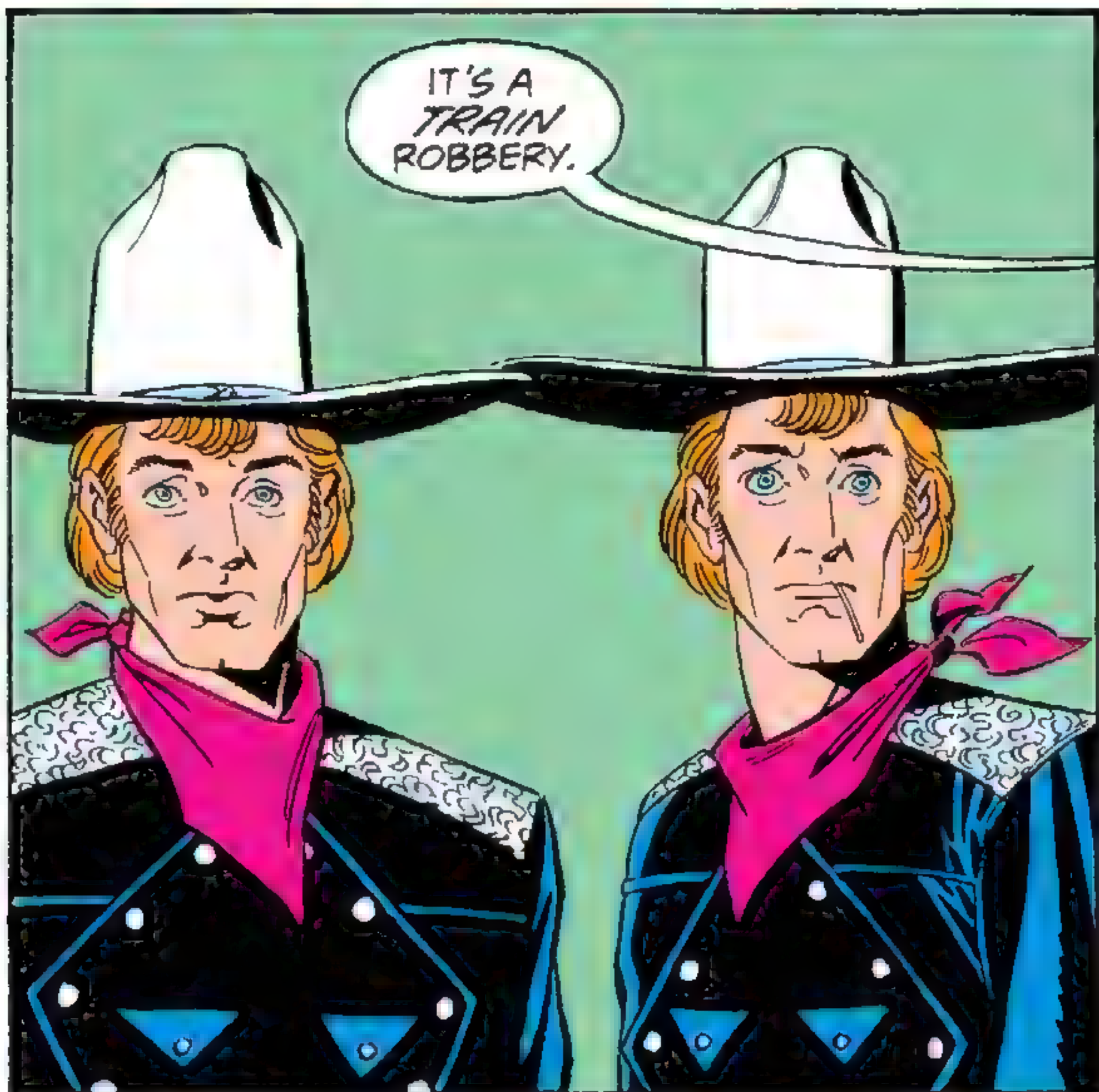
WHAT KIND OF
ACTION, DAN? YOU
GOT SOMEBODY
ELSE YOU WANT
GUNNED?

NAW,
NOTHING
LIKE THAT.



I GOT A SCORE I'VE BEEN LOOKIN' AT FOR
YEARS. COULD NET MILLIONS. GOT IT ALL WORKED
OUT EXCEPT ONE DETAIL. I NEED TWO GUYS WITH
ENOUGH GUTS TO PULL IT OFF.

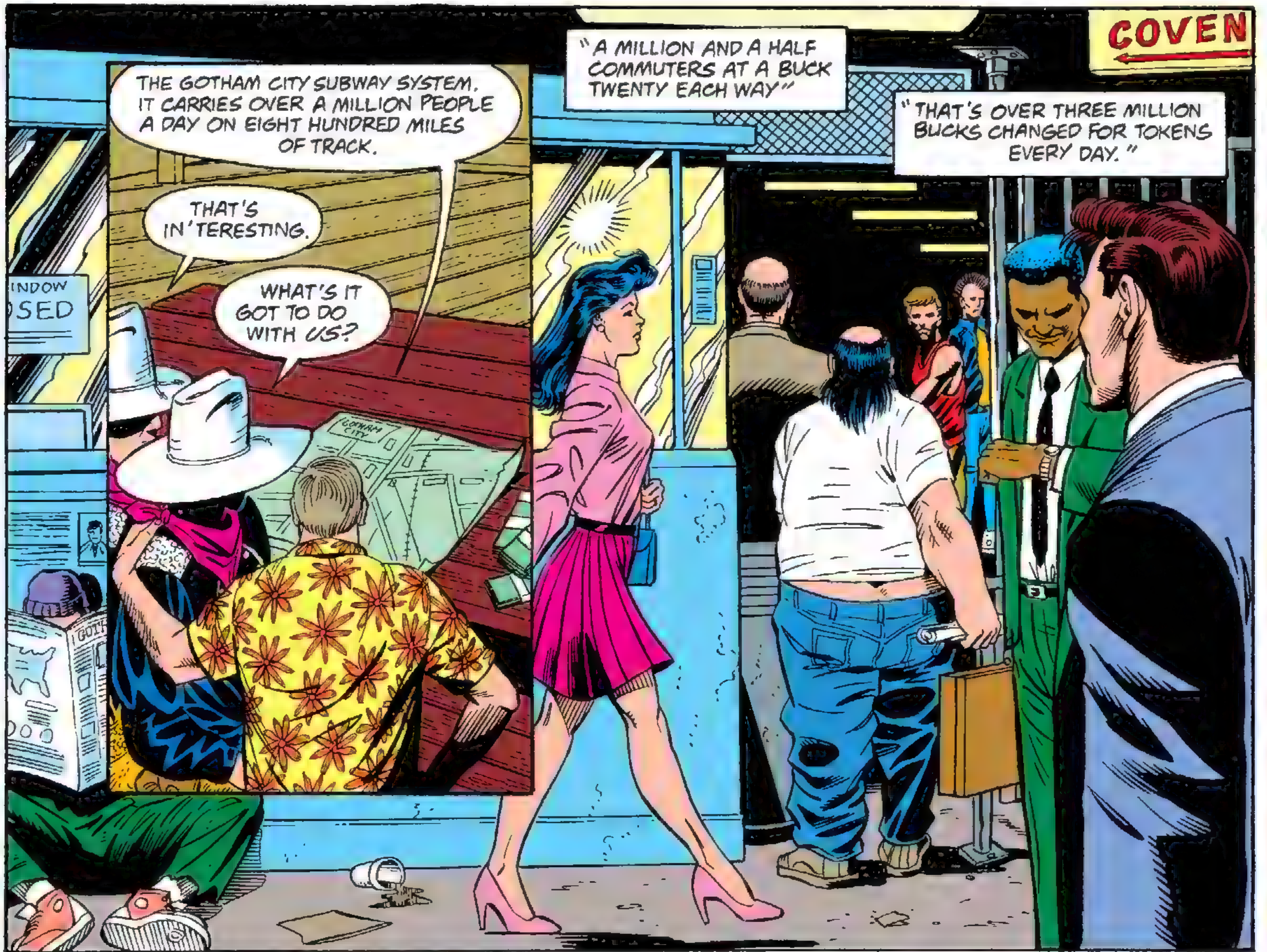
IT'S
SOMETHING
OLD AND
SOMETHING
NEW.

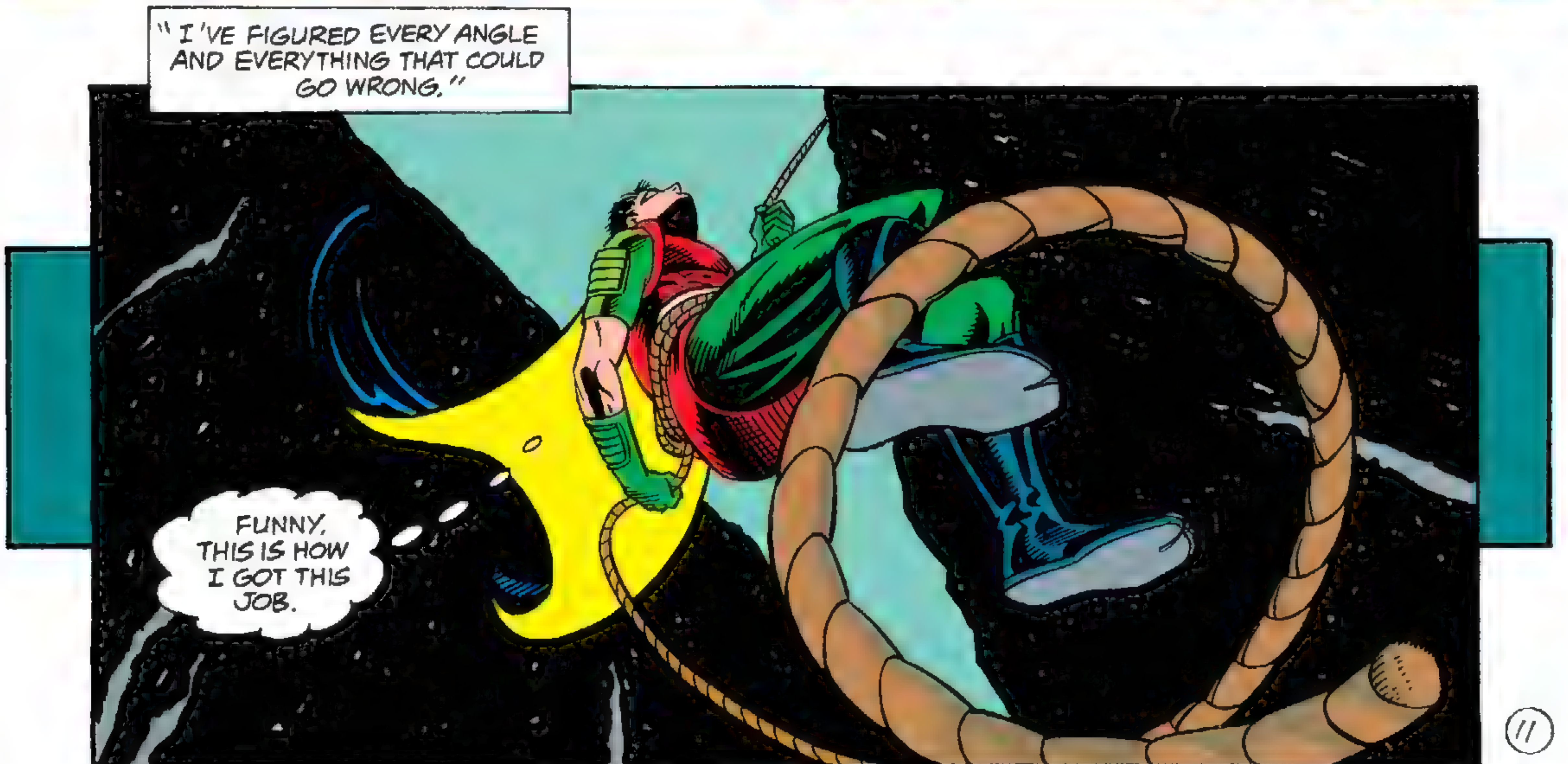
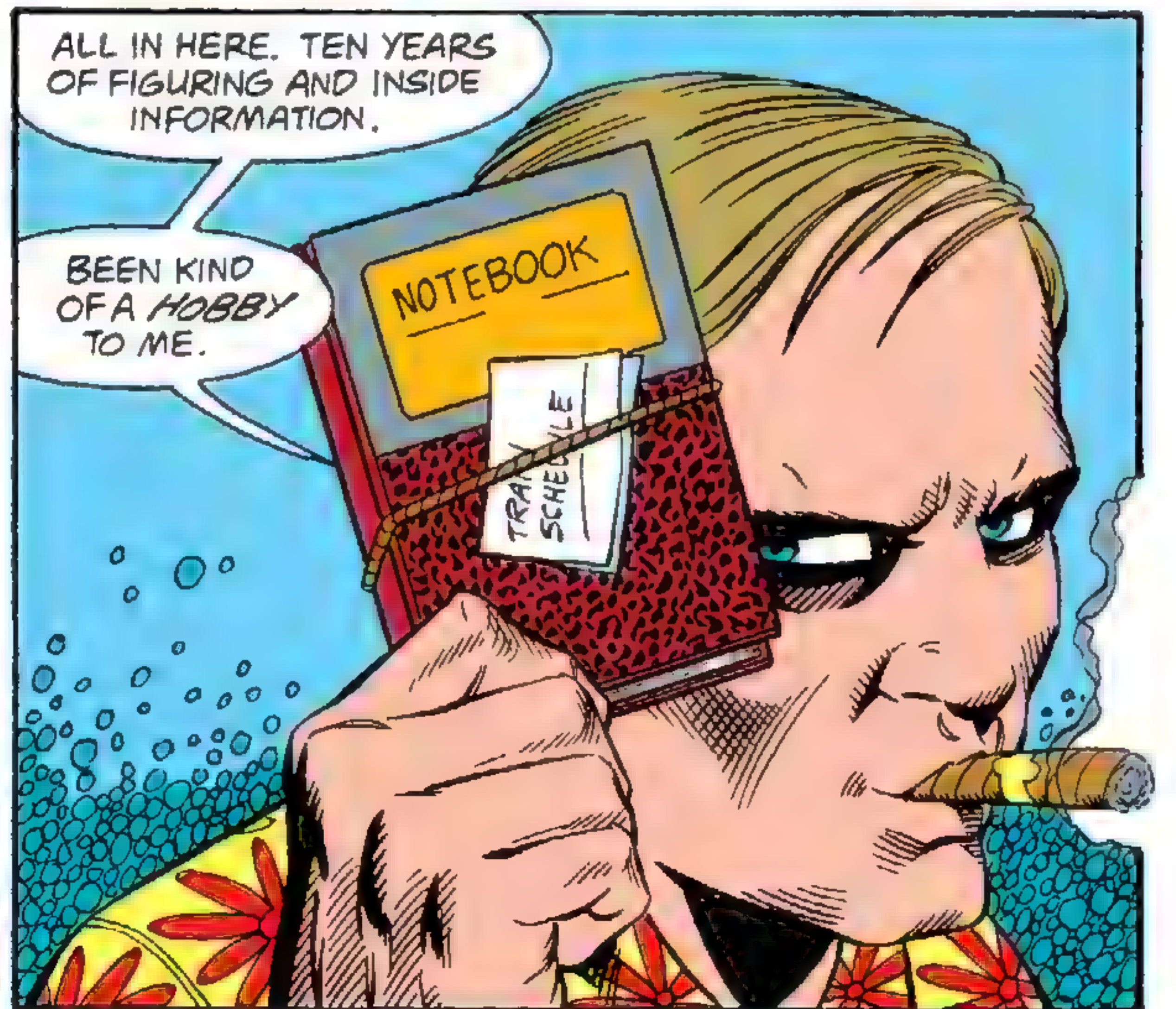
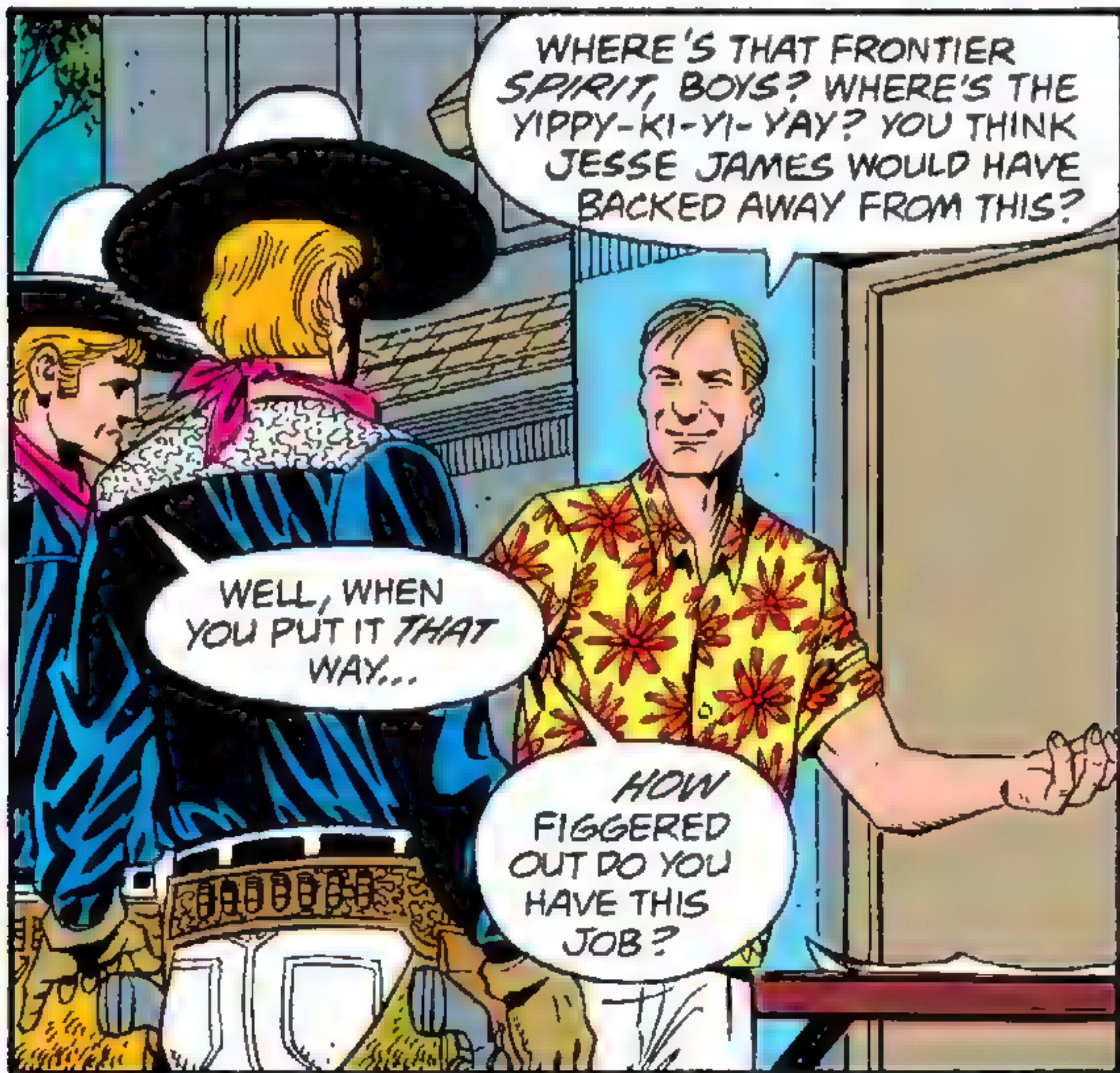


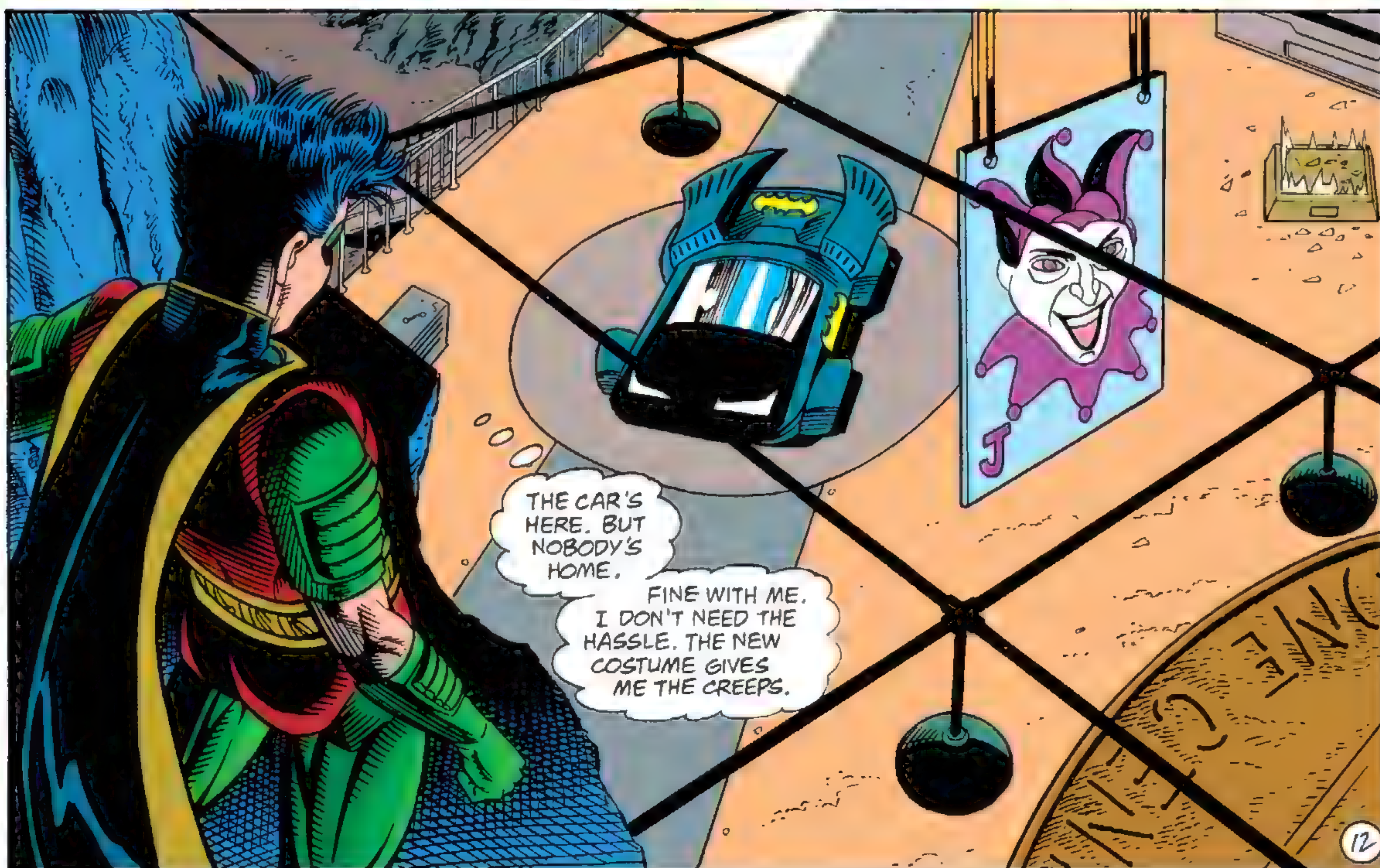
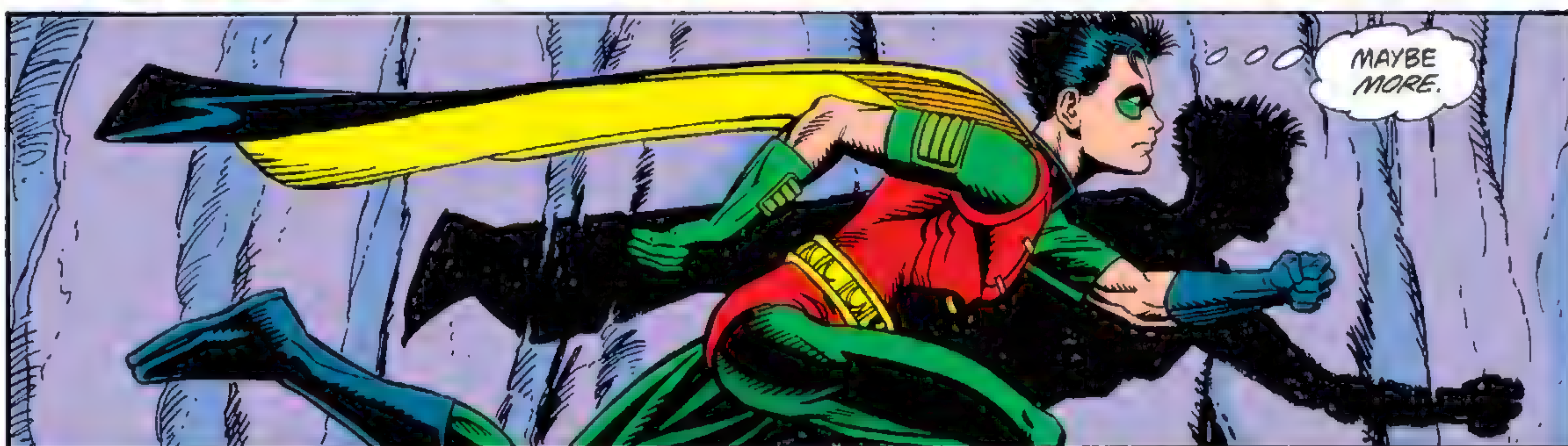
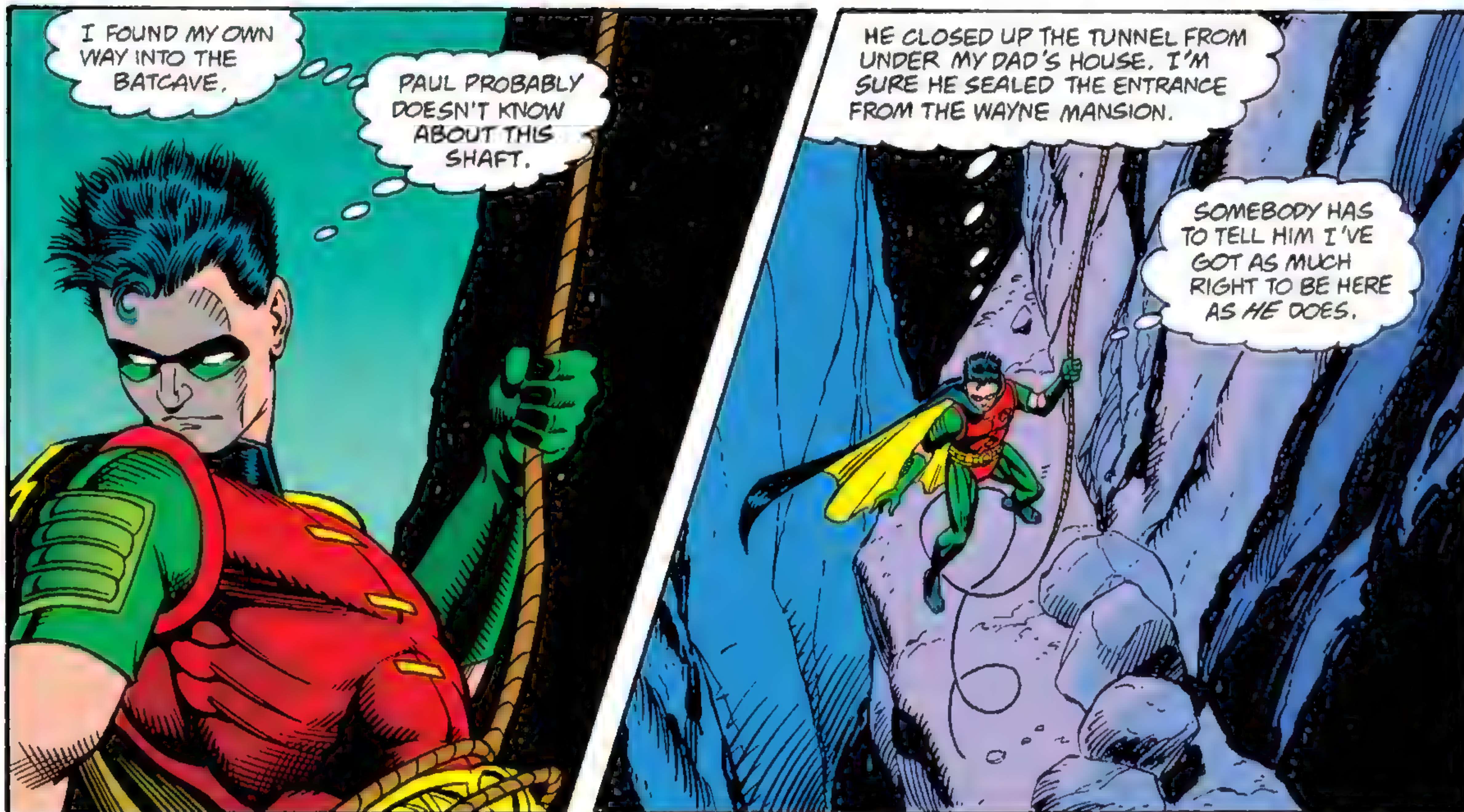
IT'S A
TRAIN
ROBBERY.



WELL, ALL
RIGHT.



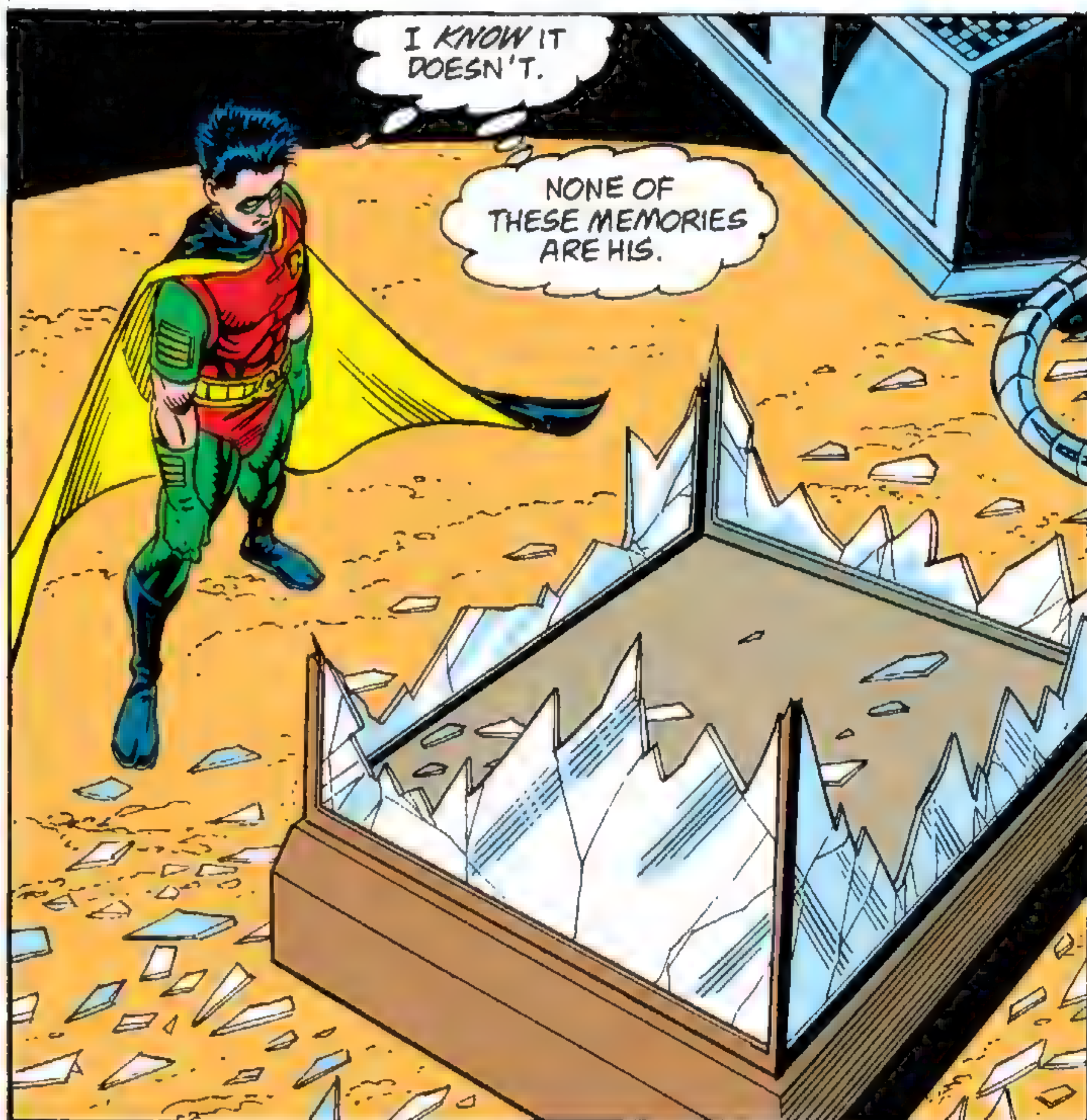






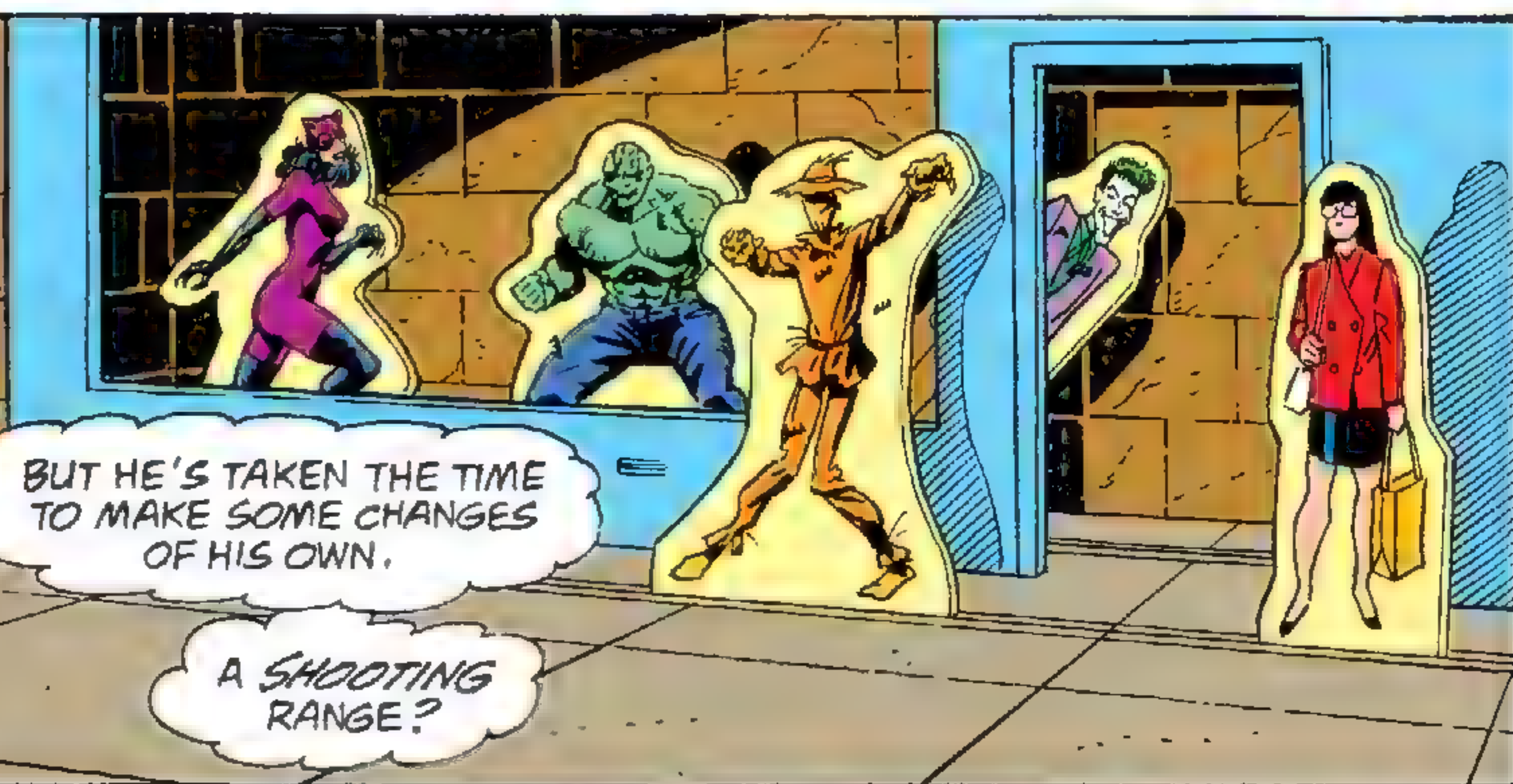
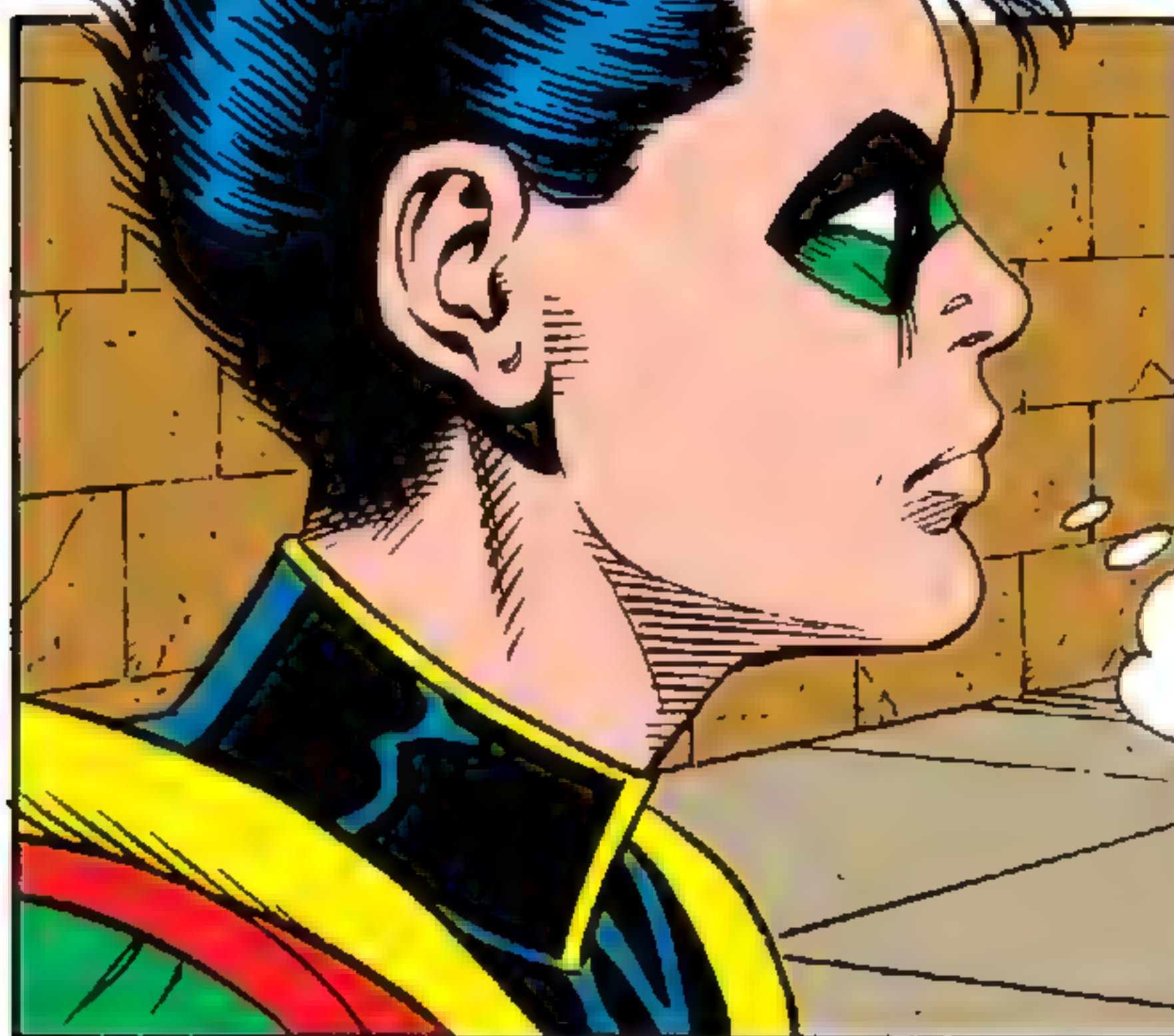
PAUL HASN'T DONE MUCH TO CLEAN UP AFTER BRUCE'S FIGHT WITH BANE.

I GUESS THIS STUFF DOESN'T MEAN MUCH TO HIM.



I KNOW IT DOESN'T.

NONE OF THESE MEMORIES ARE HIS.



BUT HE'S TAKEN THE TIME TO MAKE SOME CHANGES OF HIS OWN.

A SHOOTING RANGE?

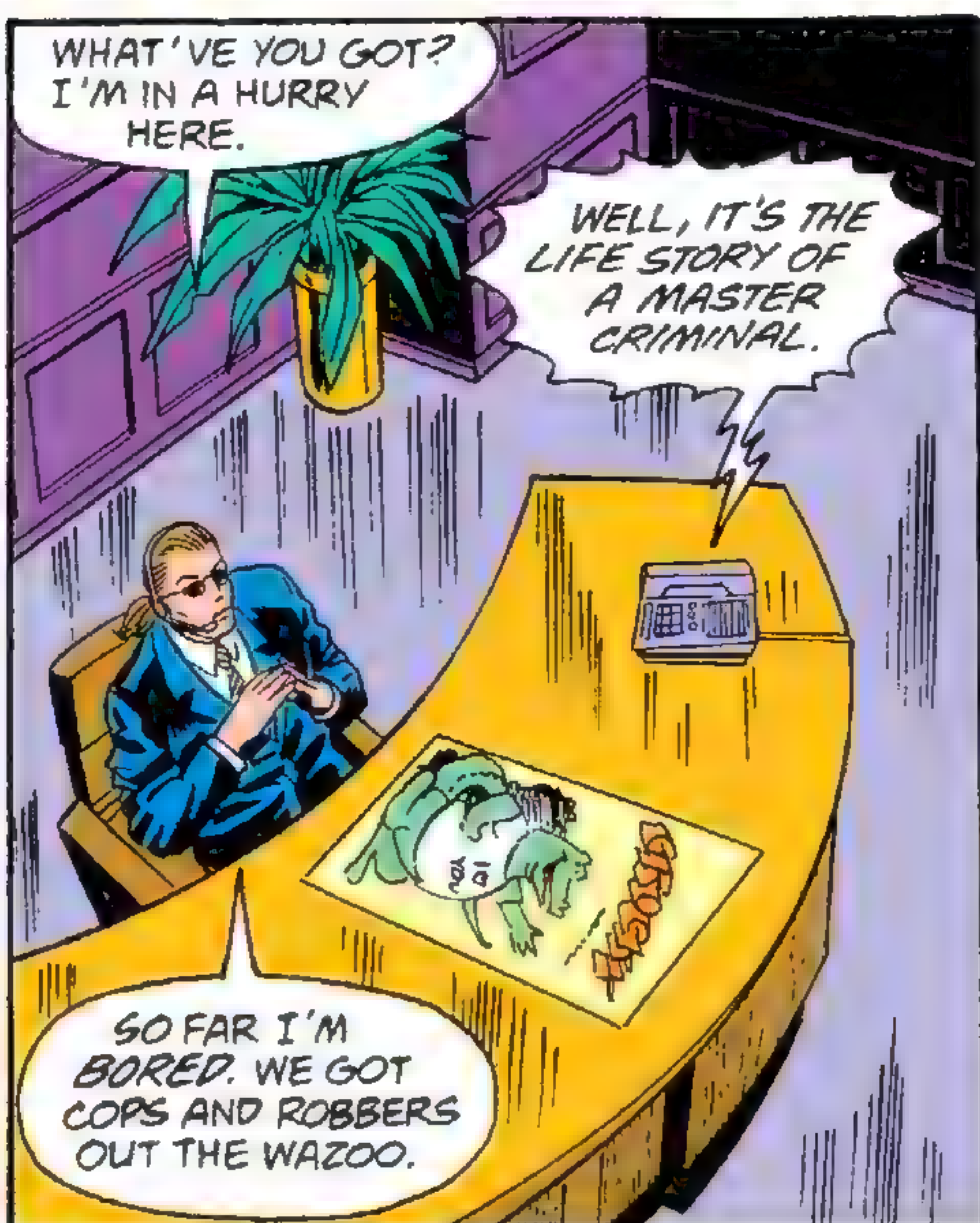
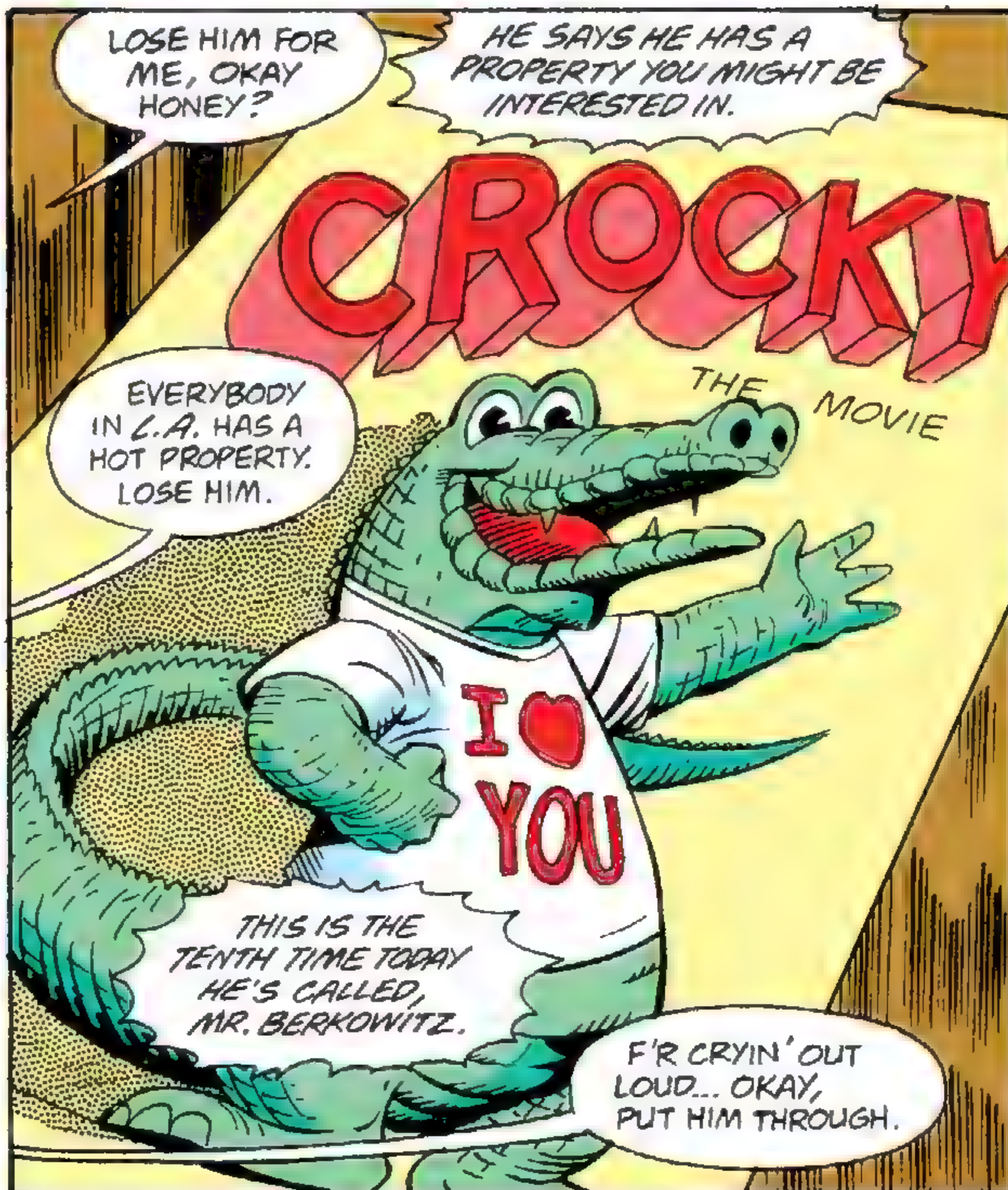
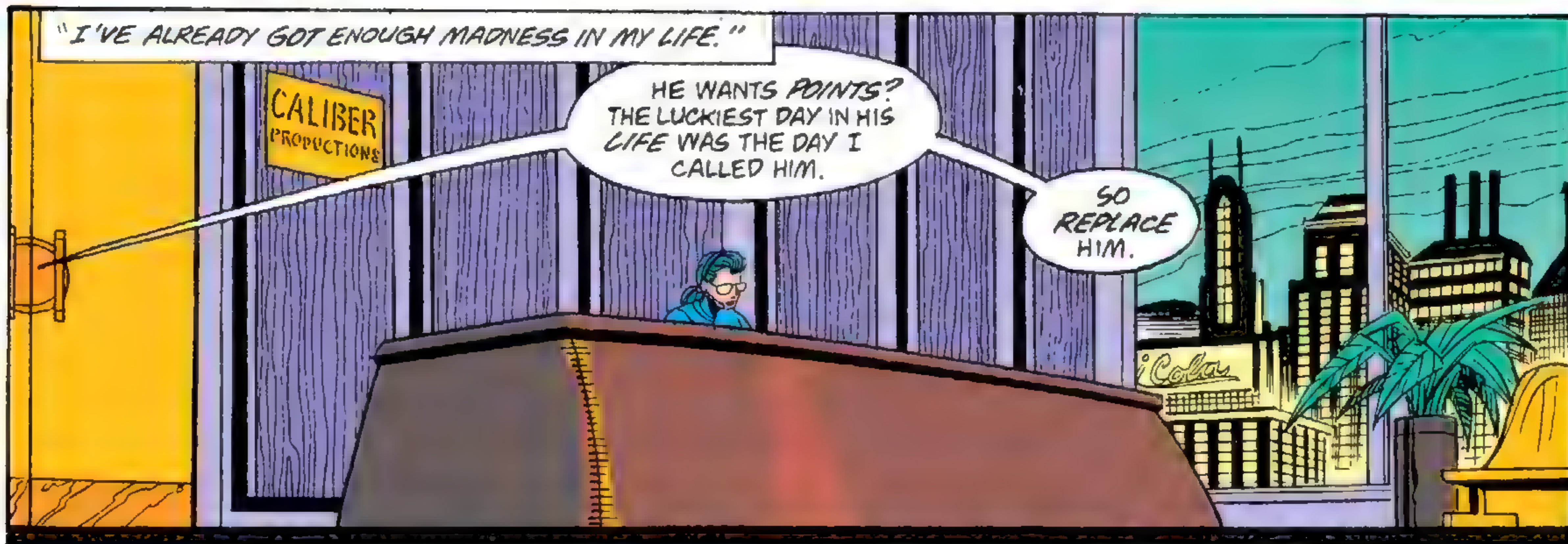


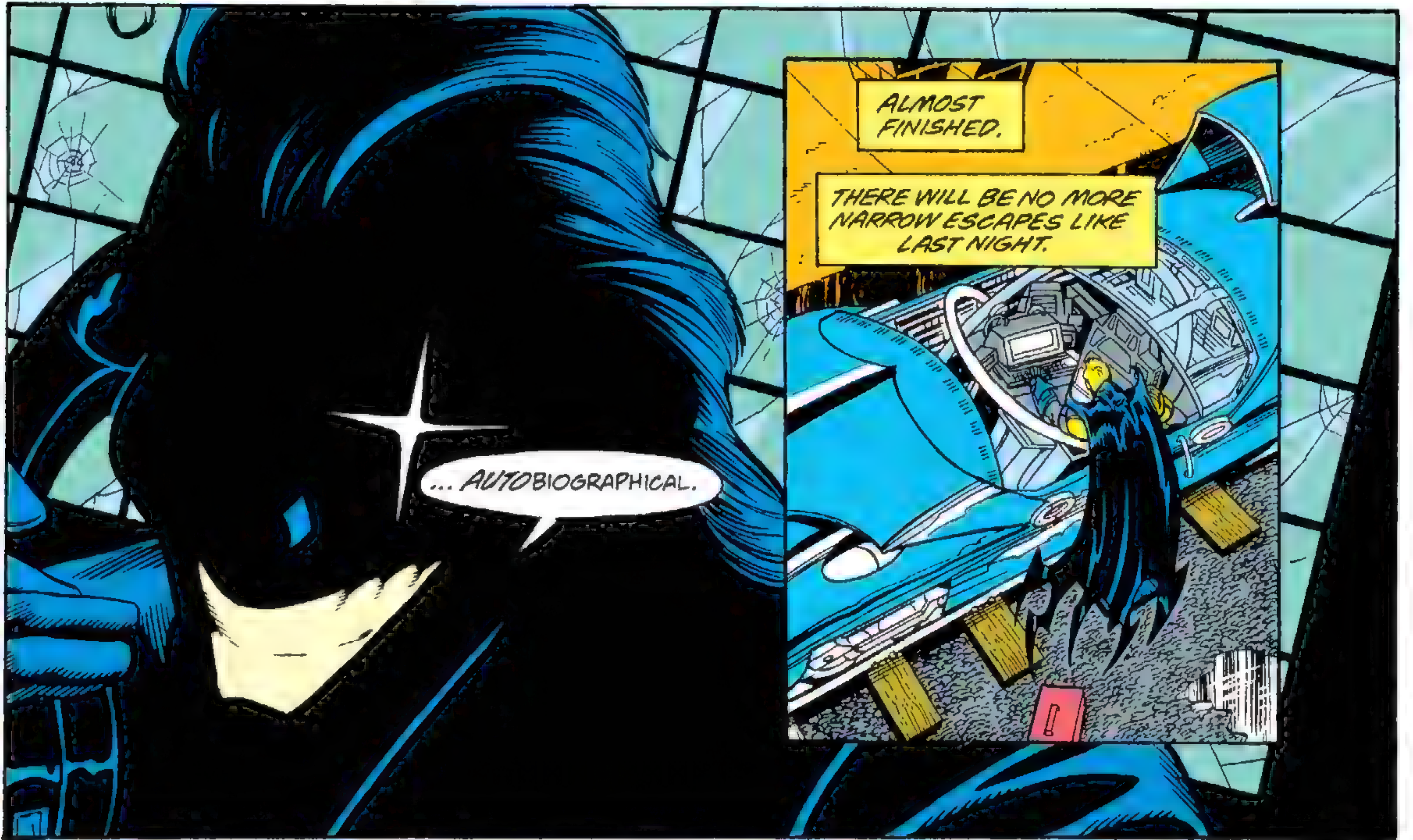
THIS IS NOT GOOD.



I'LL JUST GET WHAT I CAME FOR AND GO.

PAUL DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO KNOW I WAS HERE. I LIKE IT BETTER THAT WAY.

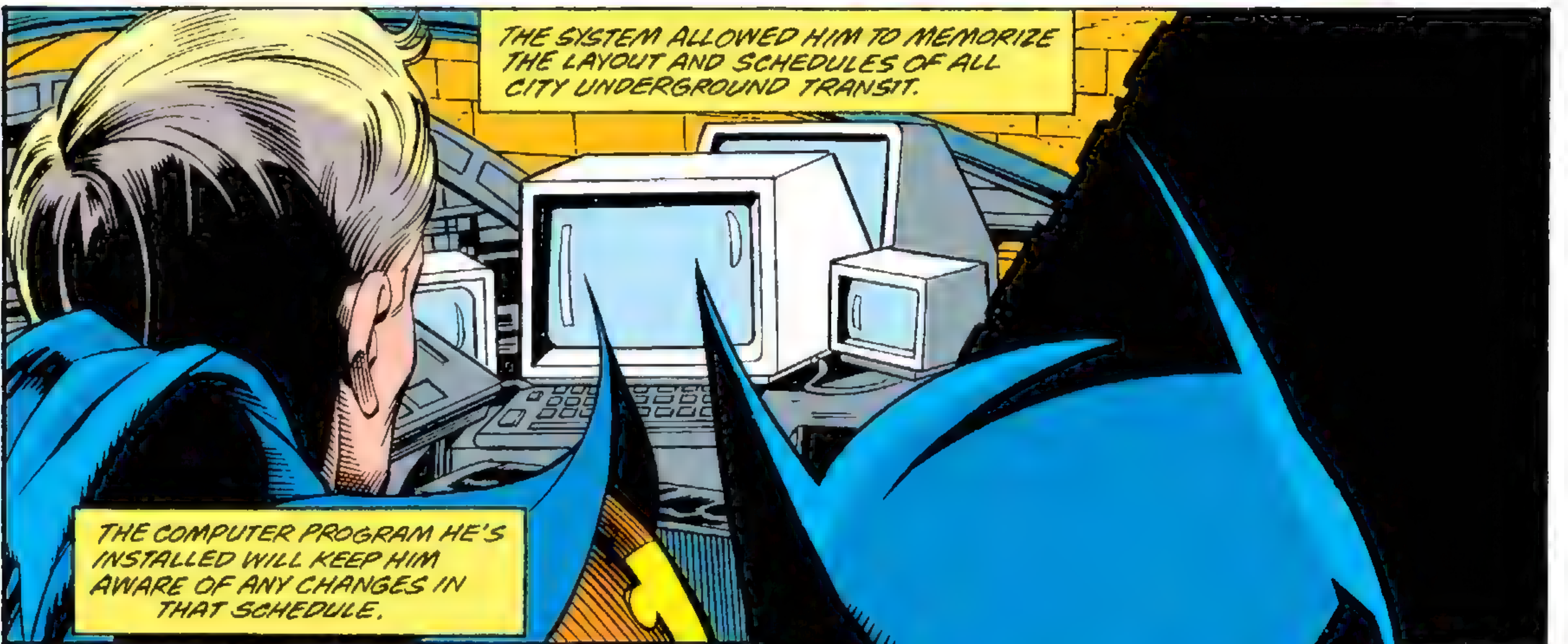




ALMOST
FINISHED.

THERE WILL BE NO MORE
NARROW ESCAPES LIKE
LAST NIGHT.

... AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

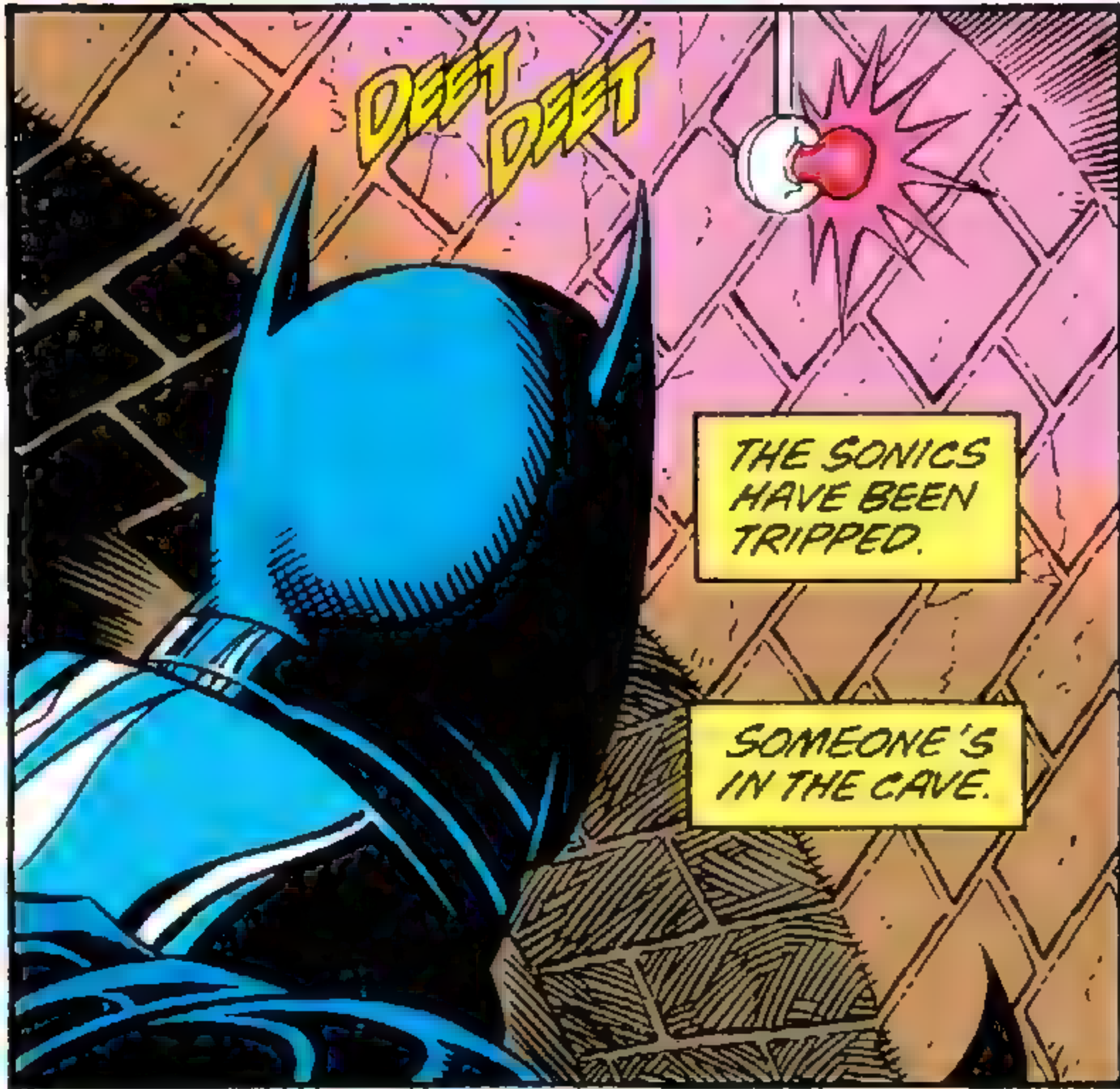


THE SYSTEM ALLOWED HIM TO MEMORIZE
THE LAYOUT AND SCHEDULES OF ALL
CITY UNDERGROUND TRANSIT.

THE COMPUTER PROGRAM HE'S
INSTALLED WILL KEEP HIM
AWARE OF ANY CHANGES IN
THAT SCHEDULE.

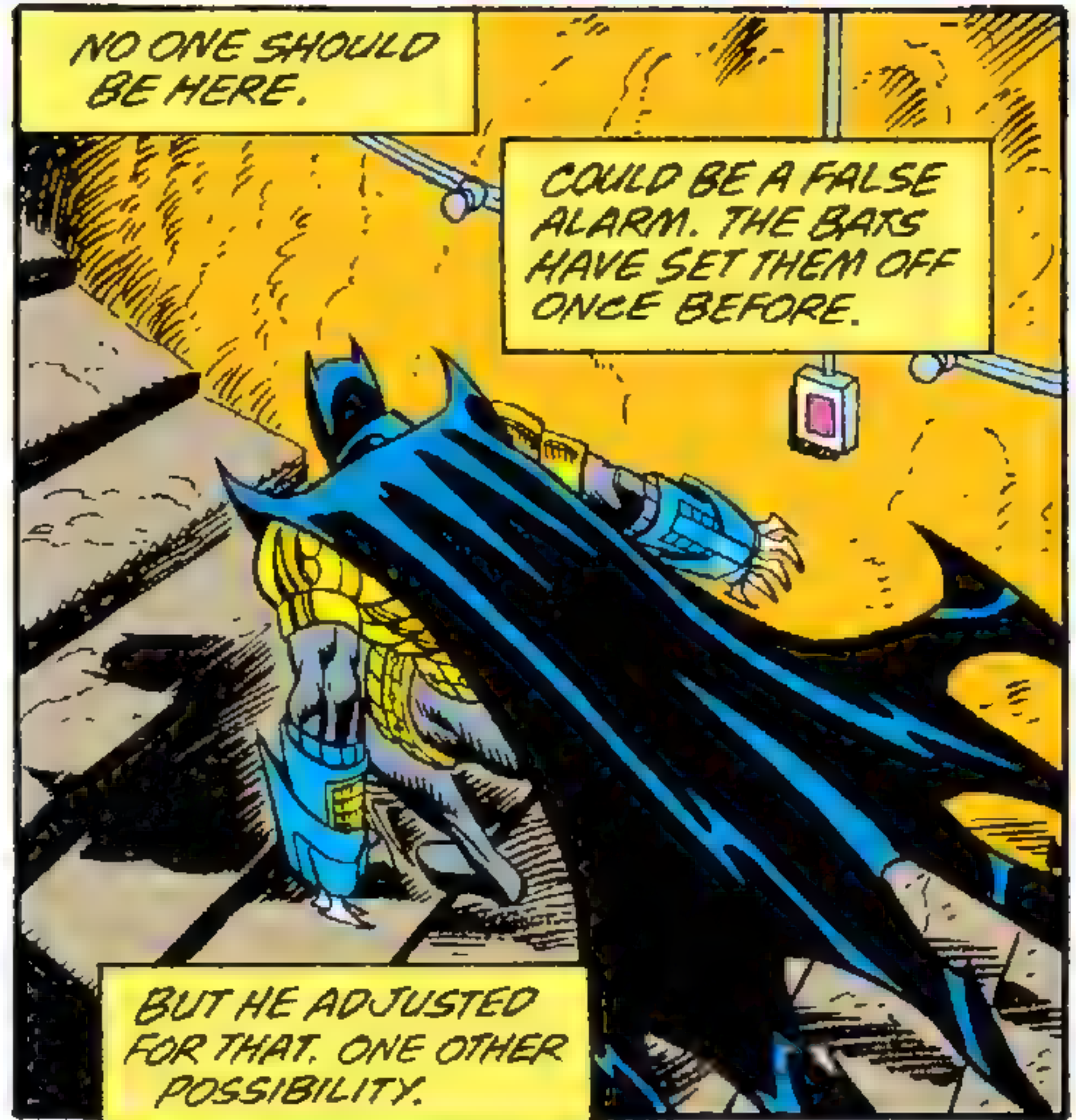
IT ALL FIT NICELY IN
THE SPACE LEFT WHEN
HE REMOVED THE
SECOND SEAT.

NO RIDERS ON
THIS TRAIN.



THE SONICS
HAVE BEEN
TRIPPED.

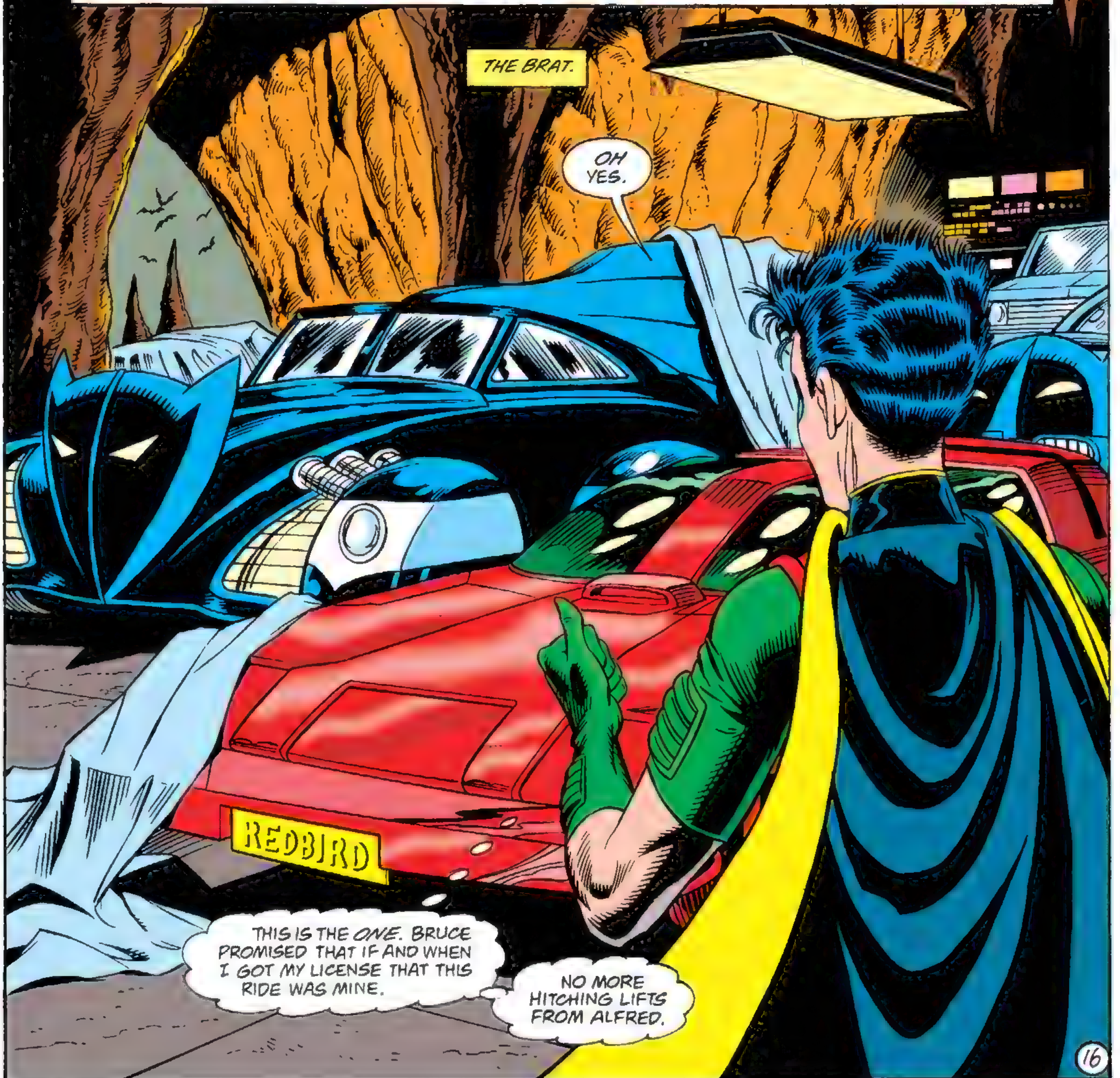
SOMEONE'S
IN THE CAVE.



NO ONE SHOULD
BE HERE.

COULD BE A FALSE
ALARM. THE BATS
HAVE SET THEM OFF
ONCE BEFORE.

BUT HE ADJUSTED
FOR THAT. ONE OTHER
POSSIBILITY.

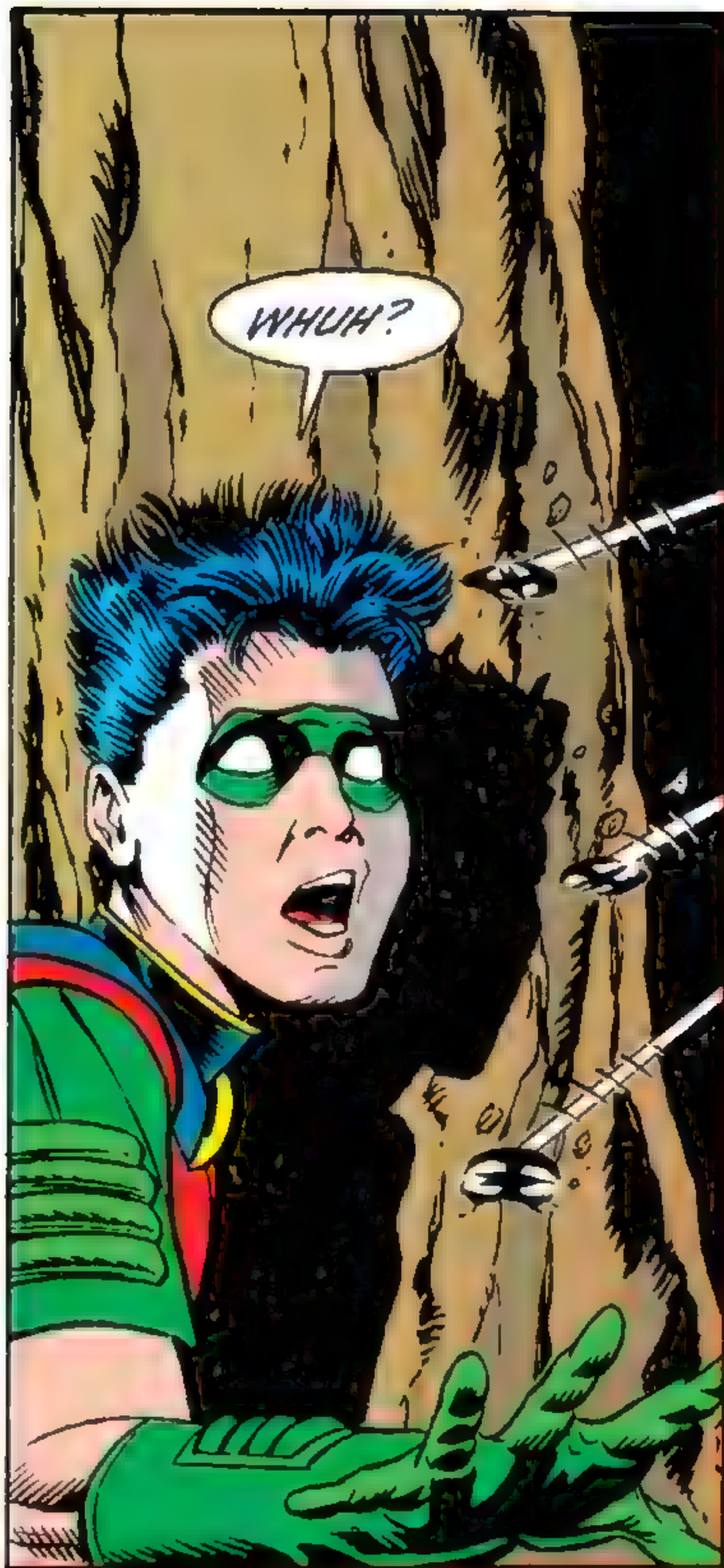


THE BRAT.

OH
YES.

THIS IS THE ONE. BRUCE
PROMISED THAT IF AND WHEN
I GOT MY LICENSE THAT THIS
RIDE WAS MINE.

NO MORE
HITCHING LIFTS
FROM ALFRED.



WHUH?



I THOUGHT I MADE IT CLEAR THAT YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE.

MAYBE I DON'T TAKE A HINT SO WELL.



AND I AM SUPPOSED TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU UNTIL BRUCE RETURNS.

IF HE RETURNS.

YOU KNOW, YOUR ATTITUDE SUCKS, PAUL.



NOT PAUL...

...BATMAN.



THE BATMAN!

OH GREAT.



HE'S LOSING IT.

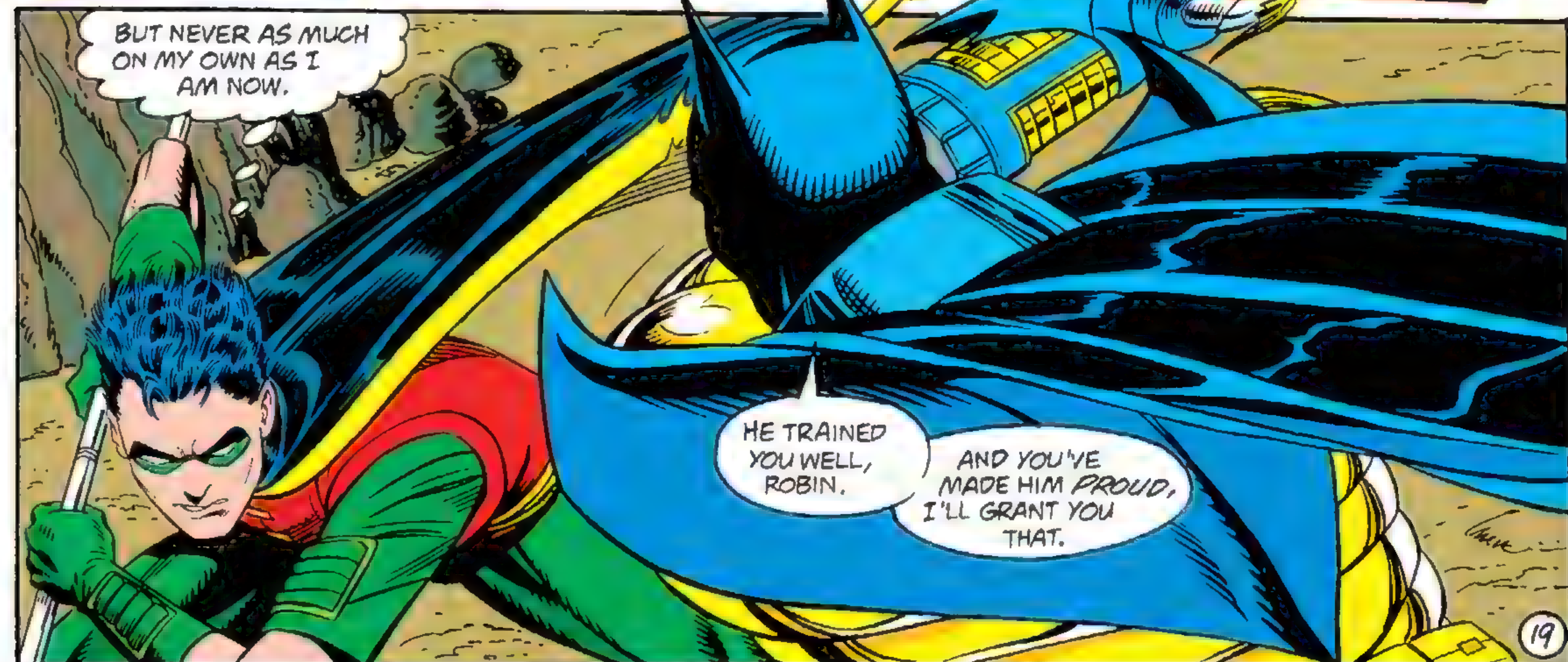
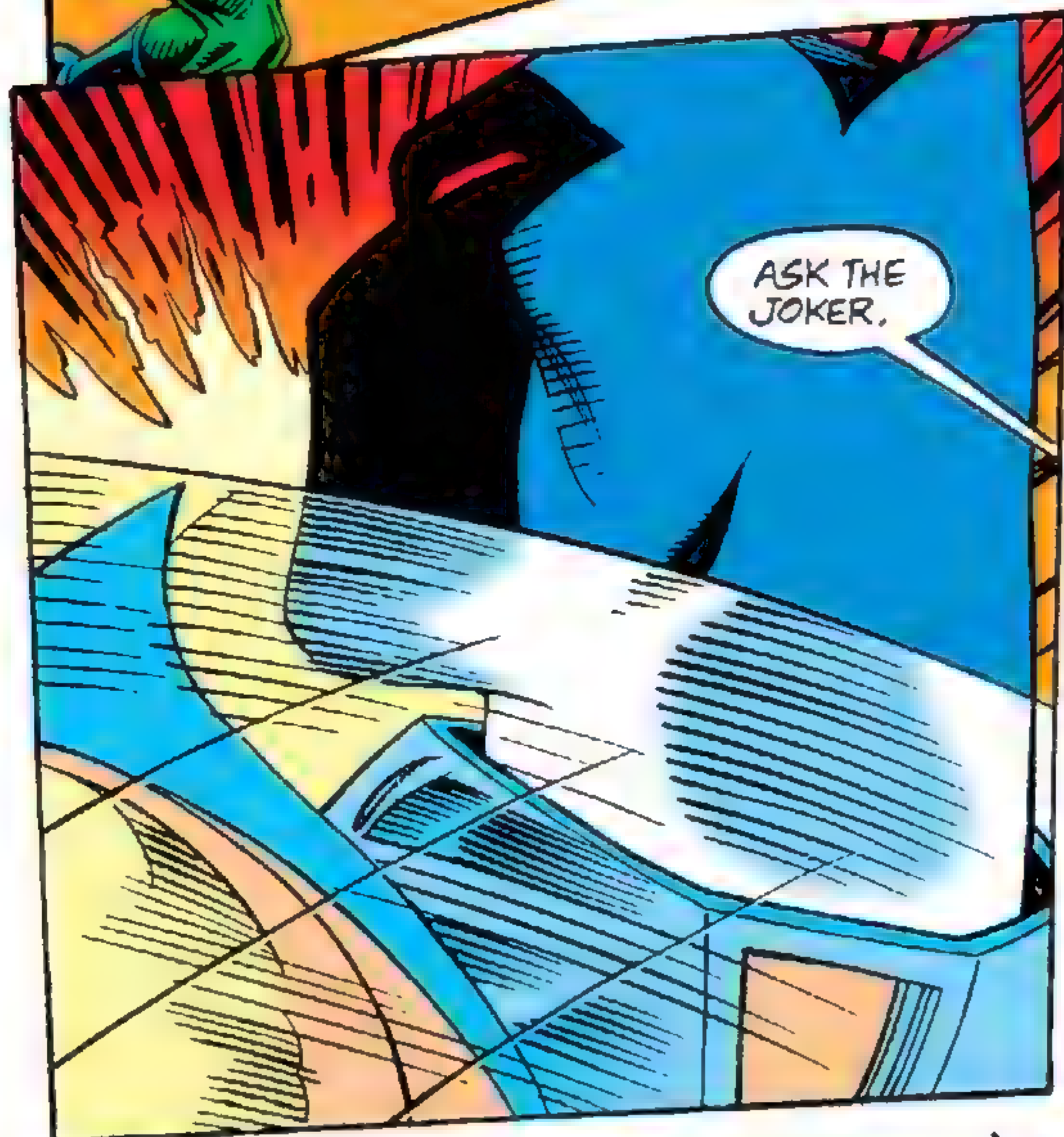
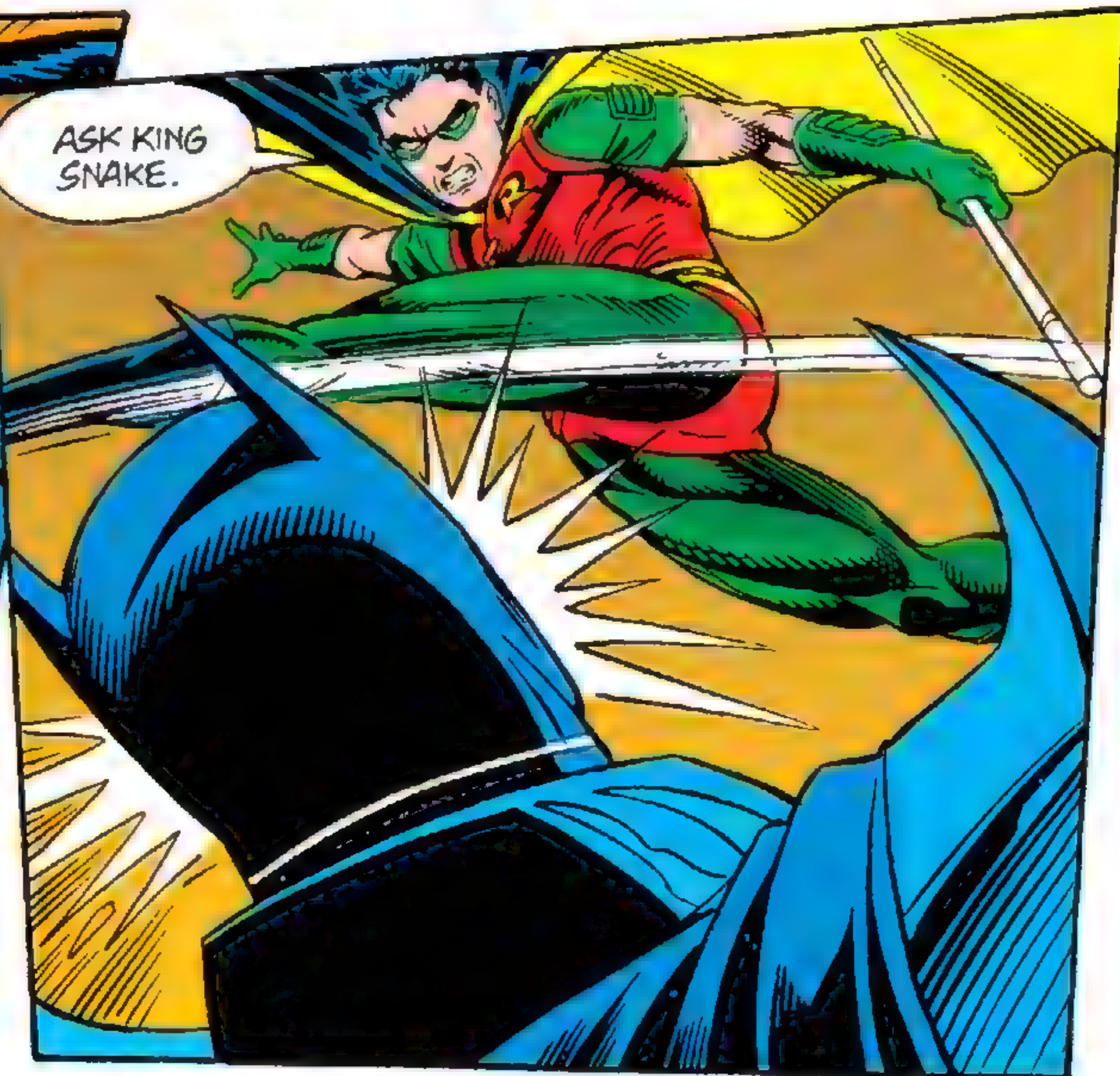
ADD THAT TO THE FACT THAT HE'S PROGRAMMED FROM BIRTH TO BE AN ASSASSIN...

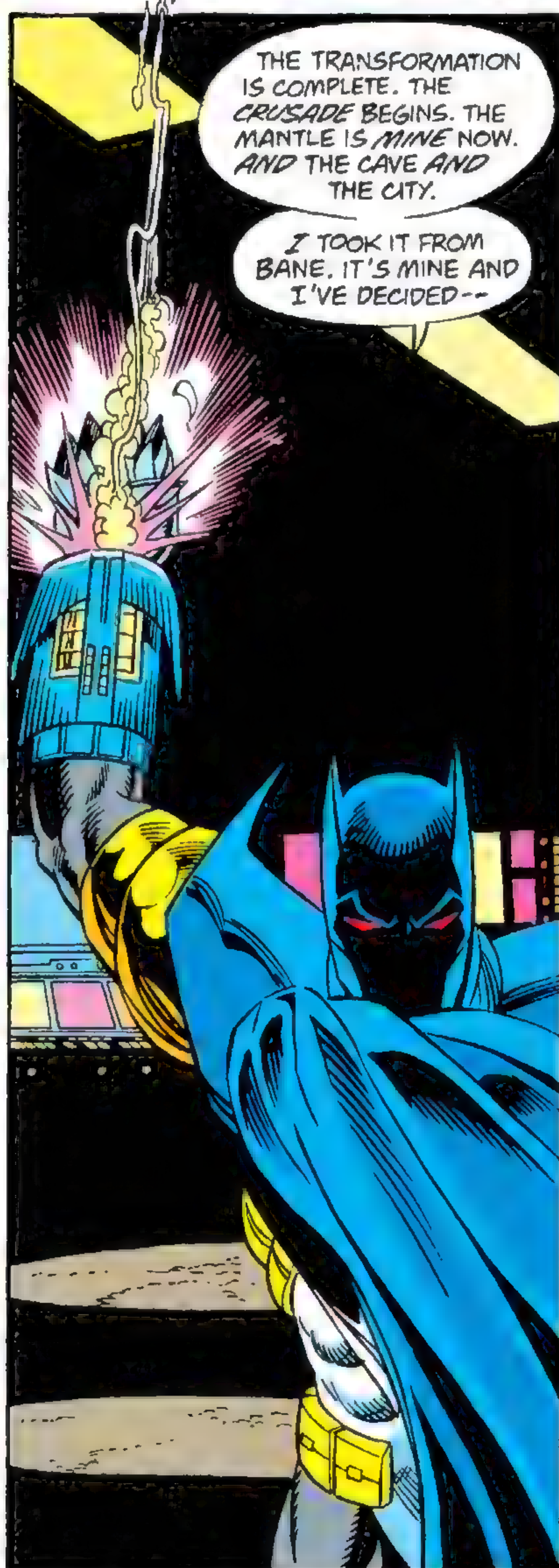
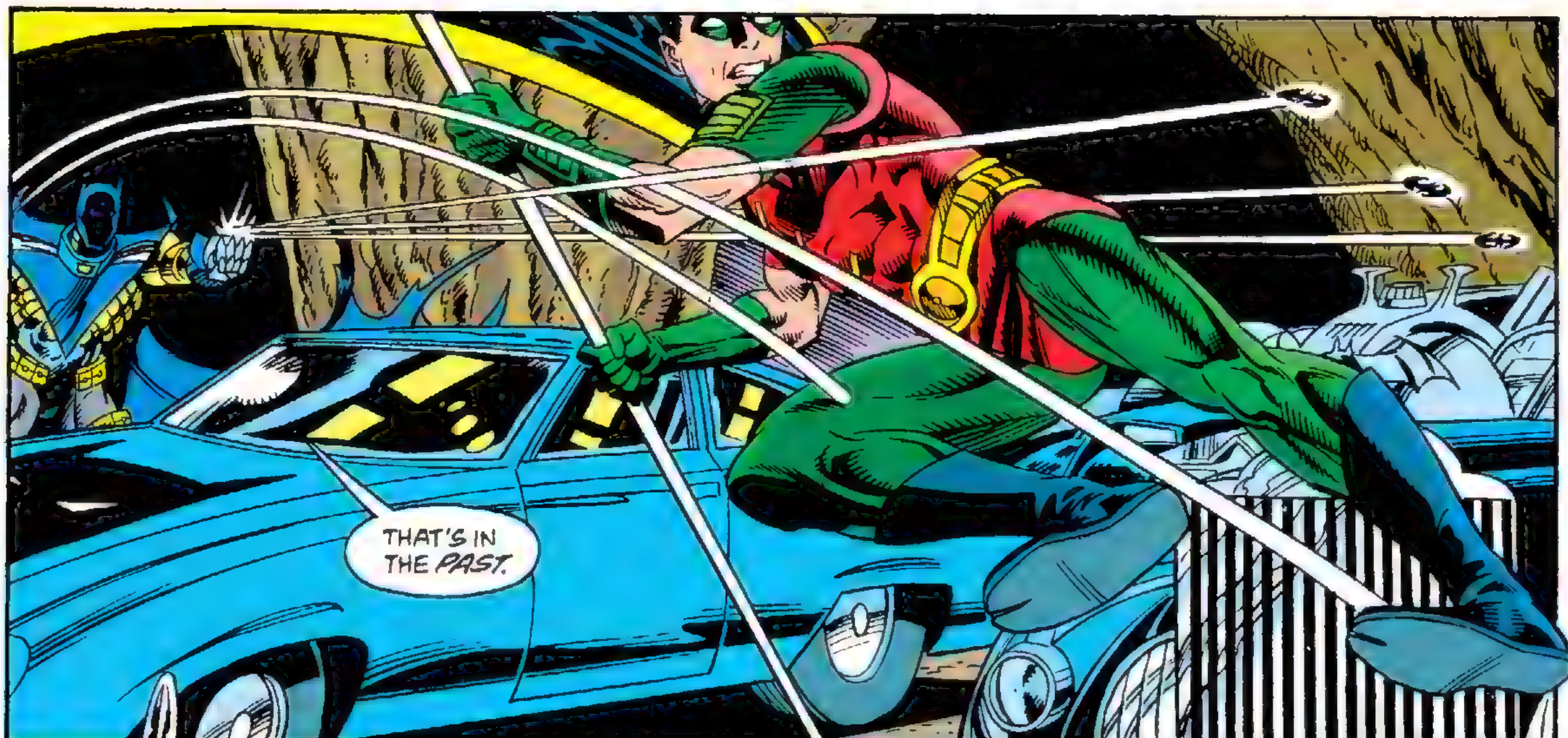


...AND I'M IN WAY DEEP.

I DON'T NEED YOU. YOU'RE A HINDRANCE AS WELL AS A SECURITY RISK.

I'LL NEVER KNOW WHY BRUCE HAMPERS HIMSELF WITH A PARTNER.







I'M NOT SURE
THAT I EVEN
WANT IT!



I'LL TAKE ON GOTHAM
ON MY OWN TERMS. THAT
MEANS NO HELP FROM
ANYONE.

I'LL ACCOMPLISH
WHAT WAYNE COULD
NEVER DO!

BECAUSE
HE WAS
WEAK.
BECAUSE
HE WAS
COMPAS-
SIONATE.

UH!



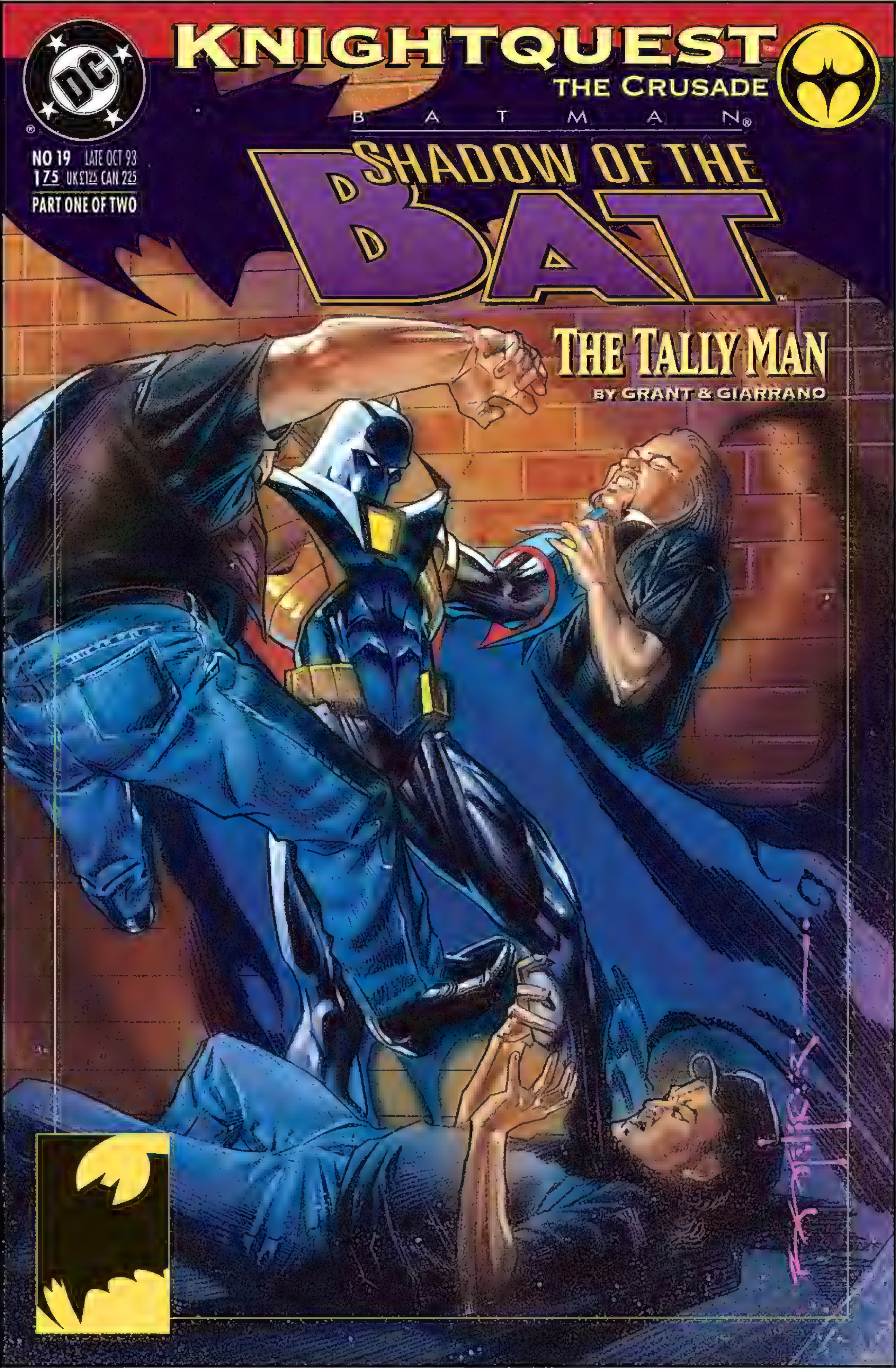
I'LL WASH THE SCUM
OF GOTHAM INTO THE
SEWERS.

I'LL TAKE THEM ALL
DOWN. SO MANY THAT
HELL WON'T HOLD
THEM.

NGG!



Cover art by BRIAN STELFREEZE



NO 19 LATE OCT 93
175 UK £125 CAN 225
PART ONE OF TWO

KNIGHTQUEST

THE CRUSADE

B A T M A N



SHADOW OF THE BAT

THE TALLY MAN

BY GRANT & GIARRANO



I HEAR THE GLASS
BREAK FROM A BLOCK
AWAY.

SINCE I TOOK ON THIS
MISSION ALL MY SENSES
SEEM HEIGHTENED--

てろは！
やめろ！
やめてえー！

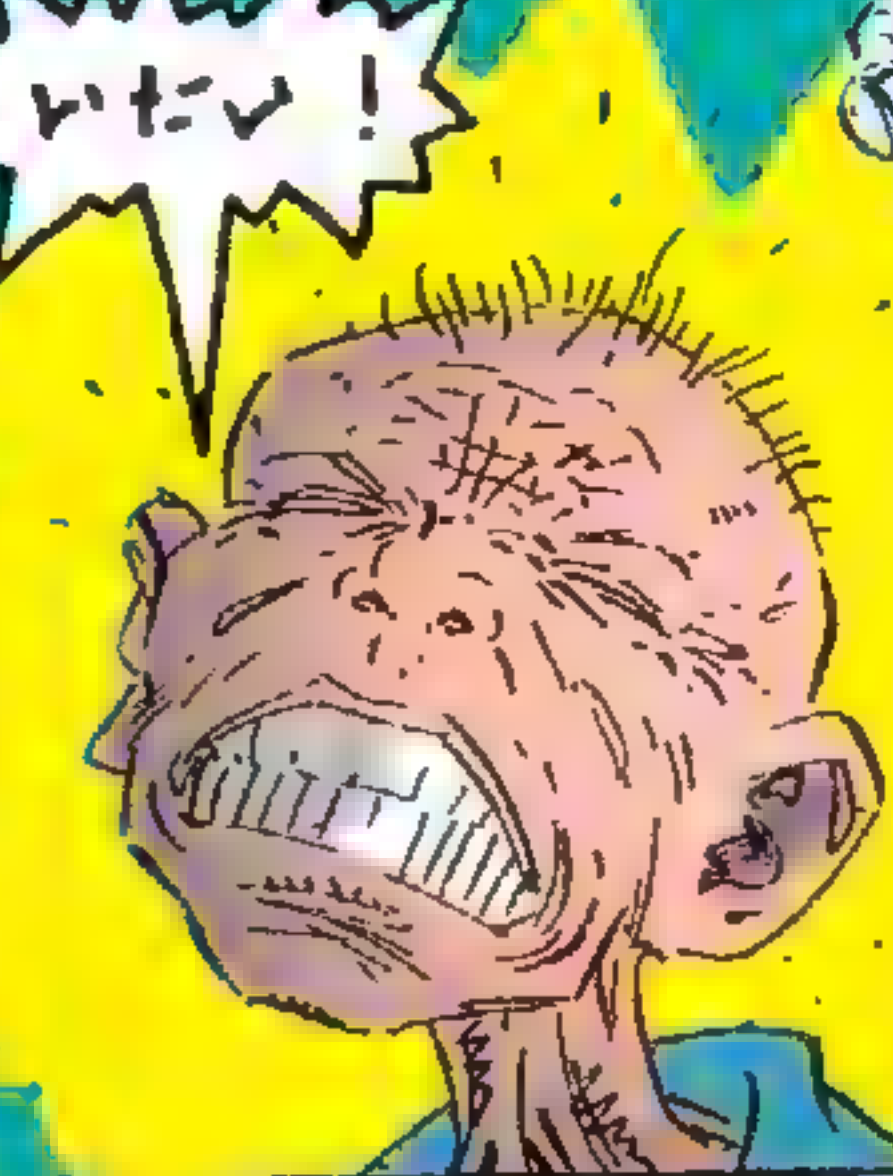
GOTHAM
NEWAGE
SUPPLIES

CREEP
DON'T EVEN SPEAK
ENGLISH!

KRAASH!

--ALL MY REACTIONS
ACCELERATED.

NOT THAT IT
MATTERS!



KCHANK!

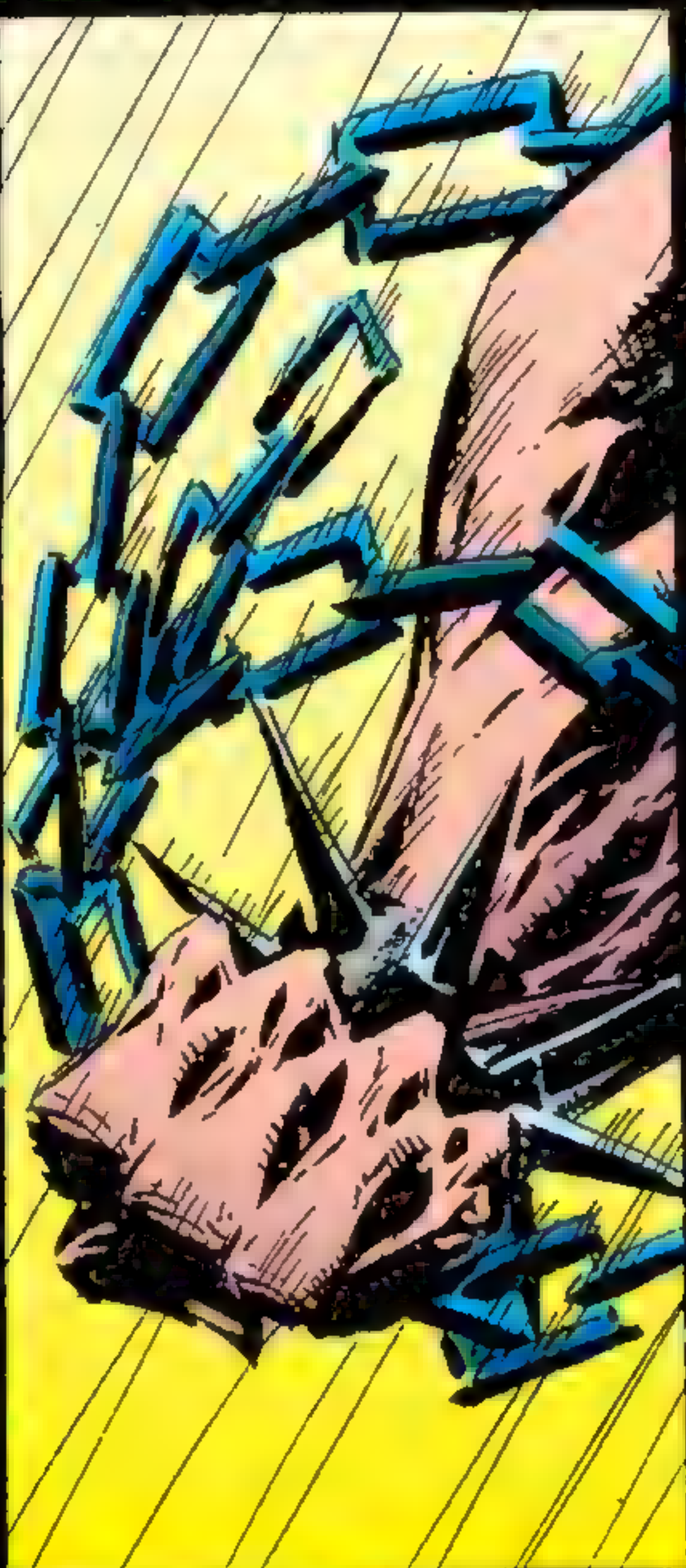
SOMETIMES WHEN
I RIDE THE NIGHT--

--I FEEL
LIKE I OWN
THIS CITY.

AAHH!

THAK
THAK

THIS'LL
TEACH
HIM!



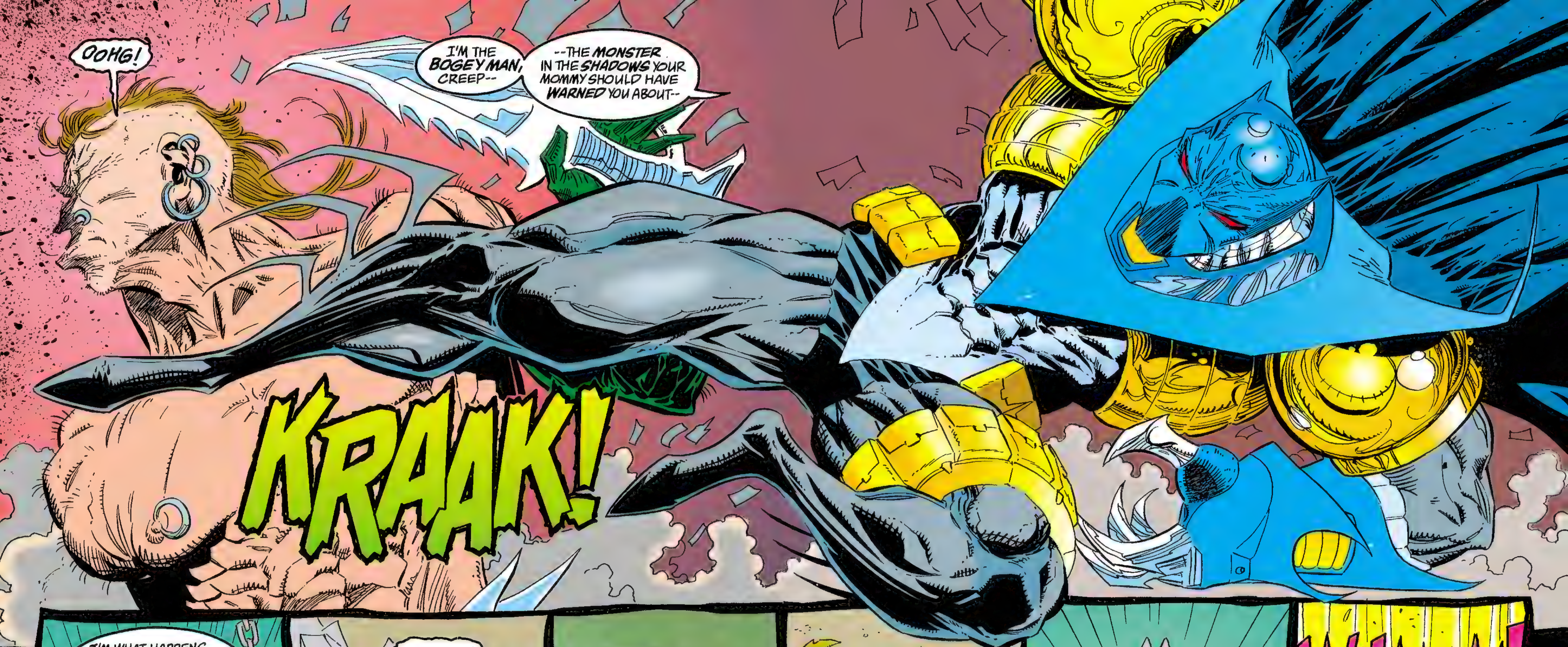


THAT BRUCE WAYNE WAS ONLY FILLING IN UNTIL I CAME ALONG!

SHAKKI!

AAHH!

WHO THE HELL--?



OOHG!

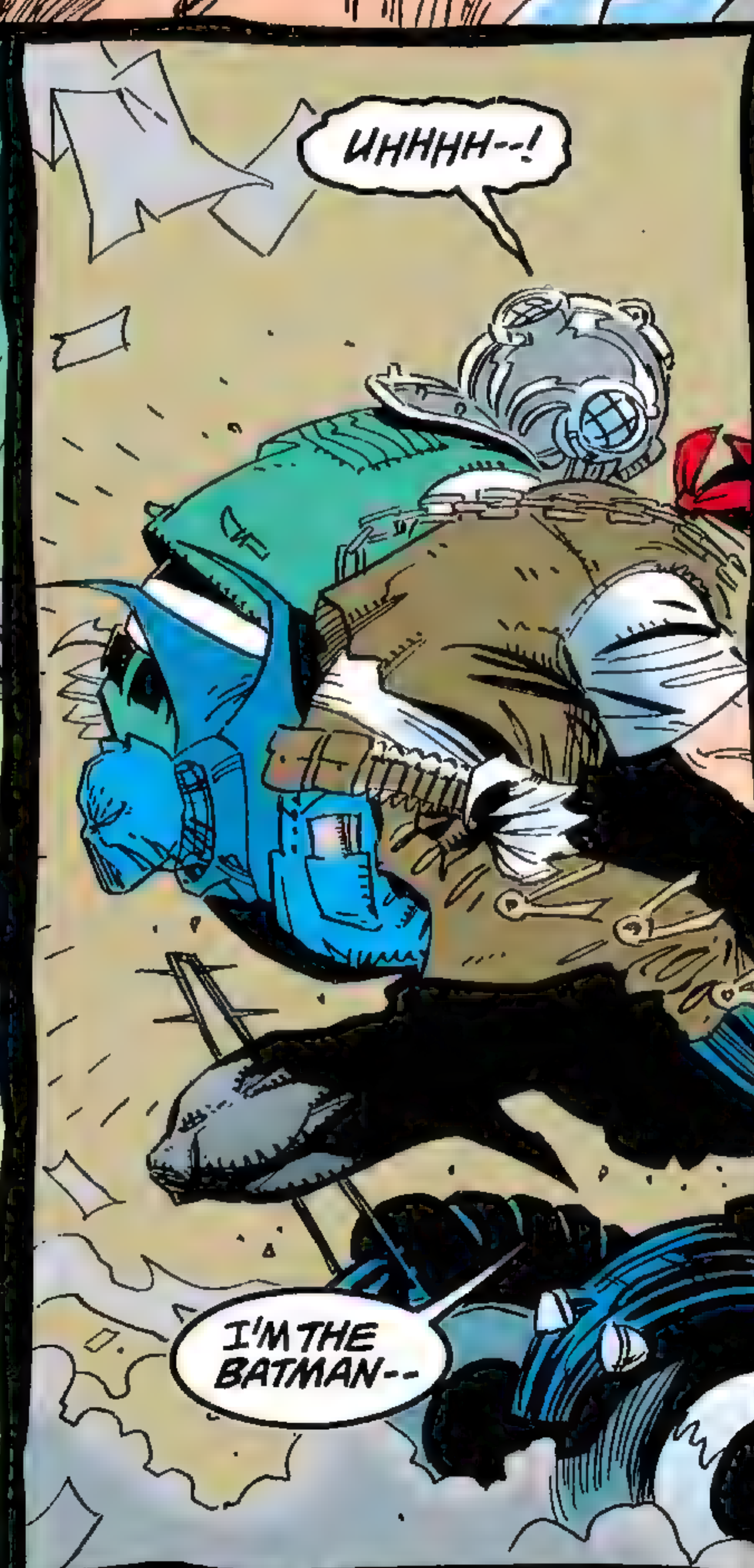
I'M THE
BOGEY MAN,
CREEP--

--THE MONSTER
IN THE SHADOWS YOUR
MOMMY SHOULD HAVE
WARNED YOU ABOUT--

KRAAK!



I'M WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN PUNKS LIKE YOU
TRY TO IMPOSE YOUR
ROTTEN WILL ON DECENT
FOLKS!

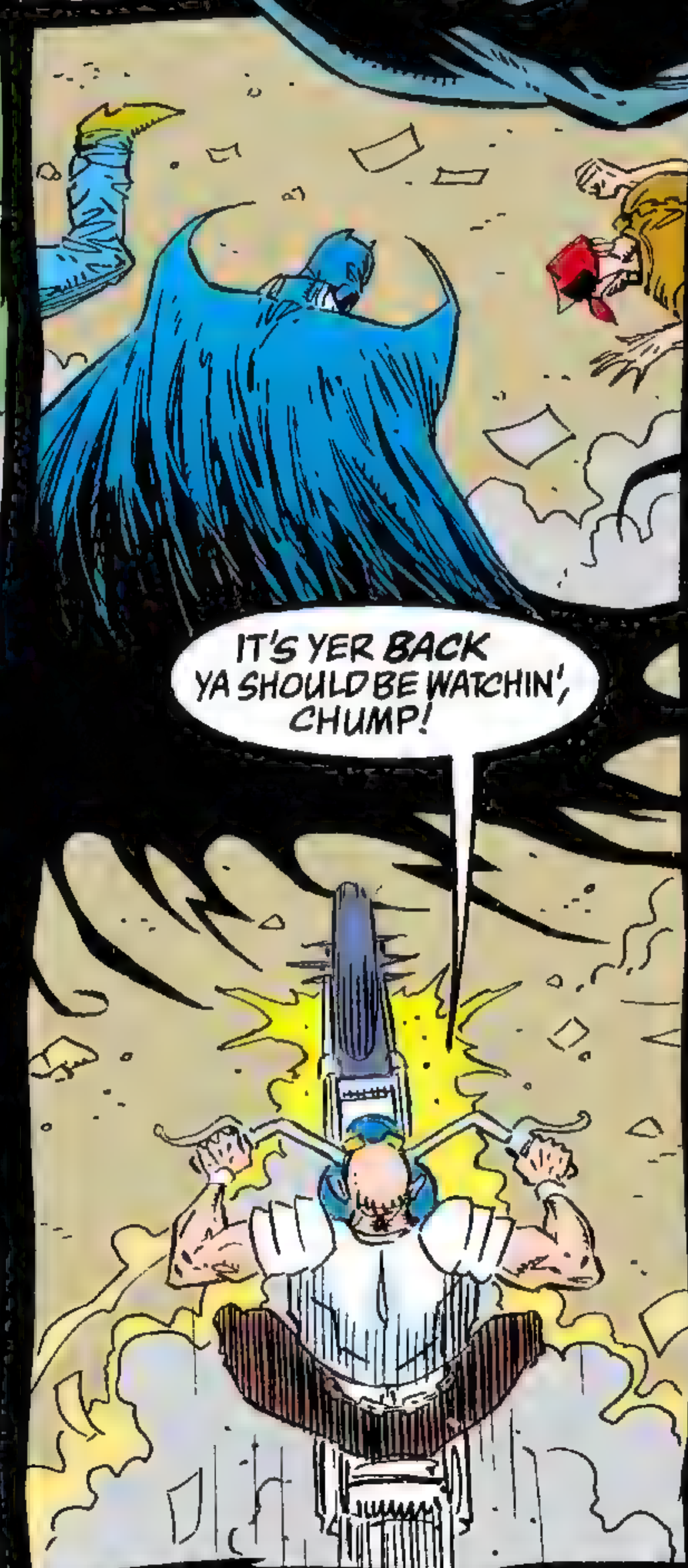


UHHHH--!

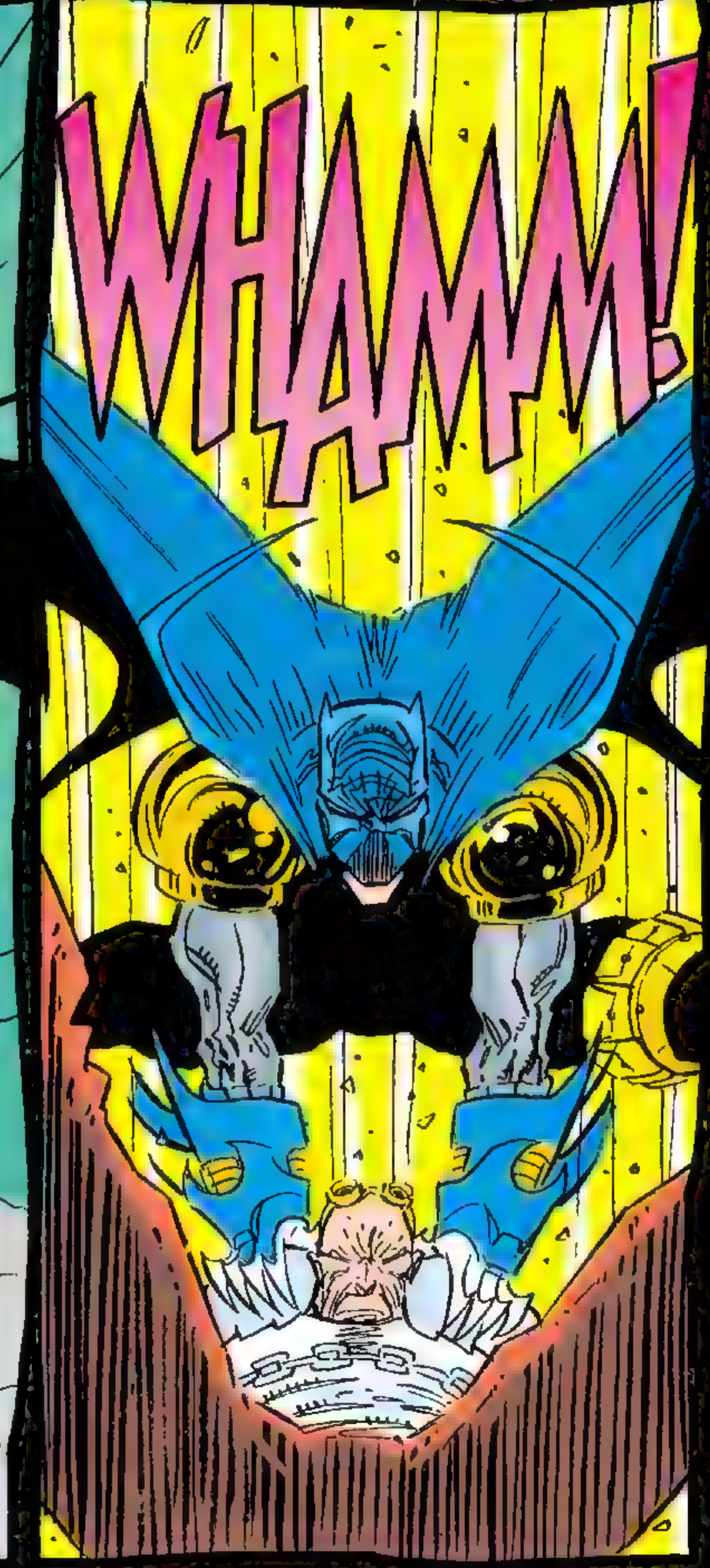
I'M THE
BATMAN--



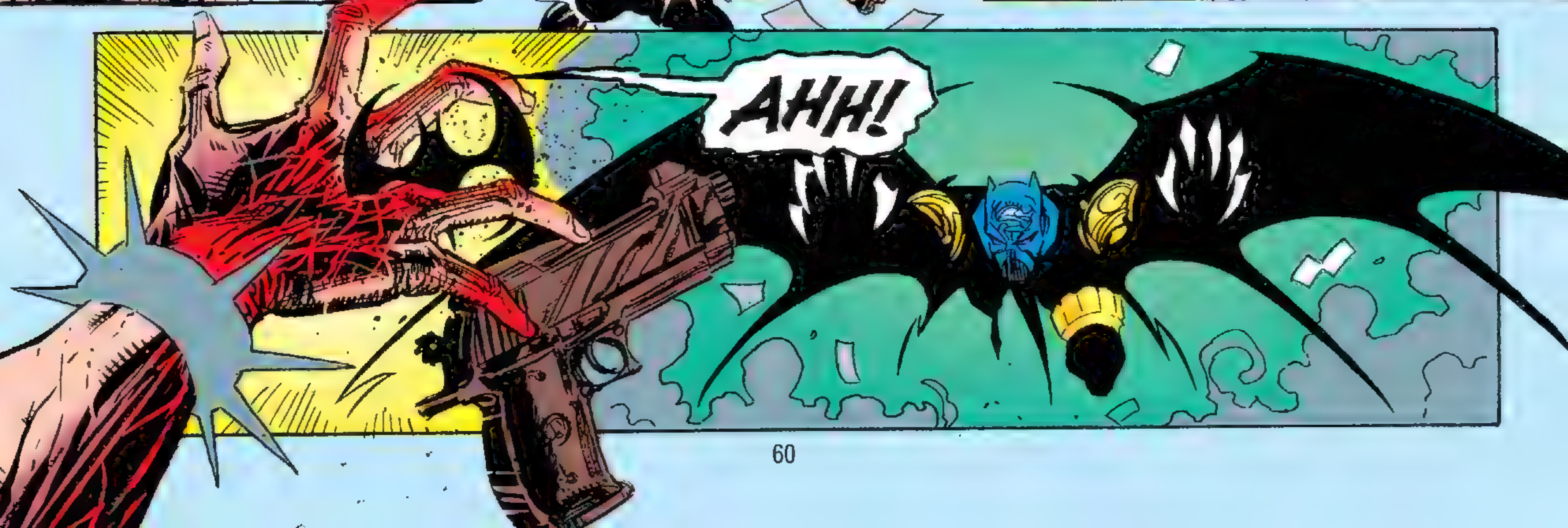
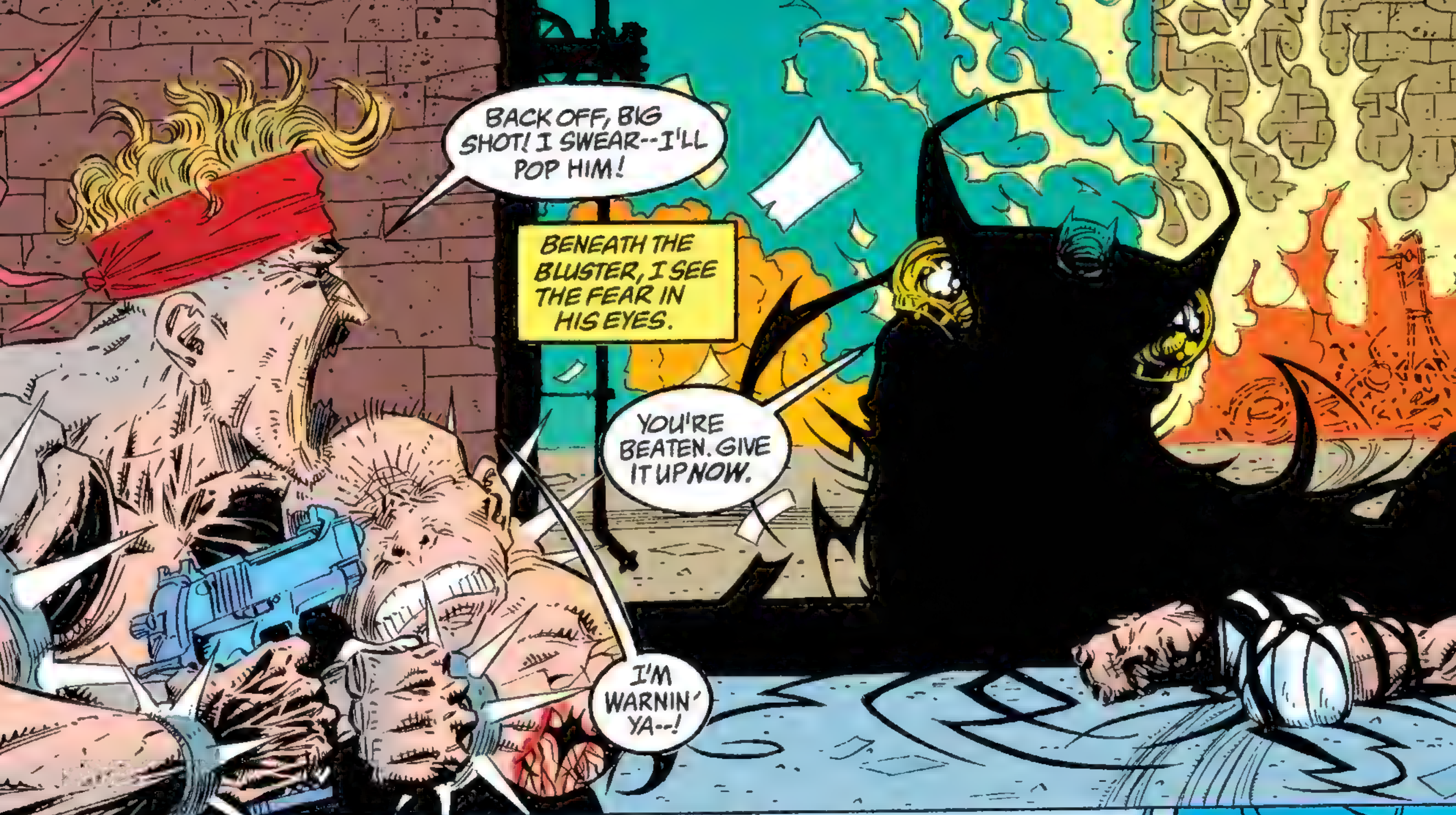
--I WATCH
OVER THE
NIGHT!



IT'S YER BACK
YA SHOULD BE WATCHIN',
CHUMP!



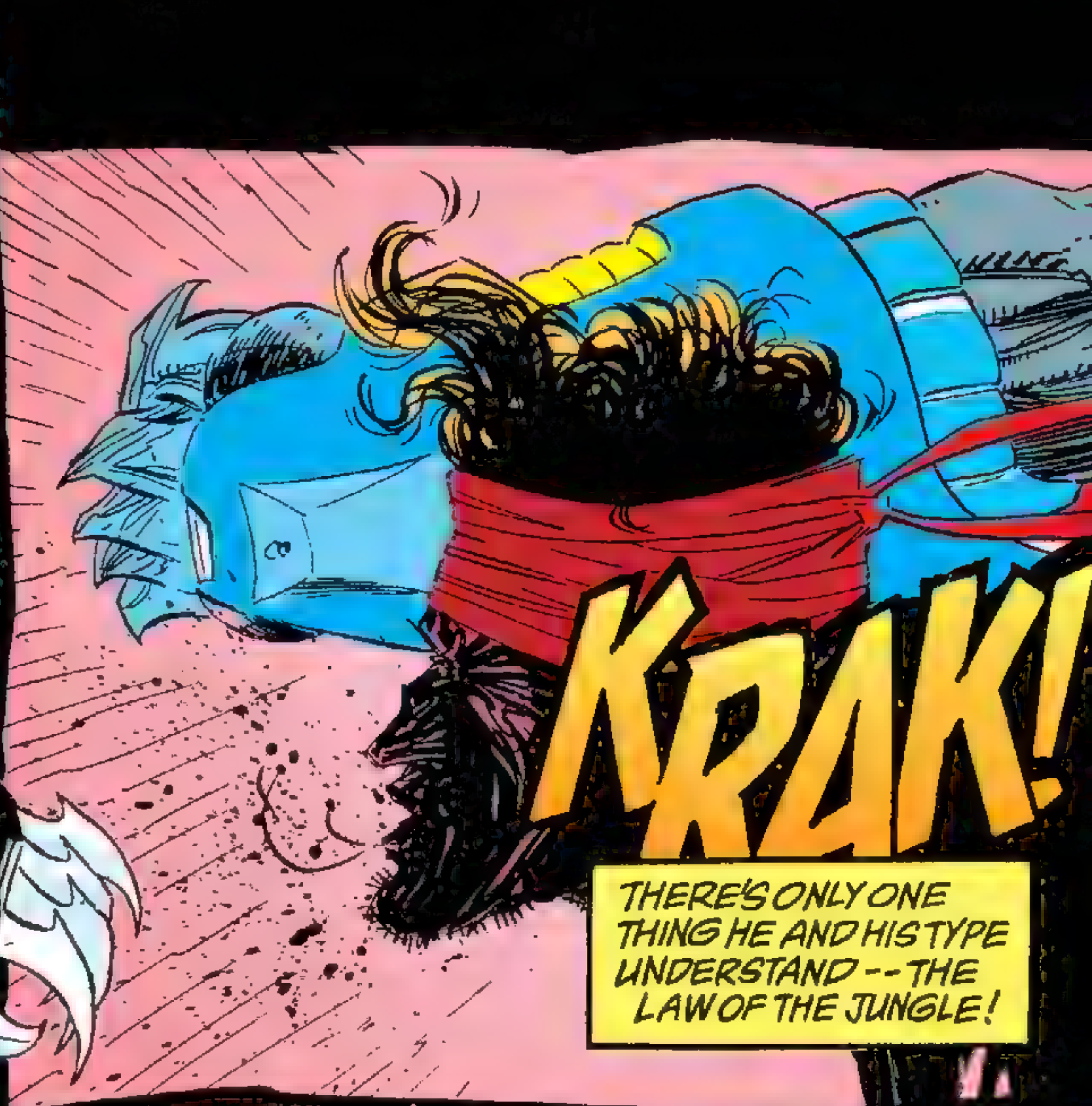
WHAMM!



COLD ANGER FLARES IN ME AT THE ARROGANCE
OF THIS SCUM. WHAT RIGHT DOES HE HAVE TO
THREATEN ANYONE?

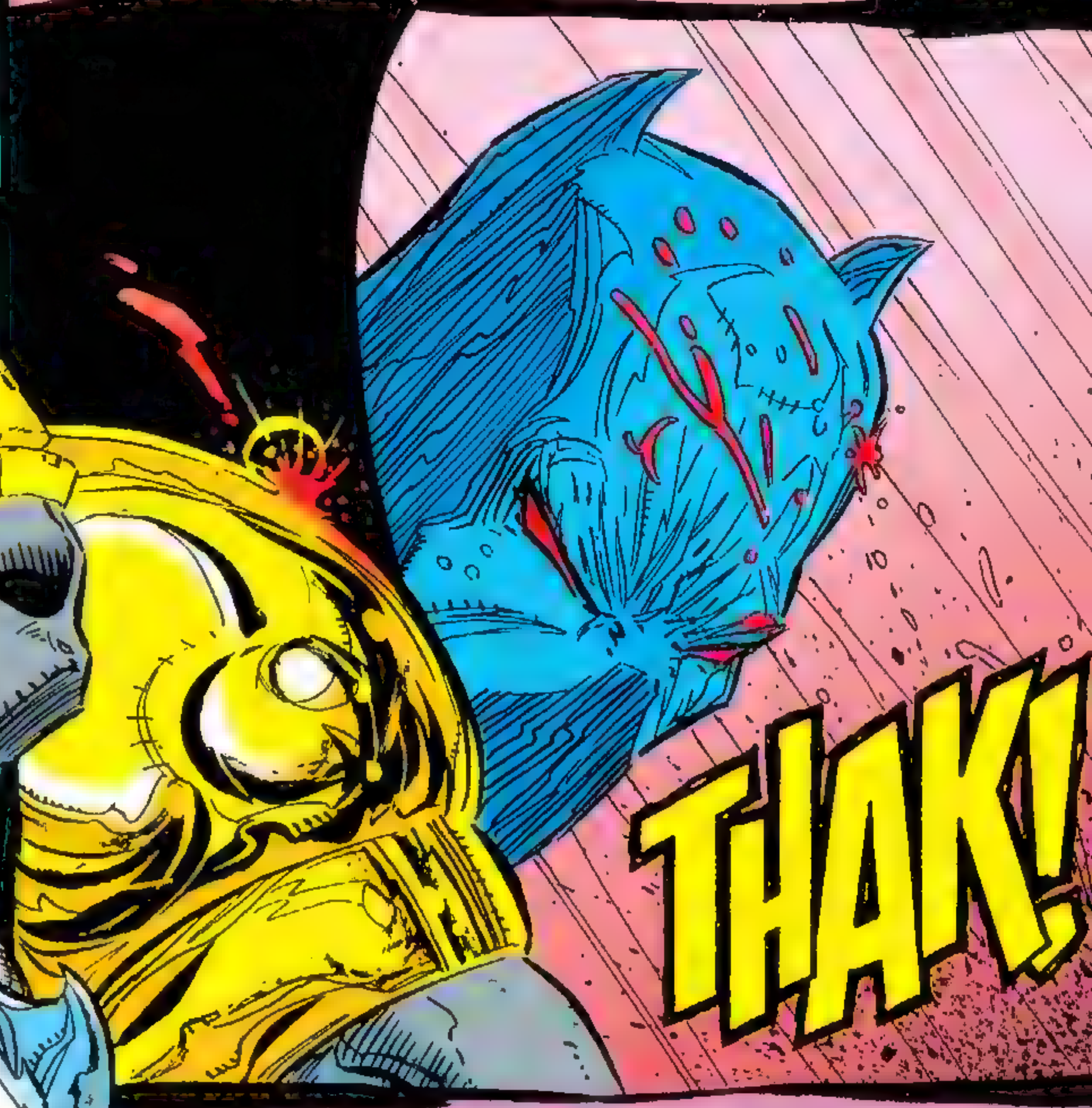


BASH!



KRAK!

THERE'S ONLY ONE
THING HE AND HIS TYPE
UNDERSTAND -- THE
LAW OF THE JUNGLE!

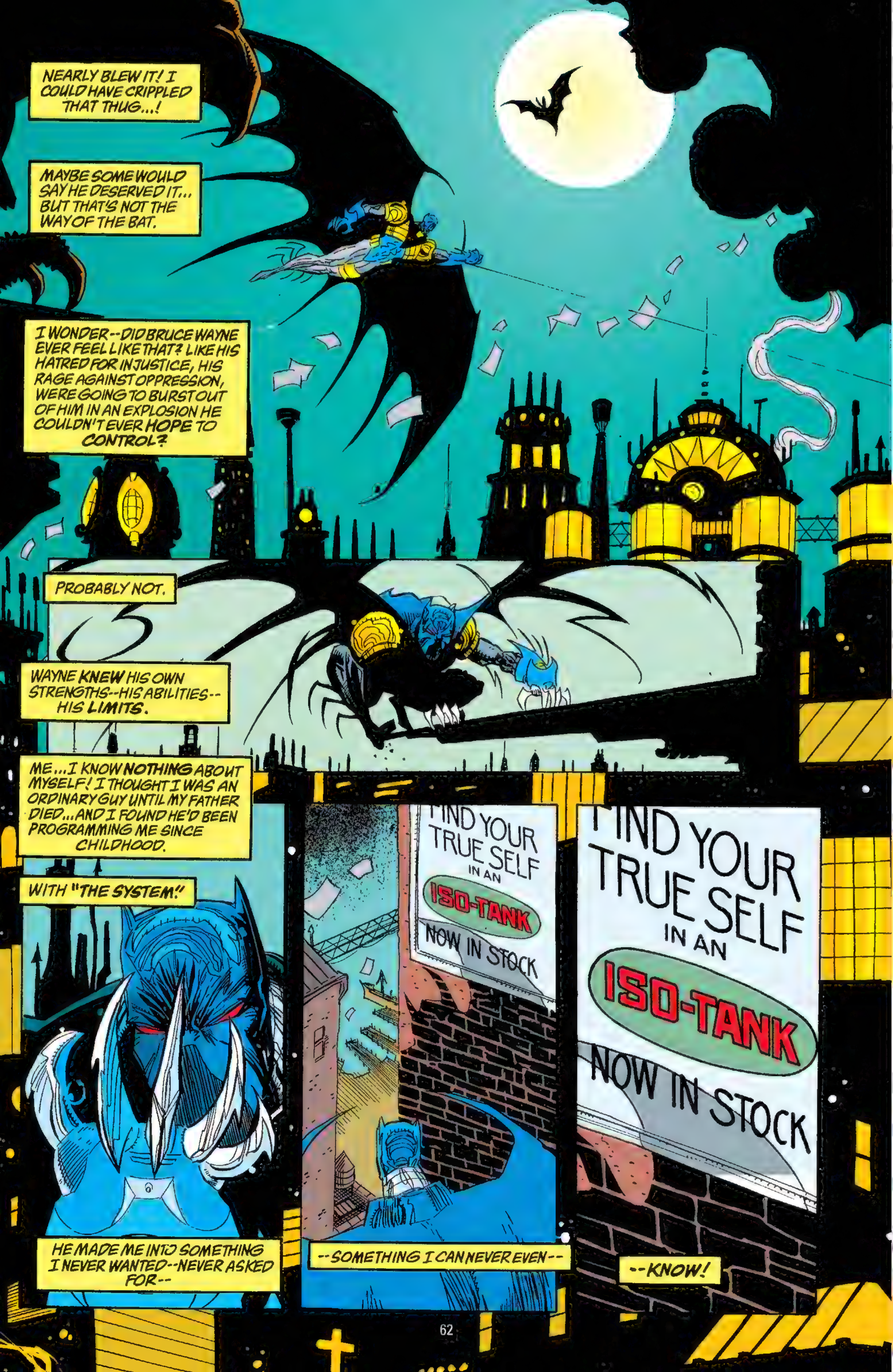


THAK!



E-ENOUGH!
I'M FINISHED!
DON'T HIT ME
AGAIN!

PLEASE
DON'T HIT ME
AGAIN...!



NEARLY BLEW IT! I
COULD HAVE CRIPPLED
THAT THUG...!

MAYBE SOME WOULD
SAY HE DESERVED IT...
BUT THAT'S NOT THE
WAY OF THE BAT.

I WONDER--DID BRUCE WAYNE
EVER FEEL LIKE THAT? LIKE HIS
HATRED FOR INJUSTICE, HIS
RAGE AGAINST OPPRESSION,
WERE GOING TO BURST OUT
OF HIM IN AN EXPLOSION HE
COULDN'T EVER HOPE TO
CONTROL?

PROBABLY NOT.

WAYNE KNEW HIS OWN
STRENGTHS--HIS ABILITIES--
HIS LIMITS.

ME...I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT
MYSELF! I THOUGHT I WAS AN
ORDINARY GUY UNTIL MY FATHER
DIED...AND I FOUND HE'D BEEN
PROGRAMMING ME SINCE
CHILDHOOD.

WITH "THE SYSTEM."

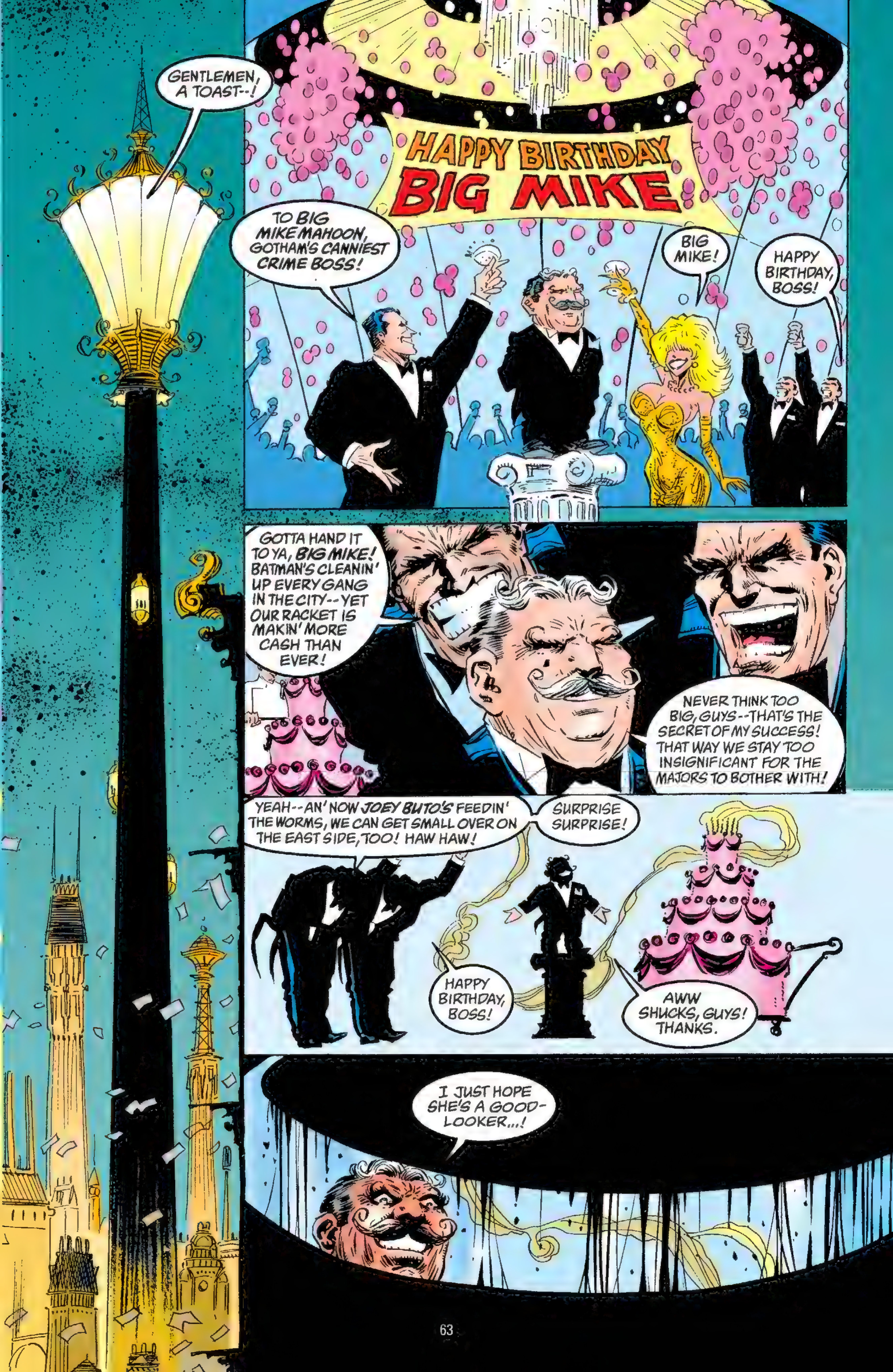


HE MADE ME INTO SOMETHING
I NEVER WANTED--NEVER ASKED
FOR--



--SOMETHING I CAN NEVER EVEN--

--KNOW!



GENTLEMEN,
A TOAST--!

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
BIG MIKE**

TO BIG
MIKE MAHOON,
GOTHAM'S CANNIEST
CRIME BOSS!

BIG
MIKE!

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY,
BOSS!

GOTTA HAND IT
TO YA, BIG MIKE!
BATMAN'S CLEANIN'
UP EVERY GANG
IN THE CITY--YET
OUR RACKET IS
MAKIN' MORE
CASH THAN
EVER!

NEVER THINK TOO
BIG, GUYS--THAT'S THE
SECRET OF MY SUCCESS!
THAT WAY WE STAY TOO
INSIGNIFICANT FOR THE
MAJORS TO BOTHER WITH!

YEAH--AN' NOW JOEY BUTO'S FEEDIN'
THE WORMS, WE CAN GET SMALL OVER ON
THE EAST SIDE, TOO! HAW HAW!

SURPRISE
SURPRISE!

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY,
BOSS!

AWW
SHUCKS, GUYS!
THANKS.

I JUST HOPE
SHE'S A GOOD-
LOOKER...!

THAT AIN'T
THE BIMBO I
ORDERED--!

AN EYE
FOR AN EYE,
BIG MIKE!

SOONER OR LATER
EVERYBODY HAS TO PAY
THE TALLY MAN--

--AND IF YOUR
BOYS SO MUCH AS
MOVE, IT'S GOING TO
BE A FEW SECONDS
SOONER!

KCHOW KCHOW KCHOW KCHOW

E-EVERYBODY
HOLD IT!



T-TALLY MAN? I NEVER HEARD'A YA!

I COLLECT DEBTS, MIKE.

AND YOU OWE BIG.

YOU MEAN THAT BUSINESS WITH JOEY BUTO? LISSSEN, I CAN EXPLAIN....!



NO NEED.

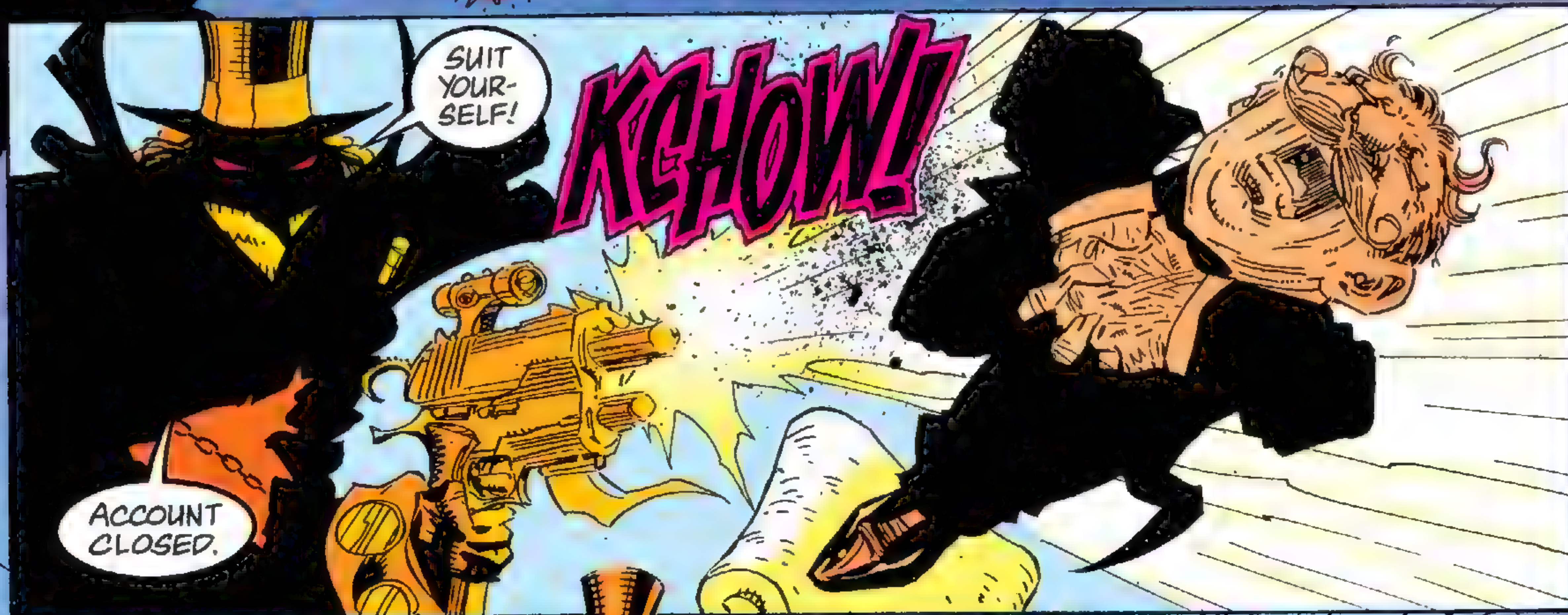
Y-YA GOTTA LISSSEN! IT WAS JOEY'S OWN FAULT! THE BATMAN TAILED HIM! THERE WAS NO DOUBLE-CROSS-- I SWEAR!

WHATEVER HIS BROTHER'S PAYIN' YA, I'LL DOUBLE IT! TRIPLE!



YOUR BROTHER'S ON MY LIST, TOO. WHERE IS HE?

J-JOHNNY? I DUNNO...AN' EVEN IF I DID, I WOULDN'T RAT ON MY OWN BROTHER!



SUIT YOURSELF!

KCHOW!

ACCOUNT CLOSED.

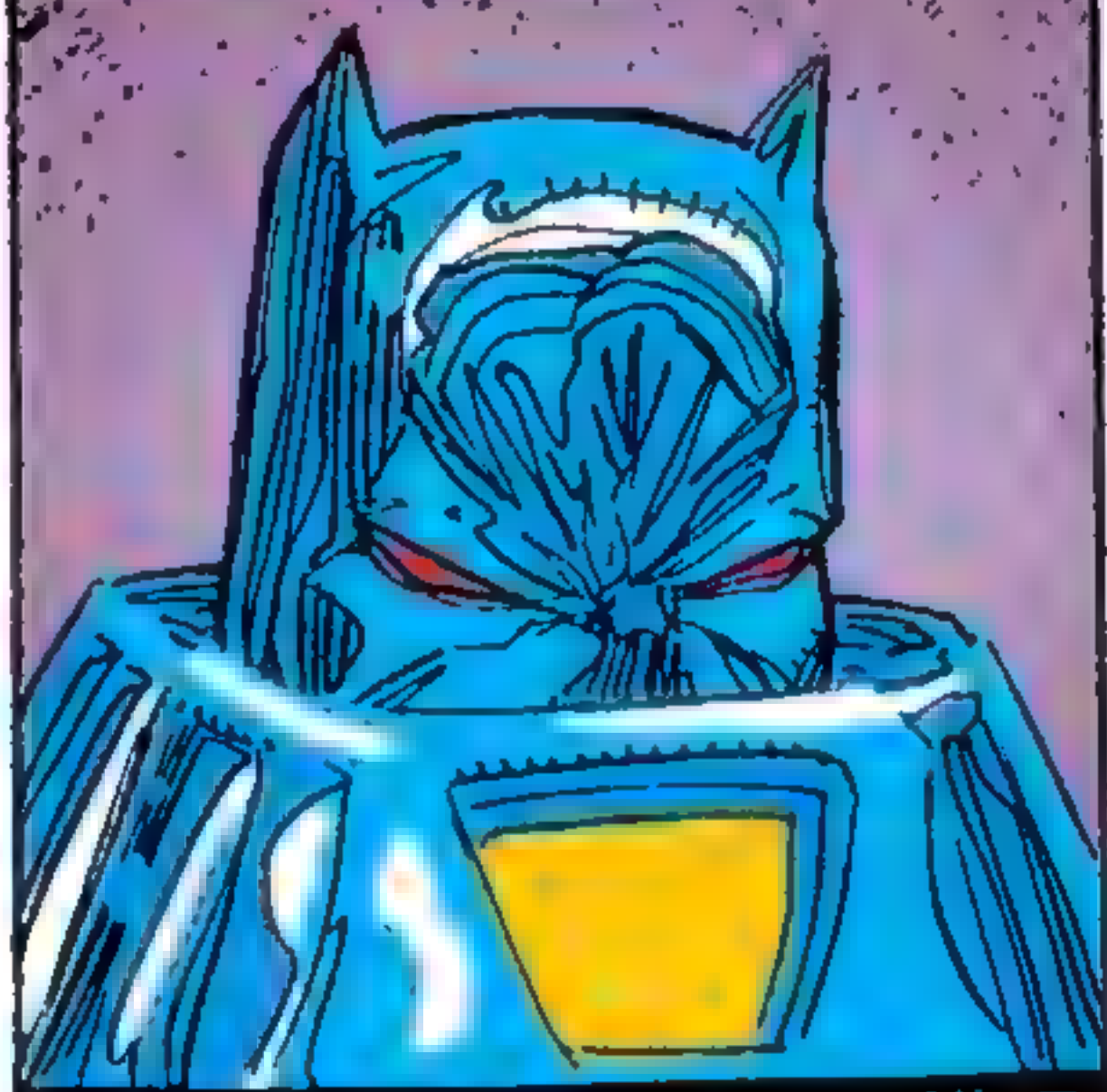


AND AS FOR JOHNNY AND THE BATMAN--

--THEY'RE NEXT!

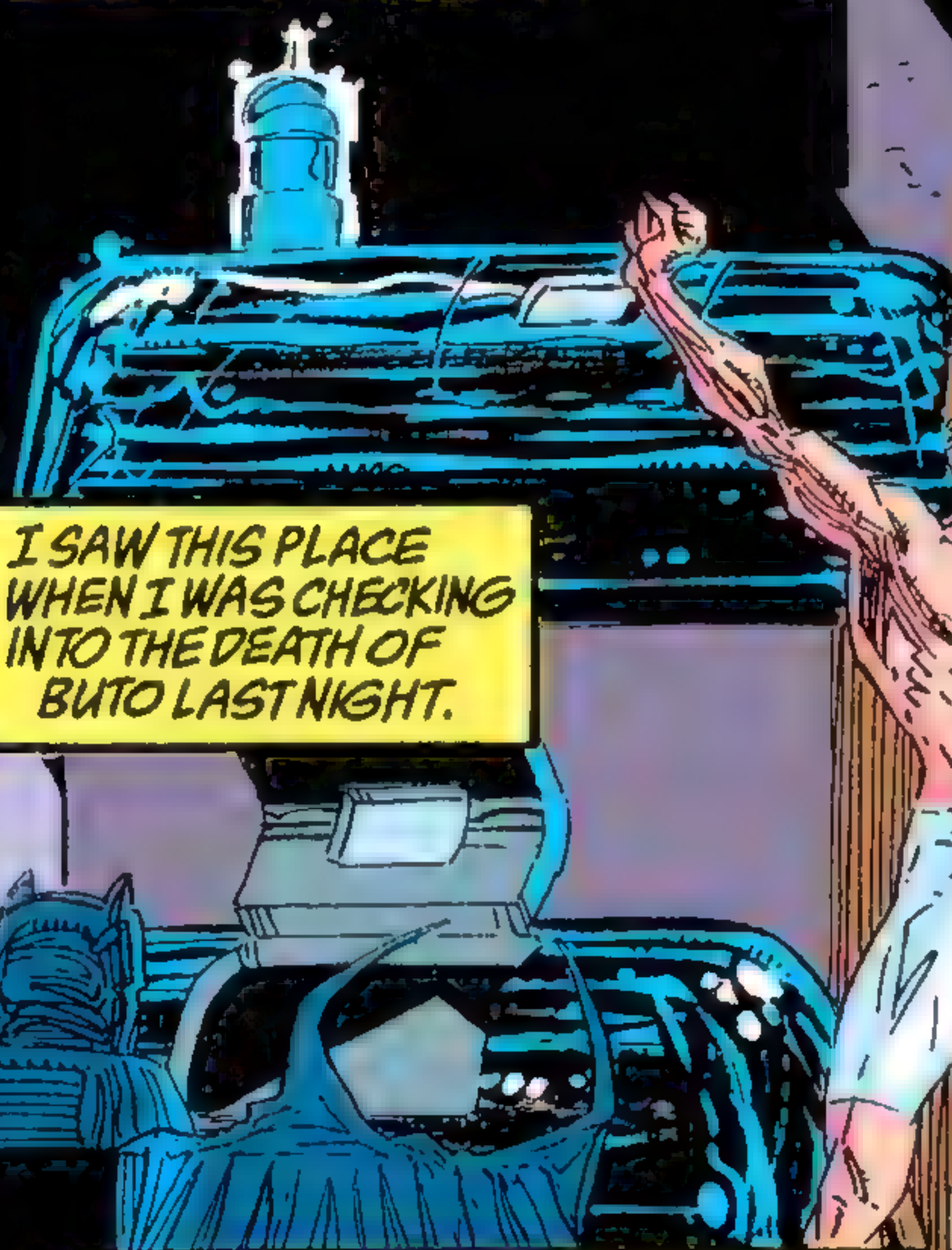
KCHOW KCHOW KCHOW!

THE CITY'S
RELATIVELY
QUIET.



GOTHAM WON'T MISS
ME FOR AN HOUR.

I SAW THIS PLACE
WHEN I WAS CHECKING
INTO THE DEATH OF
BUTO LAST NIGHT.



ISOLATION
TANK

BRINE

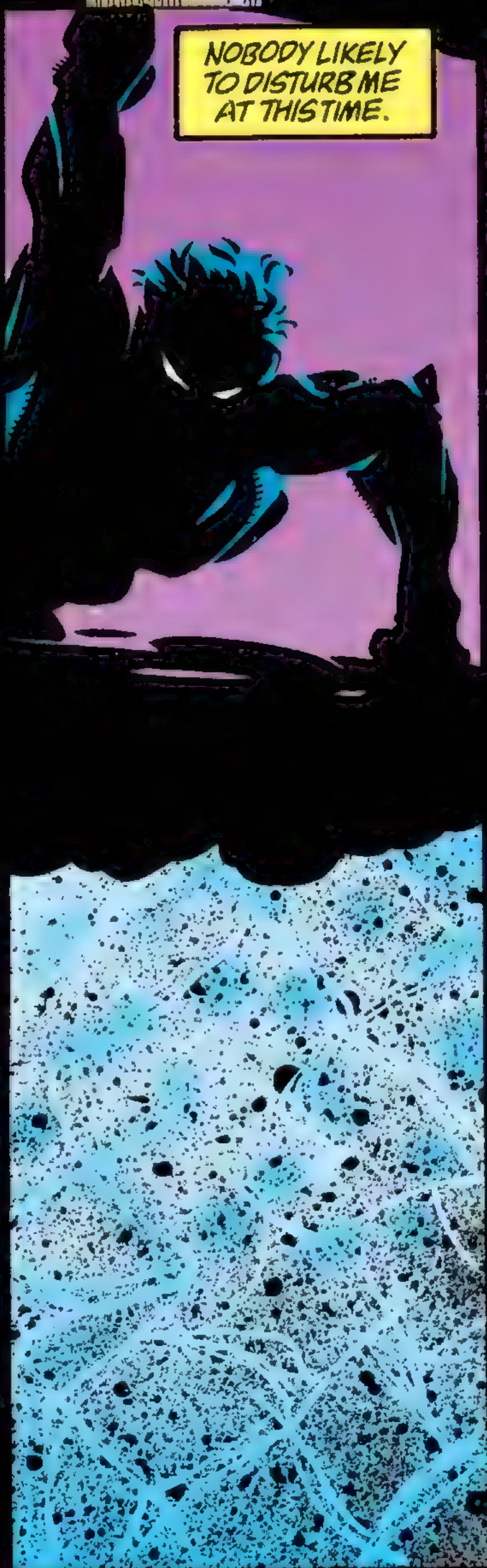
NEW
AGE INC

INCENSE

CRYSTALS

UP

NOBODY LIKELY
TO DISTURB ME
AT THIS TIME.



AND MAYBE--JUST MAYBE--IT'LL
GIVE ME SOME OF THE ANSWERS I
NEED.

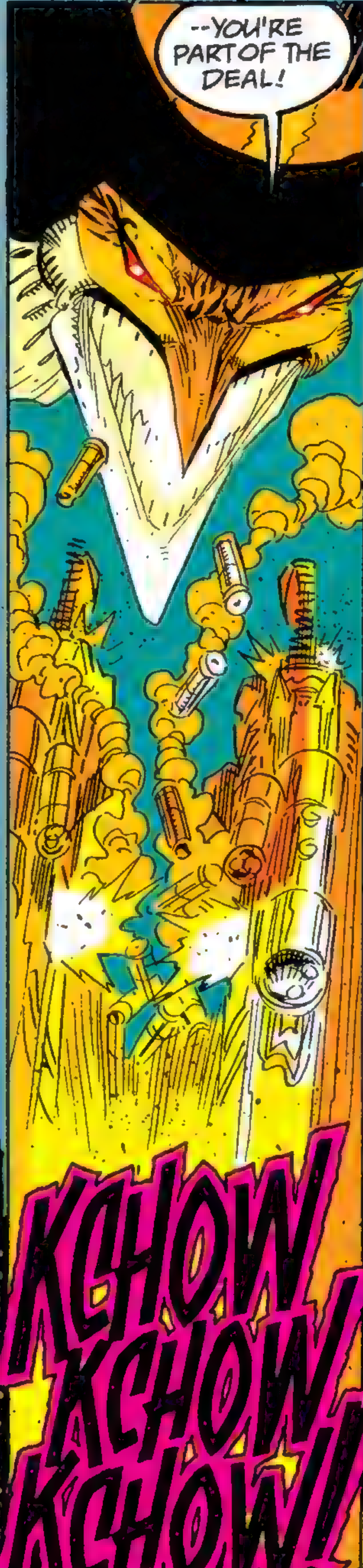
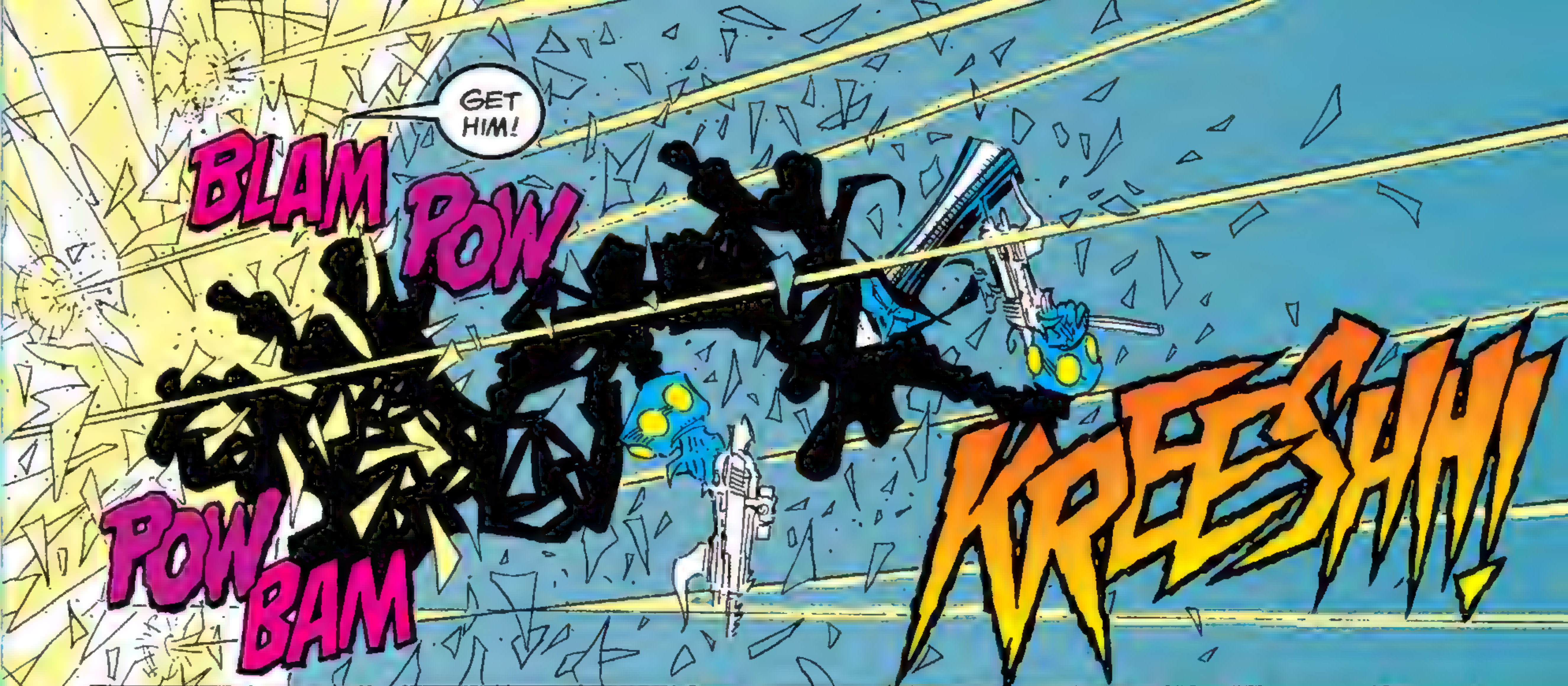


A FRISSE OF FEAR
AS I PULL DOWN THE LID...



BUT WHY SHOULD JEAN
PAUL VALLEY FEAR THE
UNKNOWN?

I LIVE WITH IT
ALL THE TIME.





DARKNESS GIVES WAY TO LIGHT
GEOMETRIC PATTERNS. WITH NO
VISUAL STIMULI, THE EYE
PRODUCES ITS OWN.

I FLOAT WEIGHTLESS IN THE HIGH-
SALINE BRINE. DISTANT PINS AND
NEEDLES IN MY FLESH, BUT
SOMEHOW THEY SEEM LIKE
SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM.

NO SOUND BUT THE THUMPS
AND GURLINGS OF MY OWN
BODILY PROCESSES BREAKS
THE SILENCE OF THE TOMB.

MY CONSCIOUS MIND--MY EGO--
KNOWS WHAT'S HAPPENING. IT'LL
DO ANYTHING RATHER THAN
RELAX, LET ME GET BENEATH IT.
IMAGES SHARPEN, COALESCE--

I LET MYSELF DRIFT,
LET THE QUICKENING
MAELSTROM TAKE ME
WHERE IT WILL--

--SPINNING LIKE A
DERVISH DEEP INTO
MY OWN MIND--

--DIVING FOR WHATEVER--
GOOD OR EVIL-- LIES IN MY
SUBCONSCIOUS.



THE RECENT PAST FLASHES AND FLICKERS,
AS IF IT WAS ON OLD CELLULOID. SUDDENLY
I'M AZRAEL, AVENGING ANGEL--

--I SEE THE EVIL
OF BANE, DESTROYING
A LEGEND--

--MY NEW DESTINY,
SO FAST ON THE HEELS
OF MY FIRST--

--BANE--DEFEATED
AT LAST, PURGED LIKE
THE SCUM HE IS--

--AND A NEW
LEGEND LIVES!

NO! THESE THINGS ARE
DISTRACTIONS--SIDESHOWS!
I WANT THE REAL ME!

WHAT AM I IN THERE?
WHO AM I? MY OWN MAN...

...OR A MACHINE?



--A BOY, SLEEPING WHILE HE
FEEDS MY MIND WITH WHAT
IT TAKES TO BE A KILLER--

--A CHILD--

NO! I WAS
JUST A BABY!

MEMORIES I NEVER KNEW I HAD
BURST FREE. I'M A TEENAGER,
SLEEPING WHILE HE FEEDS MY
MIND WITH WHAT I'LL NEED TO
BE AN ANGEL--

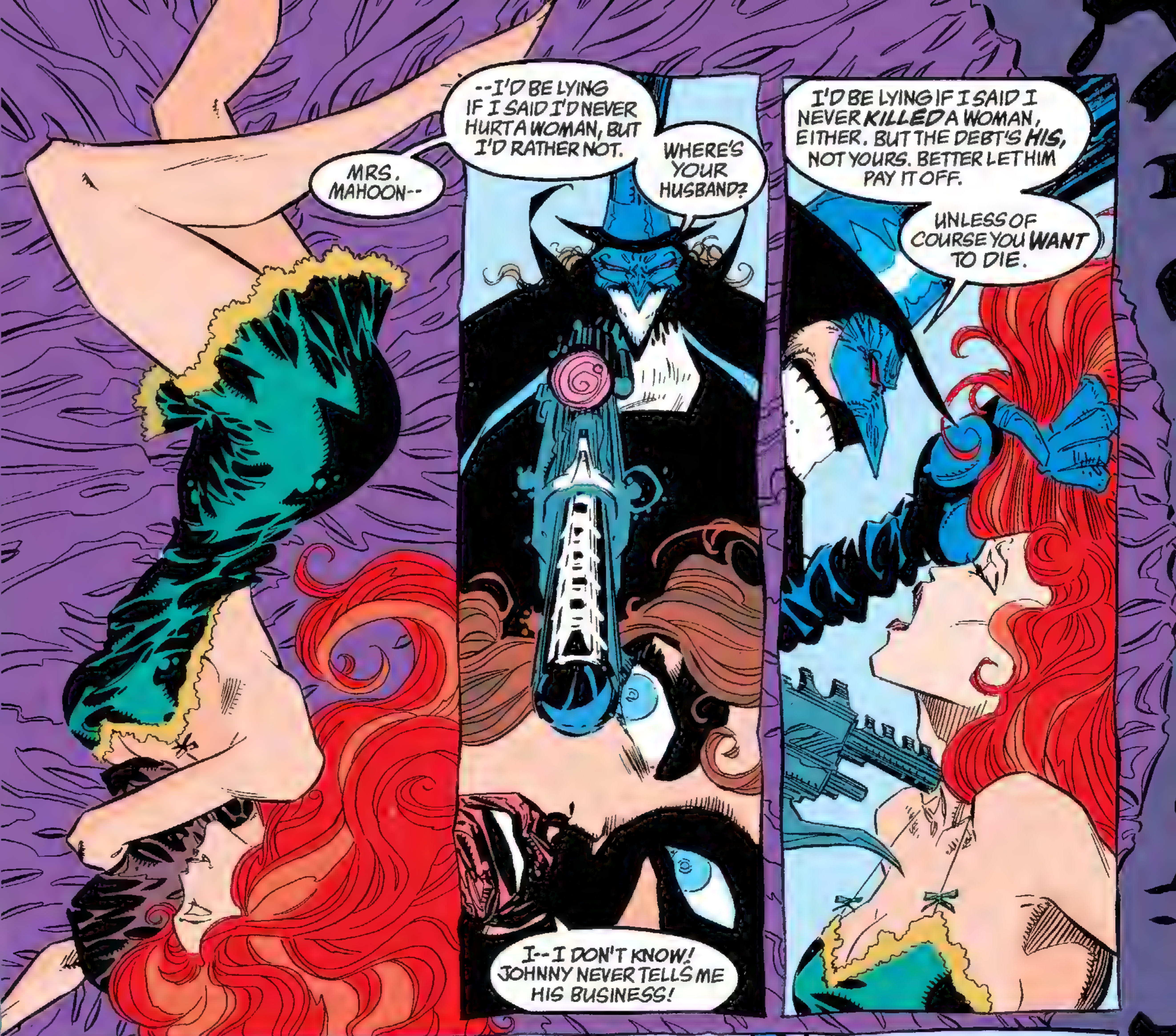
INDOCTRINATED WITH ALL THE SKILLS
NEEDED TO MURDER... ALL THE RULES
NECESSARY FOR OBEDIENCE.

"AZRAEL DOES
NOT PROTECT."

"AZRAEL IS FOR
REVENGE."

I AM A KILLING
MACHINE--

--AND NOW I AM
A LEGEND.



MRS. MAHOON--

--I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I'D NEVER HURTA WOMAN, BUT I'D RATHER NOT.

WHERE'S YOUR HUSBAND?

I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I NEVER KILLED A WOMAN, EITHER. BUT THE DEBT'S HIS, NOT YOURS. BETTER LET HIM PAY IT OFF.

UNLESS OF COURSE YOU WANT TO DIE.

I-- I DON'T KNOW! JOHNNY NEVER TELLS ME HIS BUSINESS!

HE--HE HAS SOME B-BUSINESS! MIDNIGHT-- AT THE WAREHOUSE! HE--HE'S GOING ON TO HIS BROTHER MIKE'S PARTY AFTER!

WAREHOUSE?

"G-GOTHAM NEW AGE SUPPLIES...!"



MY FATHER BELONGED TO THE
ORDER OF ST. DUMAS...THE
SAINT WHO NEVER WAS.

NINE HUNDRED YEARS AGO,
THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
WERE BORN OF THE CHRISTIAN
CRUSADES TO RETAKE
JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY.

THE ORDER OF ST. DUMAS
WAS BORN SHORTLY AFTER.
ITS MISSION WAS THE
SAME.

LEGEND HAS IT THAT BOTH GROUPS
DISCOVERED THE MYSTIC SECRETS
OF THE LONG-LOST TEMPLE OF
SOLOMON--SECRETS THAT BROUGHT
THEM POWER AND WEALTH BEYOND
ALL MEASURE.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR DISBANDED.
THE ORDER OF ST. DUMAS GREW--
IN SECRET.

IT BECAME IMMENSELY POWERFUL
--PARTLY BECAUSE NO ONE KNEW
IT EXISTED.

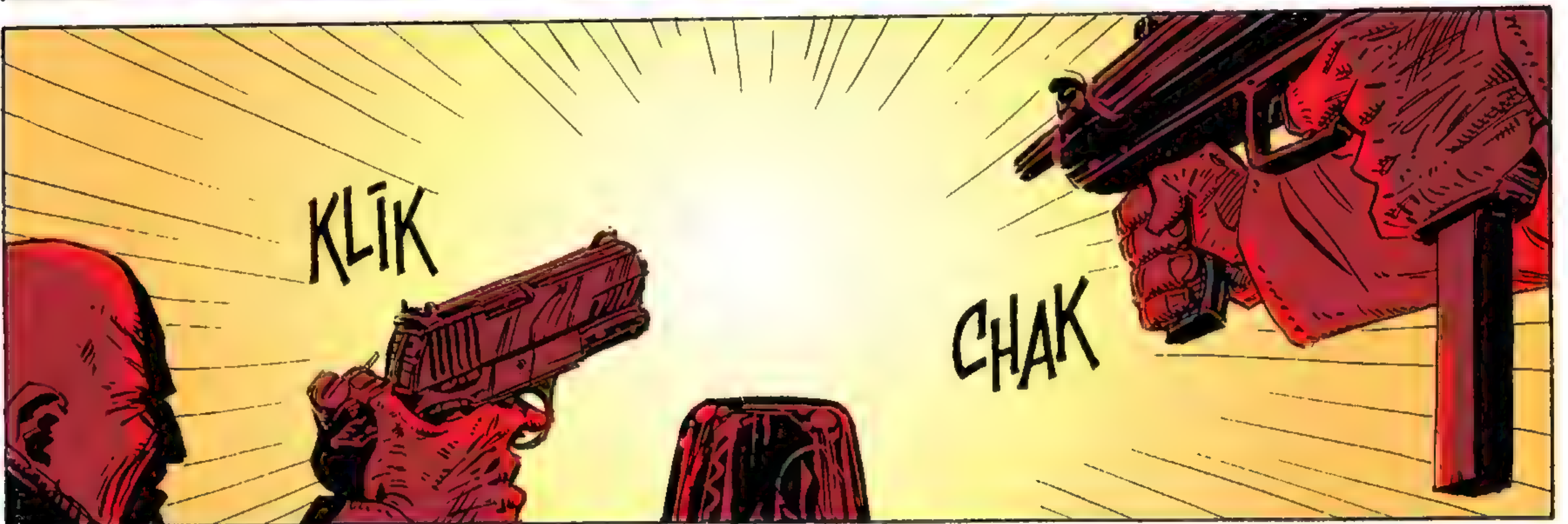
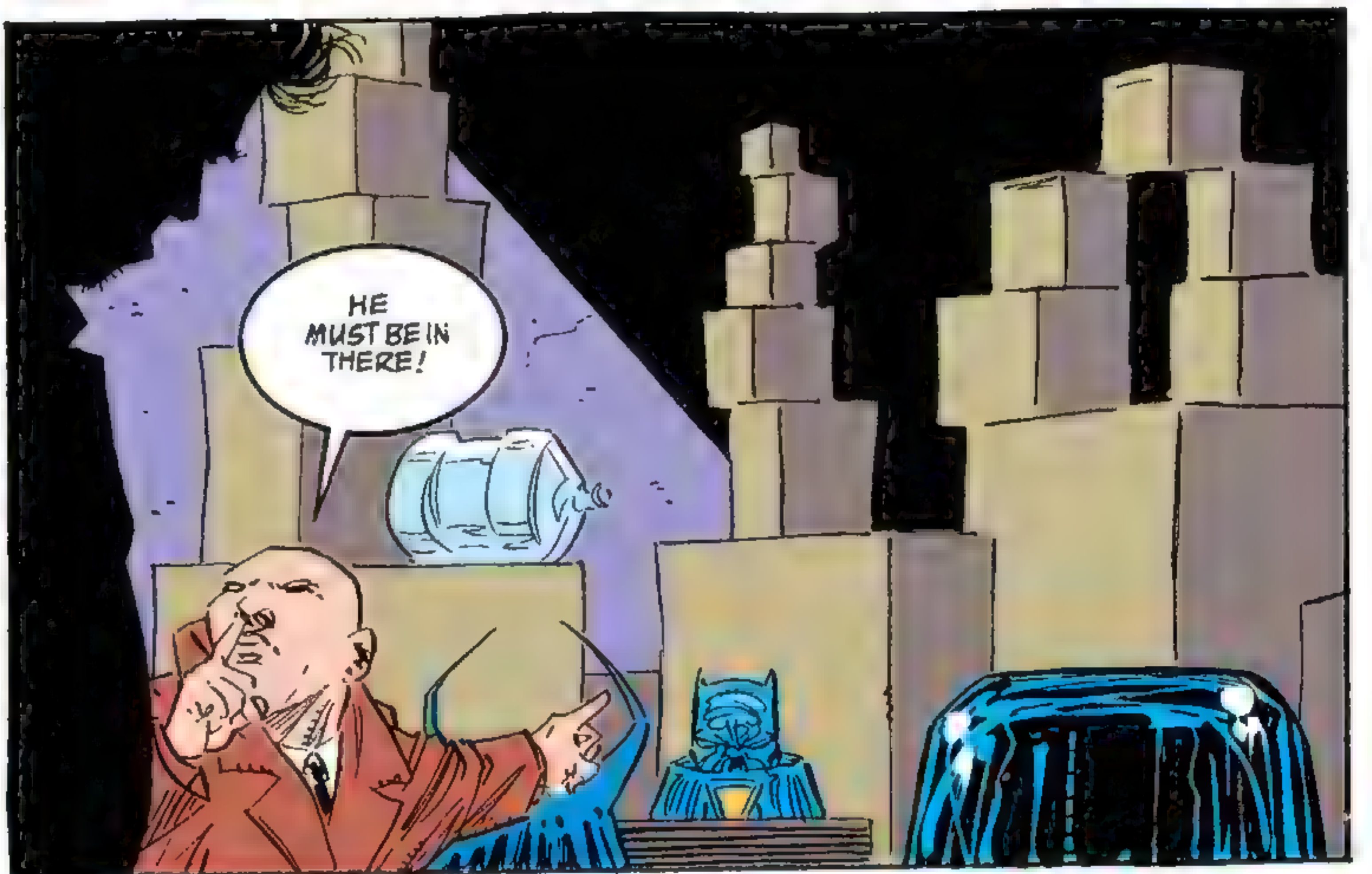
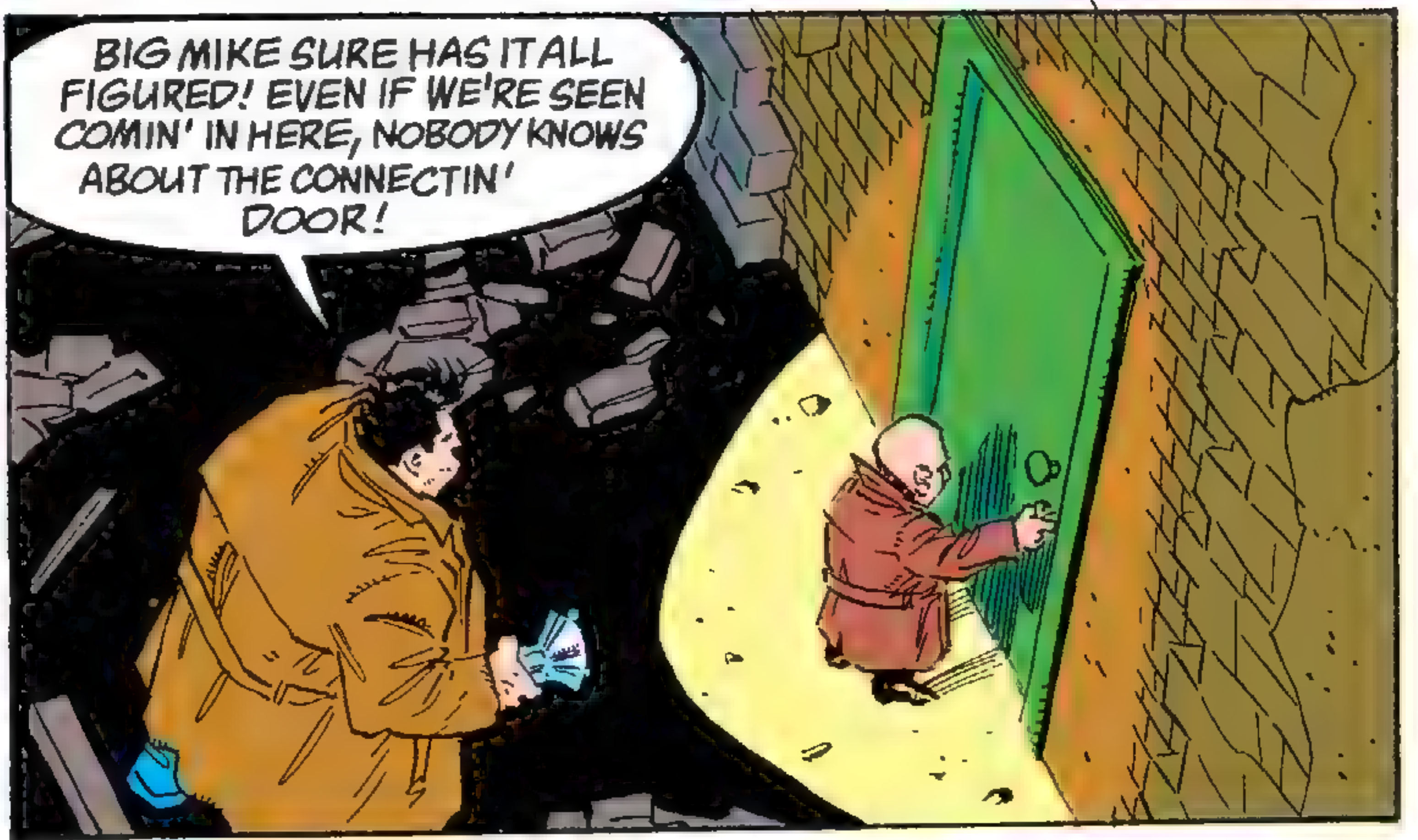
I NEVER WONDERED
BEFORE...BUT WHY?

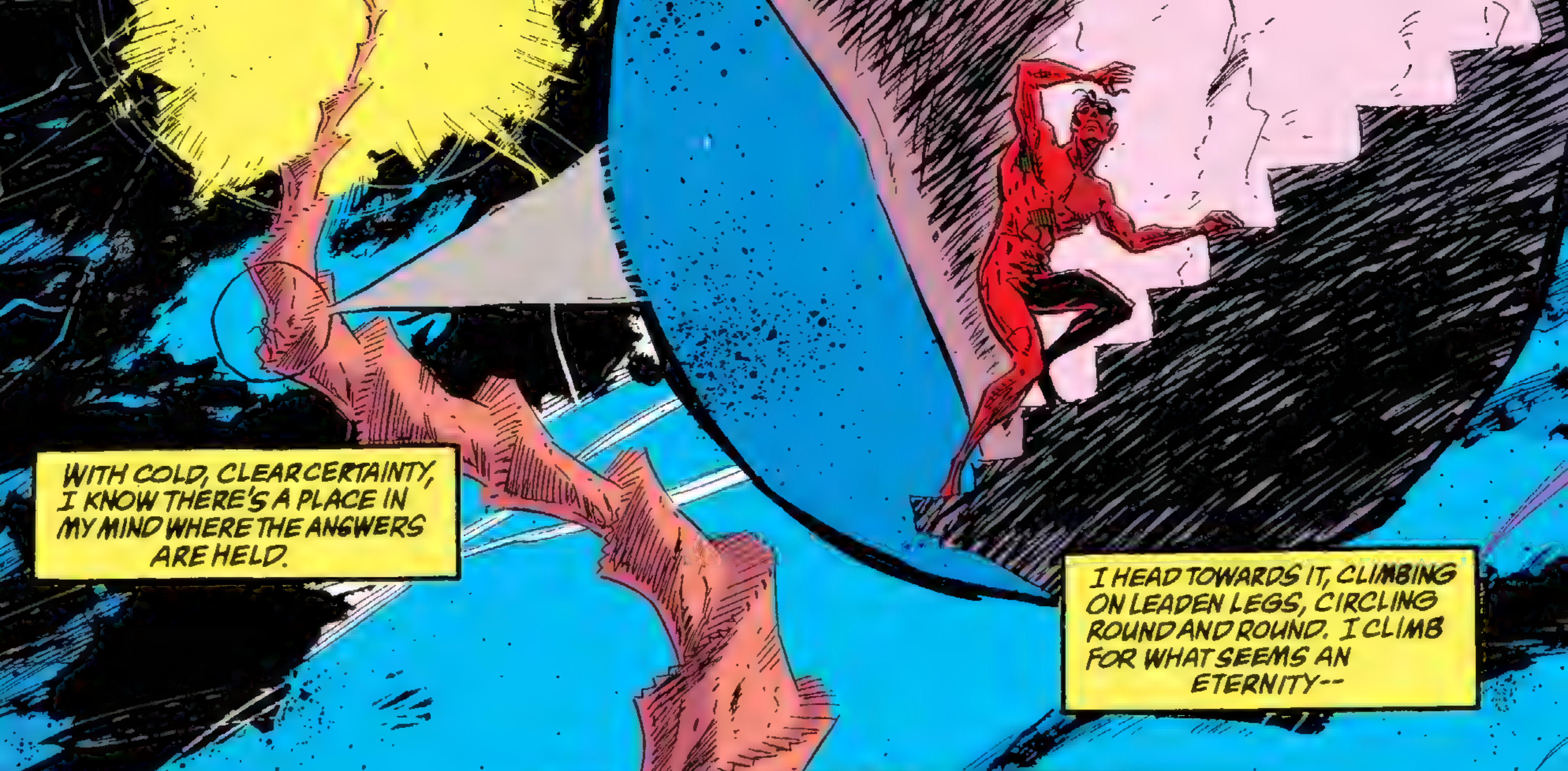
WHY USE THEIR VAST RICHES TO SET UP A
SECRET EMPIRE, UNKNOWN TO ANY
GOVERNMENT? AN EMPIRE THAT LASTED
CENTURIES, THROUGH WARS THAT
CHANGED THE WORLD.

WHY? WHAT
MOTIVATED
THEM?

WHAT MOTIVATES
THEM NOW, THAT
THEY NEED TO TAKE
A MAN AND TURN
HIM INTO AN
AVENGING ANGEL?

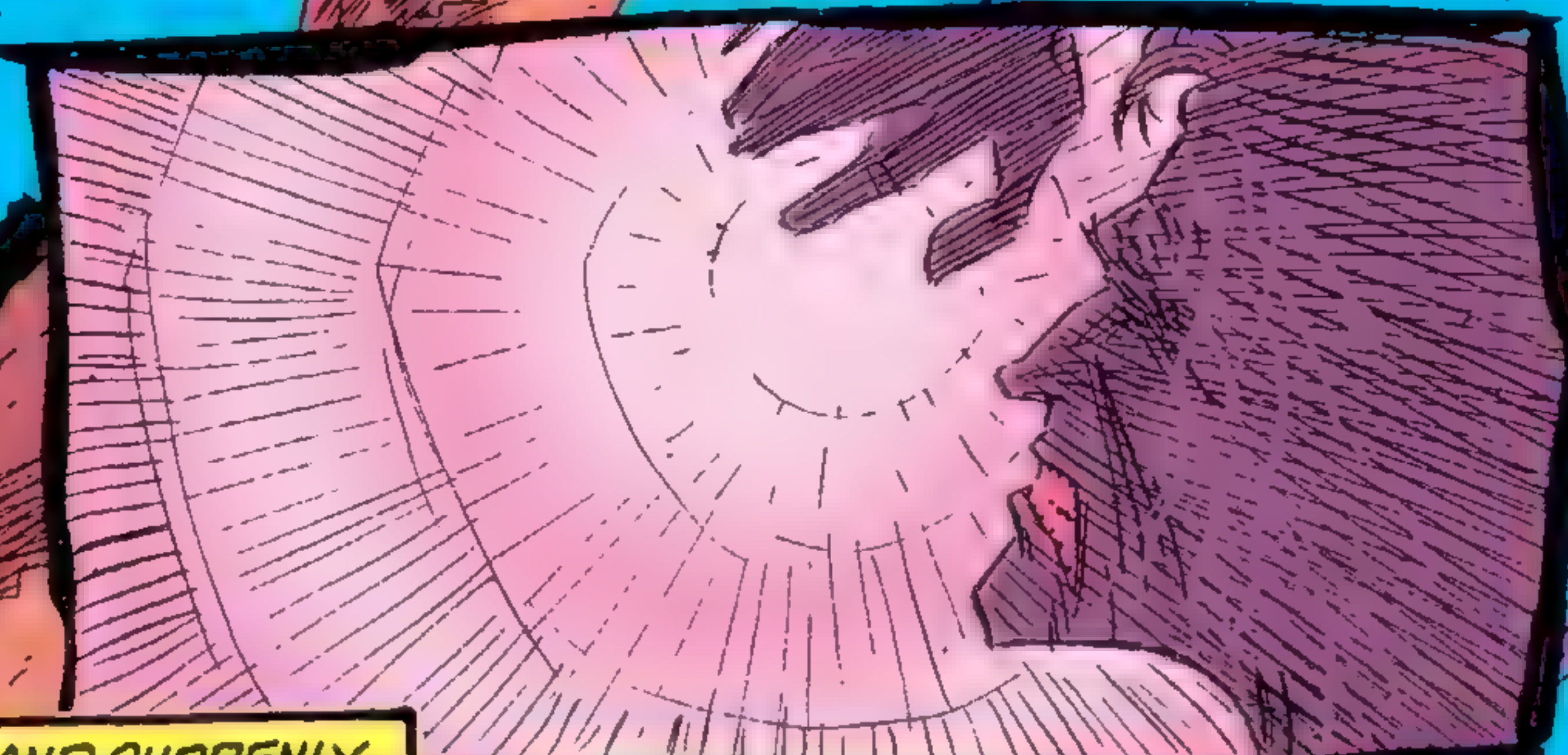
JUST WHAT IS
IT ALL ABOUT?



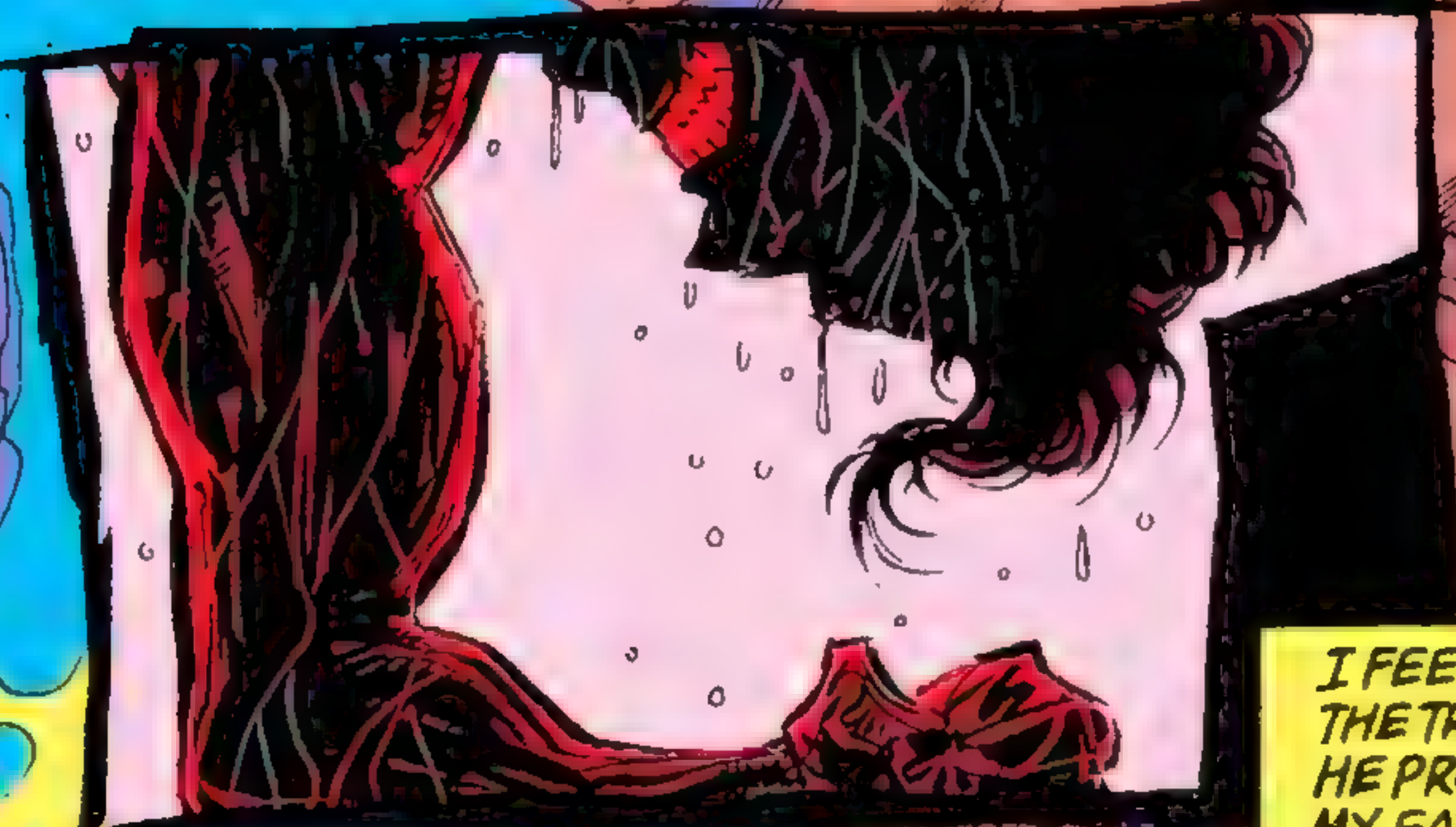


WITH COLD, CLEAR CERTAINTY,
I KNOW THERE'S A PLACE IN
MY MIND WHERE THE ANSWERS
ARE HELD.

I HEAD TOWARDS IT, CLIMBING
ON LEADEN LEGS, CIRCLING
ROUND AND ROUND. I CLIMB
FOR WHAT SEEMS AN
ETERNITY--



--AND SUDDENLY
REALIZE I'M NO
CLOSER!



I FEEL SICK TO MY GUT AS
THE TRUTH KICKS IN. WHEN
HE PROGRAMMED MY MIND,
MY FATHER BUILT IN
SOMETHING ELSE--

--A PROGRAM THAT
PREVENTS ME FROM
EVER FINDING OUT
ABOUT MYSELF!

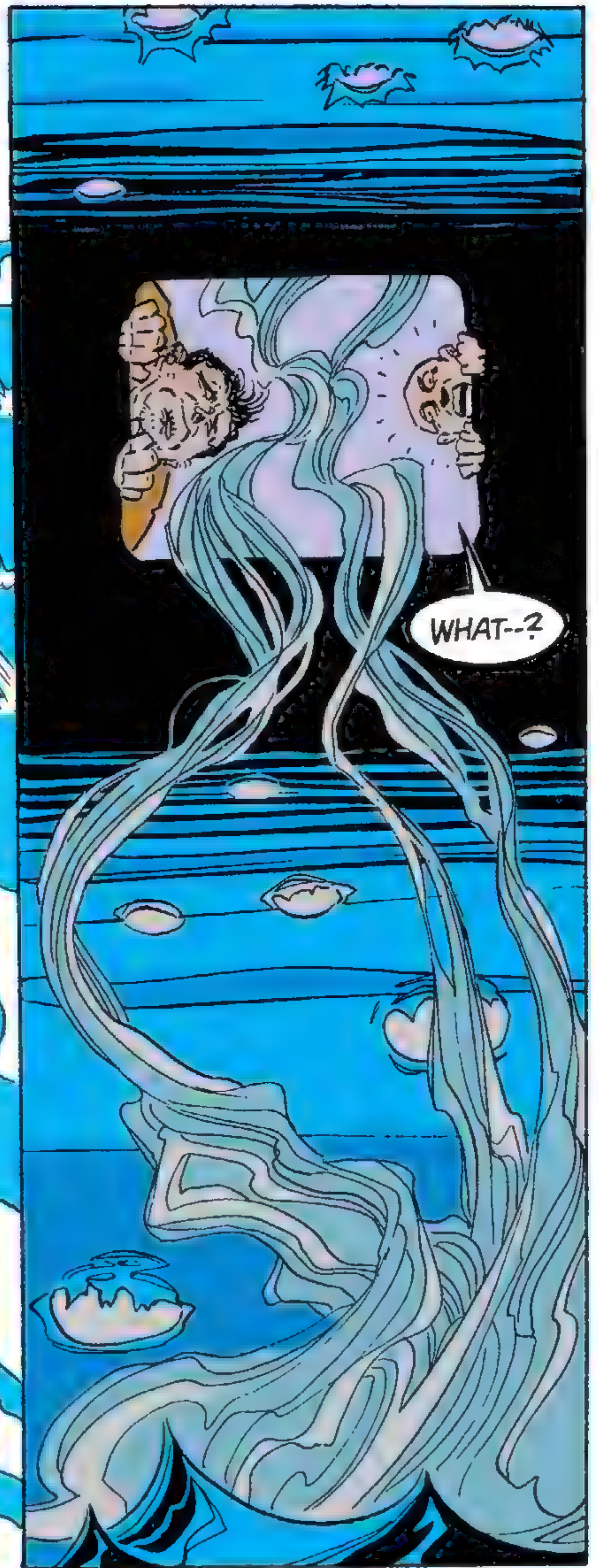


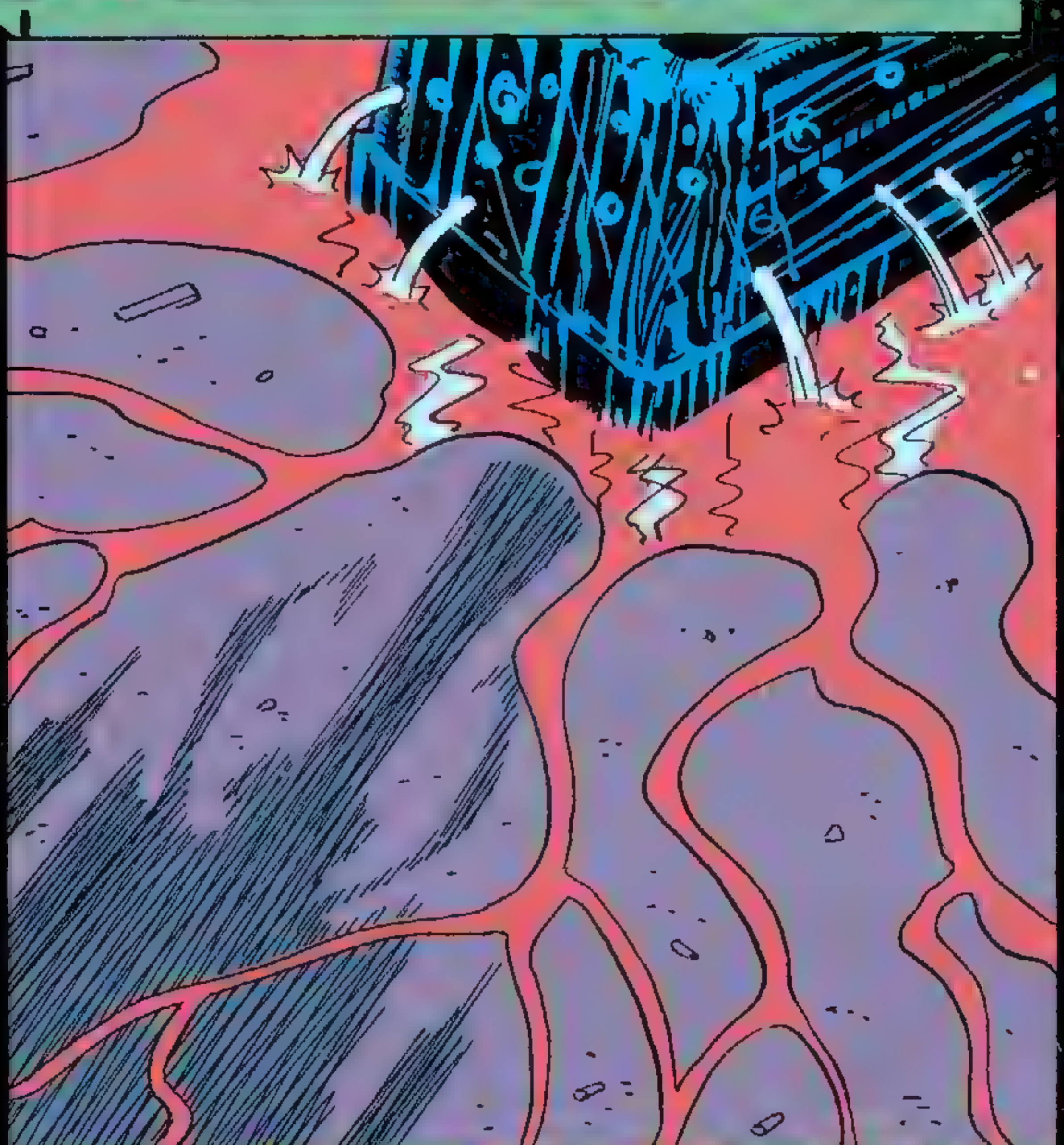
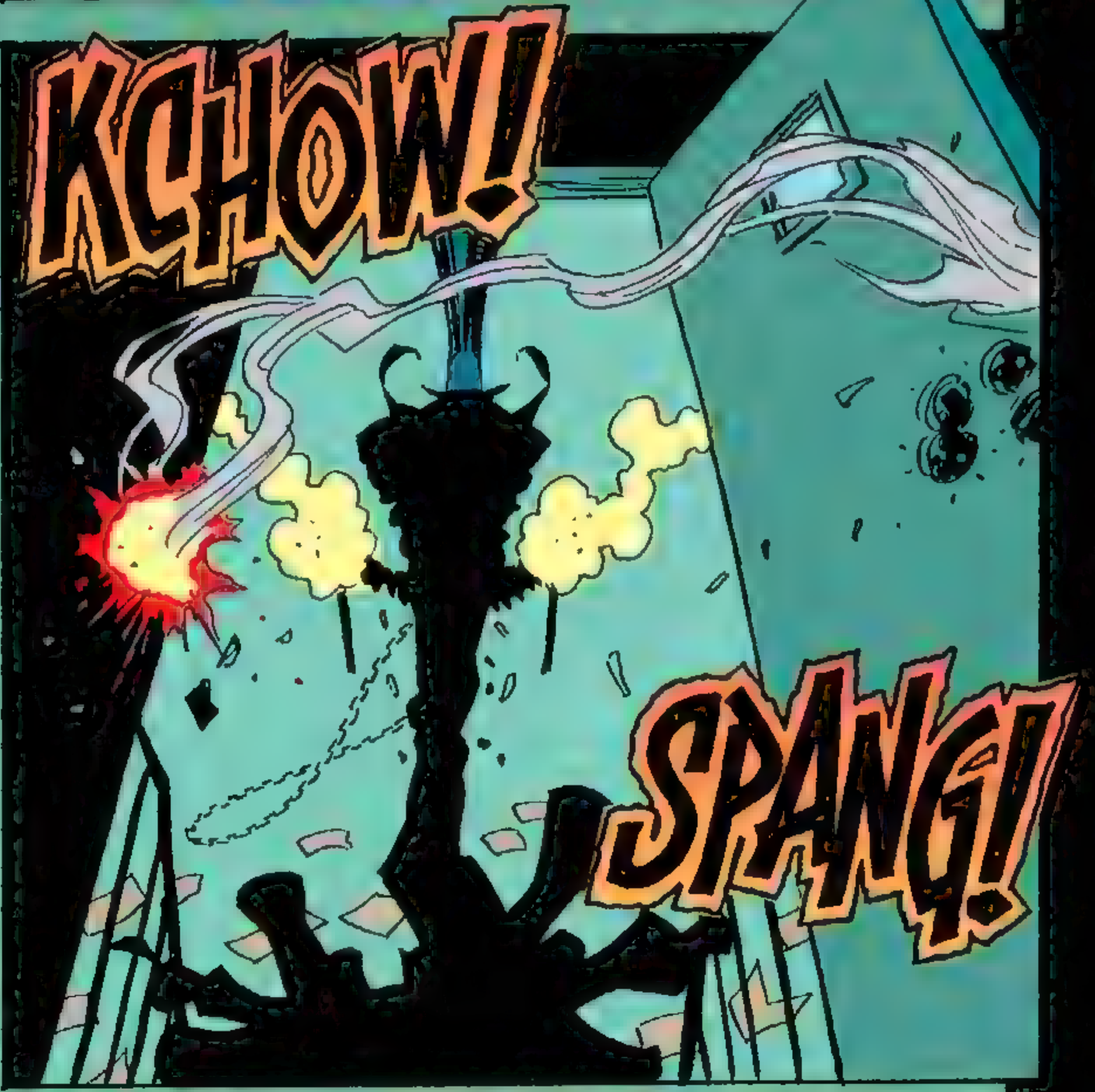
DO YA THINK
WE GOT HIM? DO
YA THINK WE KILLED
THE BATMAN?

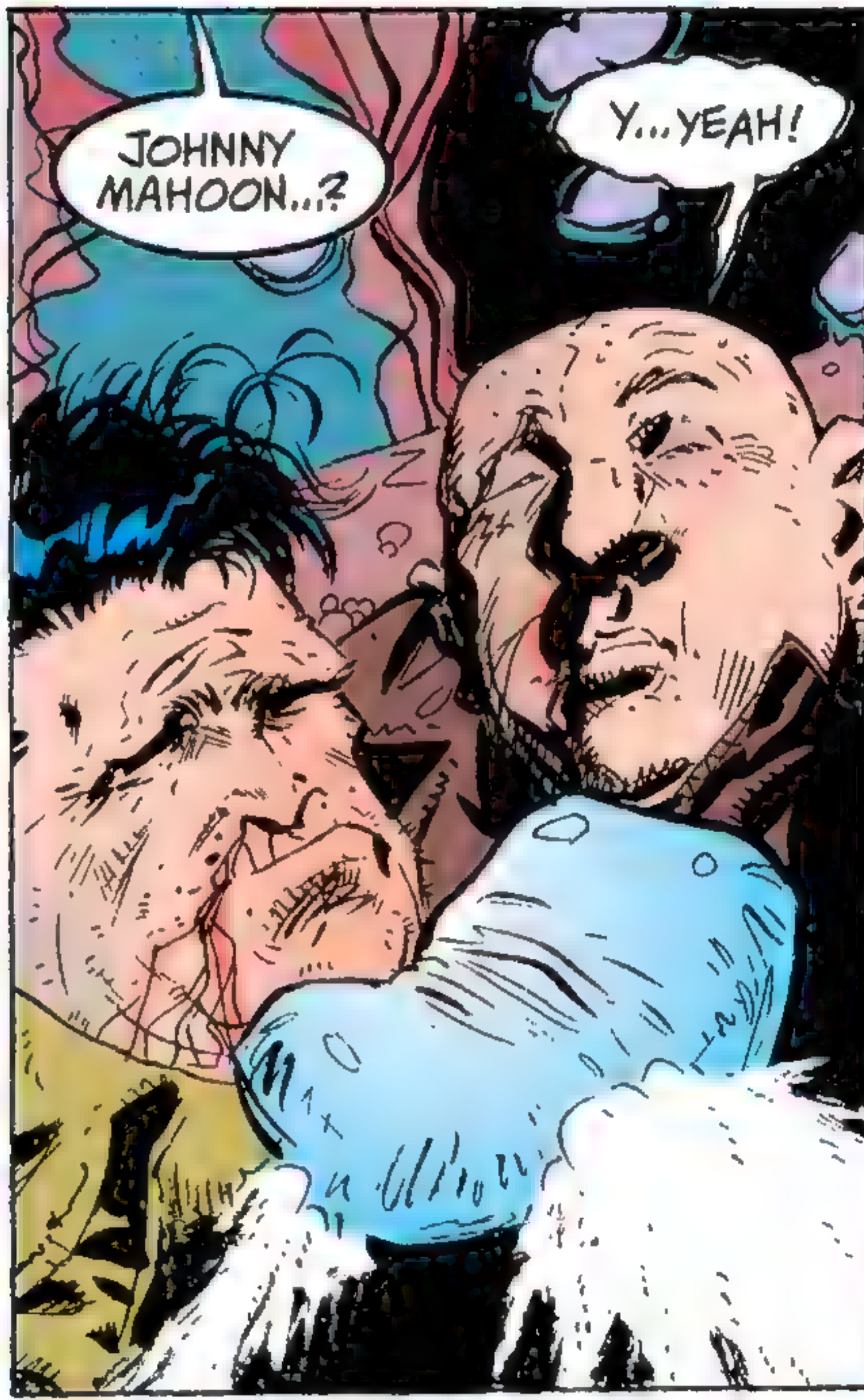
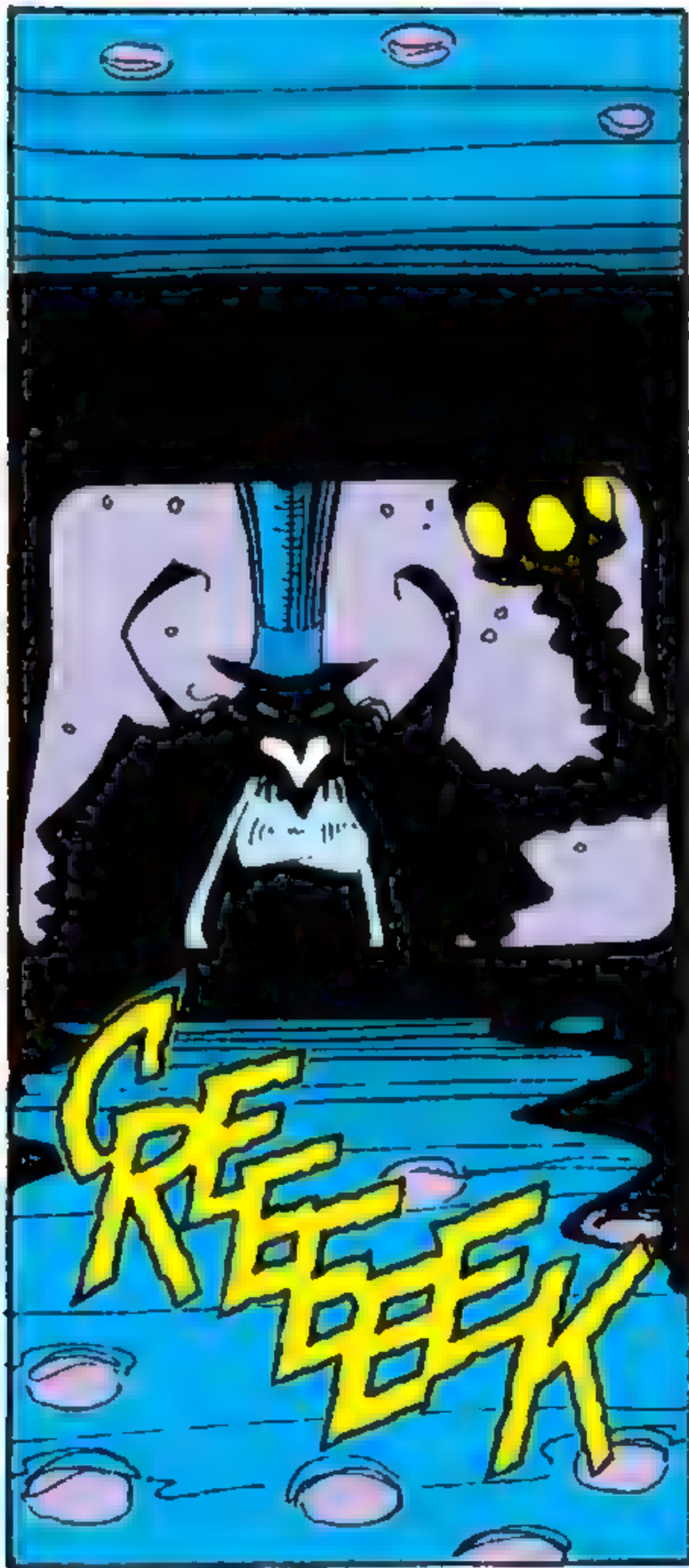
I DUNNO
WHAT THE HELL
YOU'RE DOIN' IN
THERE, BATMAN
--BUT YOU WON'T
POKE YOUR NOSE
IN MY BUSINESS
AGAIN!

HA! AN' WE
WON'T EVEN HAVE
TO BUY YOU A
COFFIN!

WHAT ARE
YOU, WILLY--
STUPID? HOW
COULD WE
MISS?







JOHNNY
MAHOON...?

Y...YEAH!



WHO
DID THIS TO
YOU?

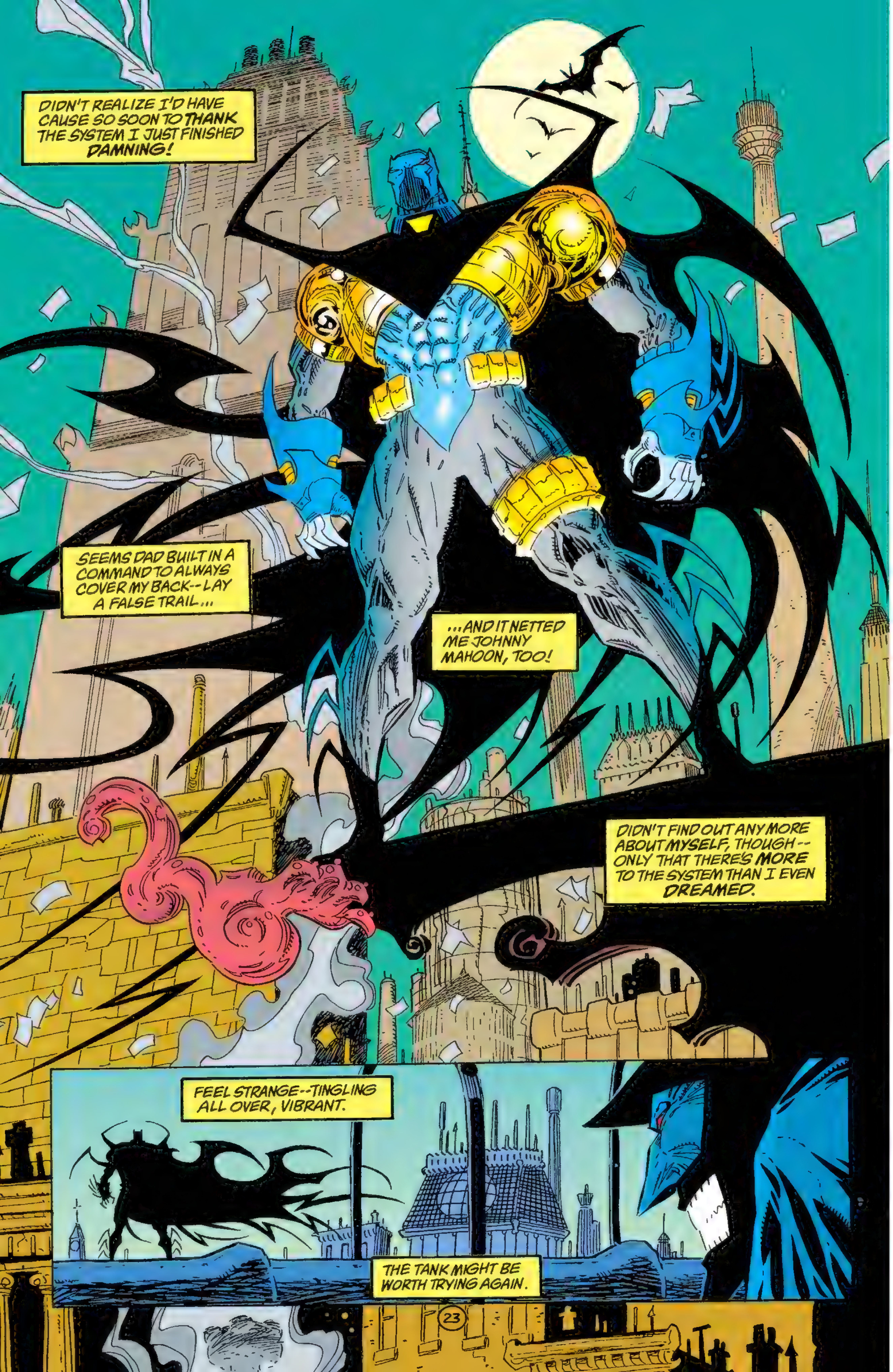
B-BATMAN...!
HE... JUST LEFT!
MY BROTHER--YA
...YA GOTTA TELL
MIKE!



TELL HIM
YOURSELF...

...IN HELL!

KAHOW
KAHOW
KAHOW!



DIDN'T REALIZE I'D HAVE
CAUSE SO SOON TO THANK
THE SYSTEM I JUST FINISHED
DAMNING!

SEEMS DAD BUILT IN A
COMMAND TO ALWAYS
COVER MY BACK--LAY
A FALSE TRAIL...

...AND IT NETTED
ME JOHNNY
MAHOON, TOO!

DIDN'T FIND OUT ANY MORE
ABOUT MYSELF, THOUGH--
ONLY THAT THERE'S MORE
TO THE SYSTEM THAN I EVEN
DREAMED.

FEEL STRANGE--TINGLING
ALL OVER, VIBRANT.

THE TANK MIGHT BE
WORTH TRYING AGAIN.





NO 20, EARLY NOV 93
175, UK £125 CAN 225
PART TWO OF TWO

KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE

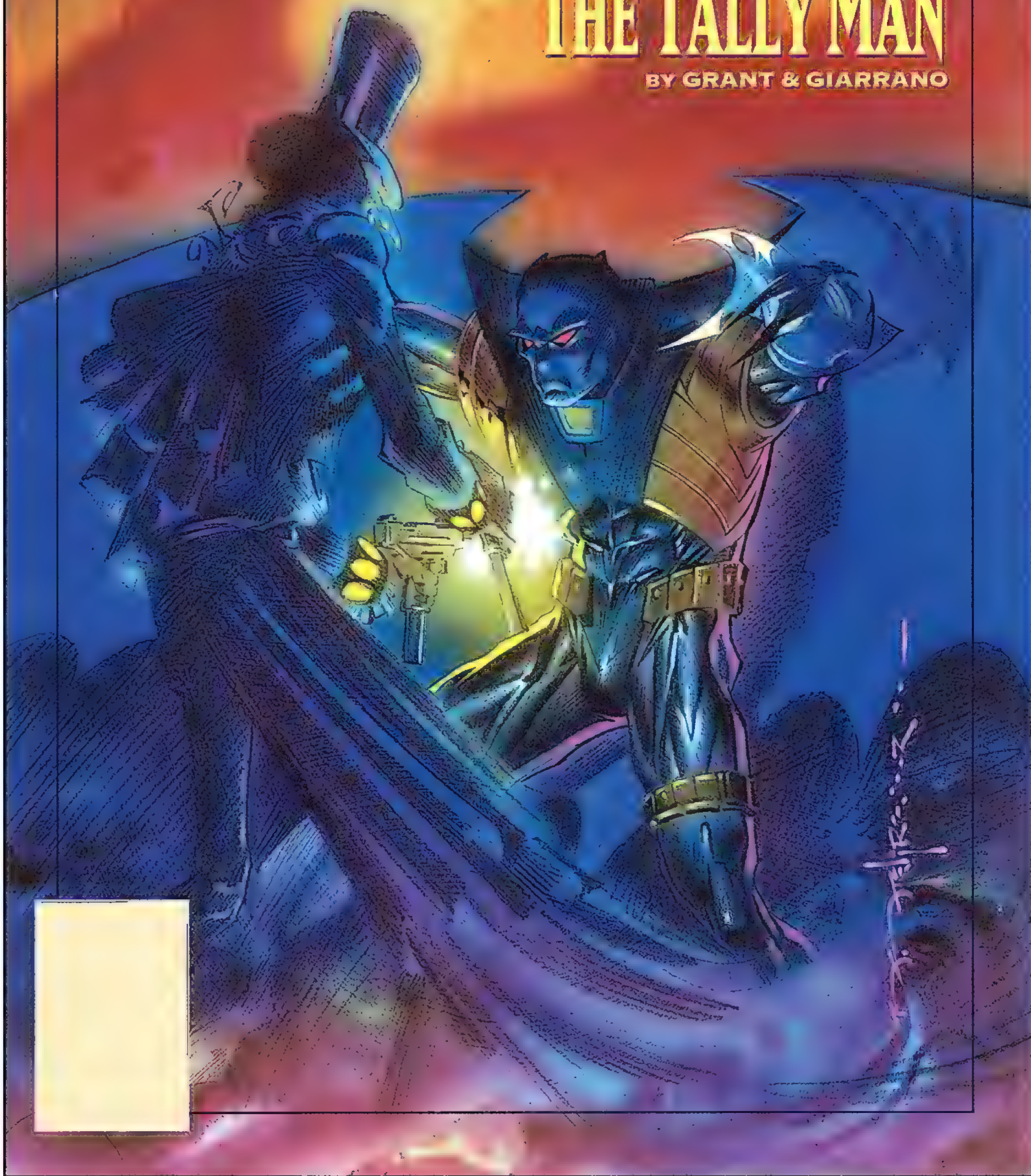
B A T M A N®



SHADOW OF THE BAT™

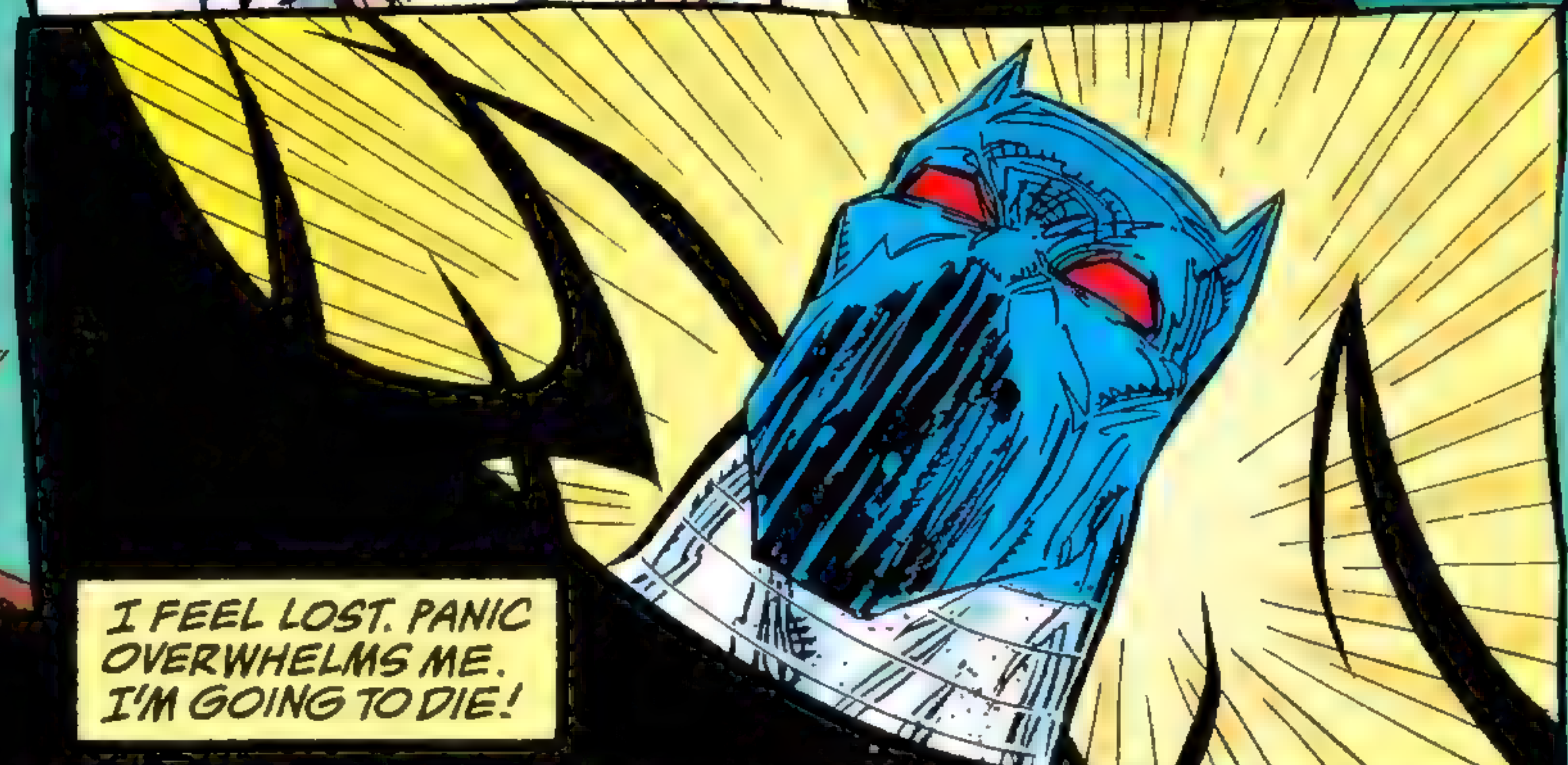
THE TALLY MAN

BY GRANT & GIARRANO





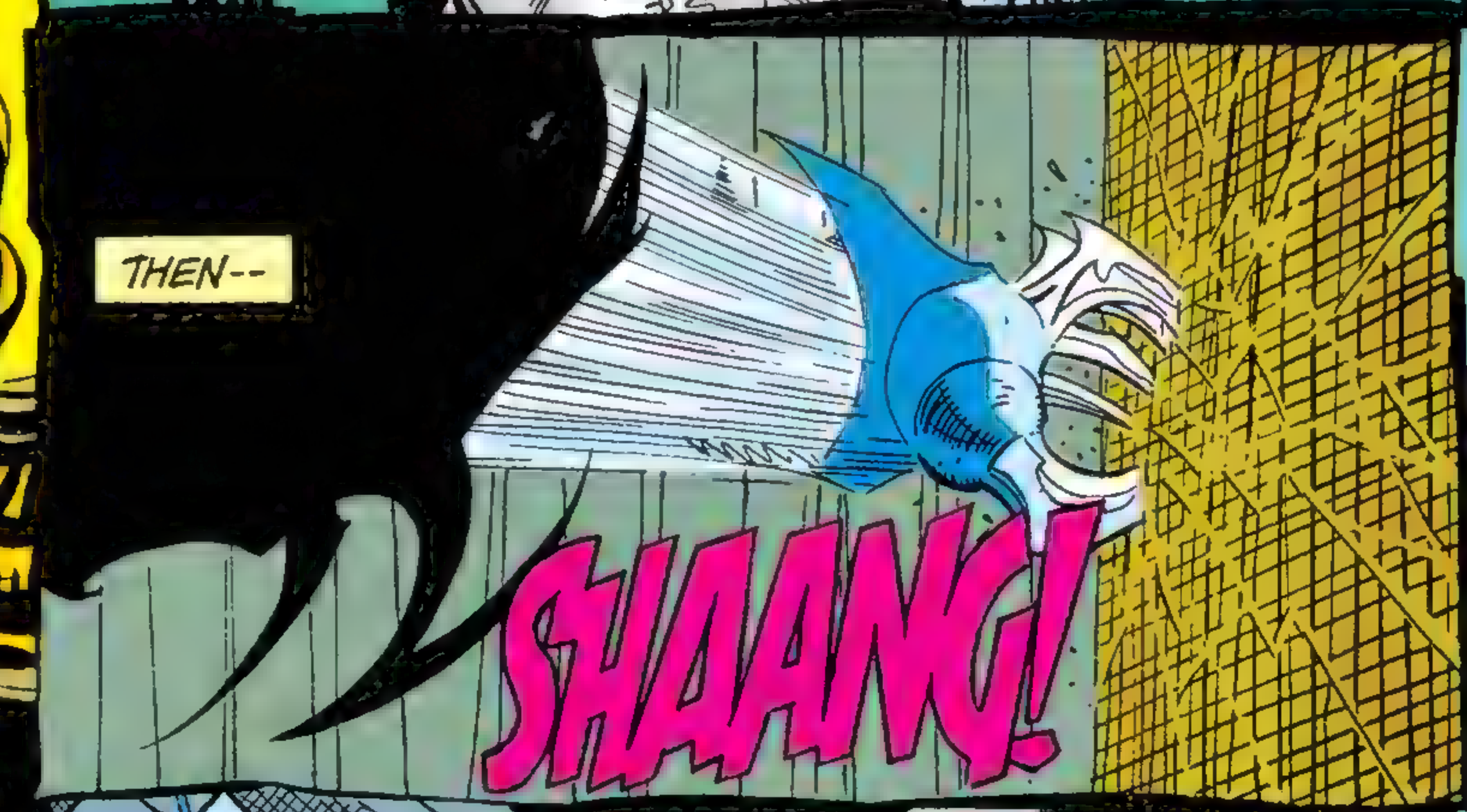
YOUR DEBT IS PAID, BATMAN--



I FEEL LOST. PANIC OVERWHELMS ME. I'M GOING TO DIE!

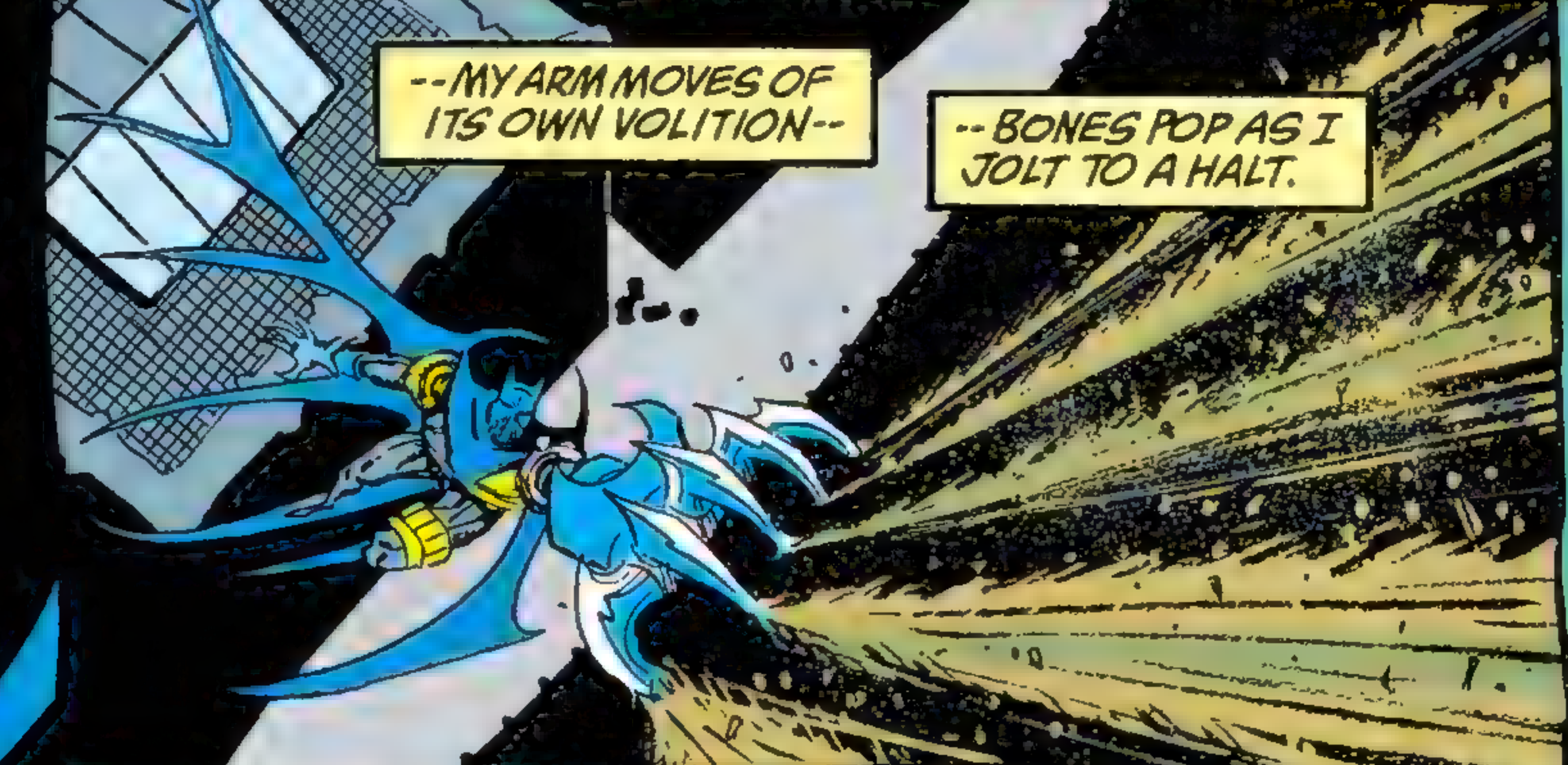


--THE TALLYMAN'S ACCOUNT IS CLOSED!



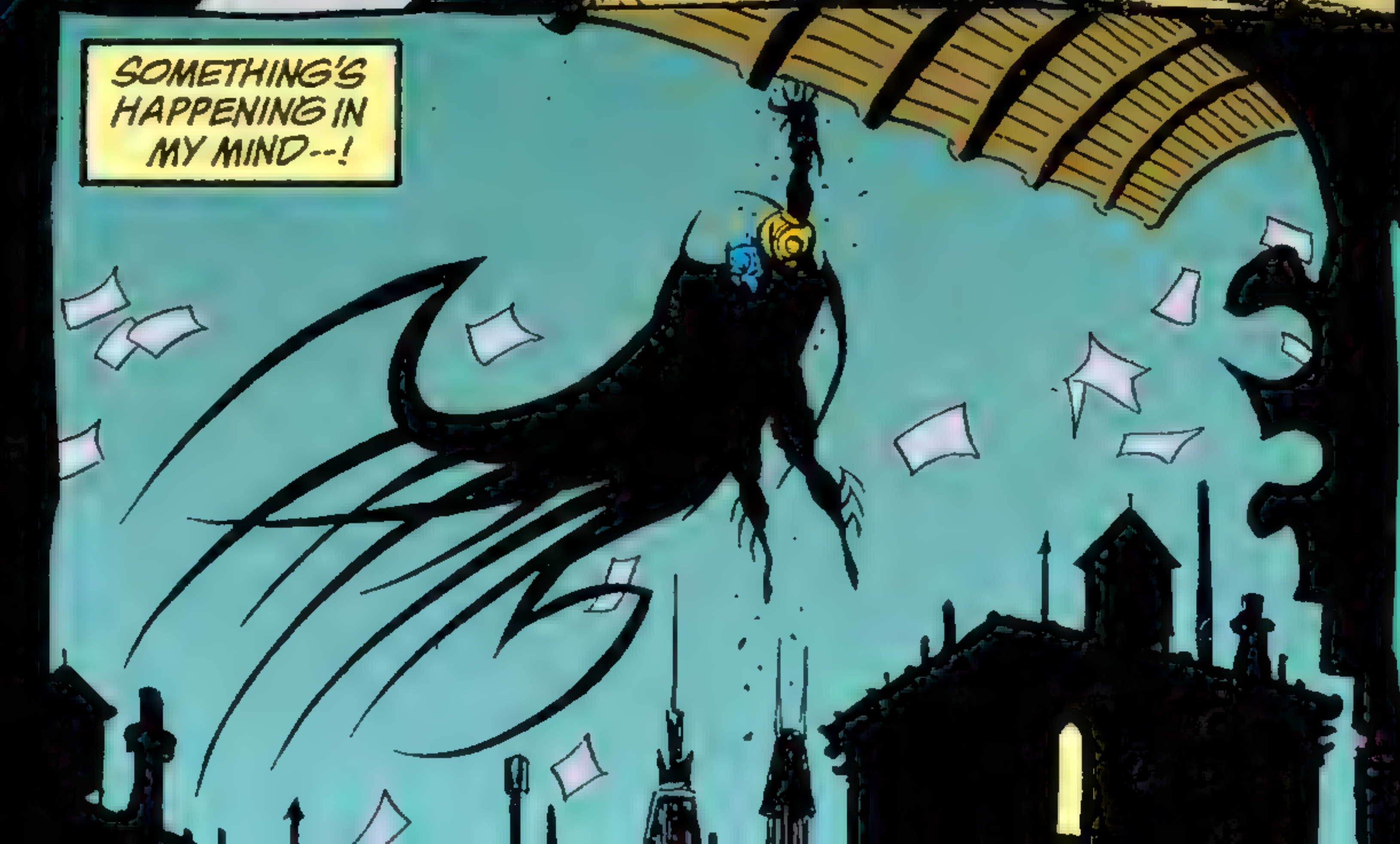
THEN--

SHAANG!



--MY ARM MOVES OF ITS OWN VOLITION--

--BONES POP AS I JOLT TO A HALT.



SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN MY MIND--!

STUPID!

I MUST HAVE BEEN DISORIENTED AFTER MY TIME IN THE ISOLATION TANK. TOO MUCH THINKING ABOUT ME, AND NOT ENOUGH ABOUT WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DOING!

IRONIC IF I SHOULD DIE NOW, KNOWING ONLY WHAT OTHER MEN MADE ME--A GRIM AVENGING ANGEL--

--WITHOUT THE FIRST IDEA OF WHO I REALLY AM!

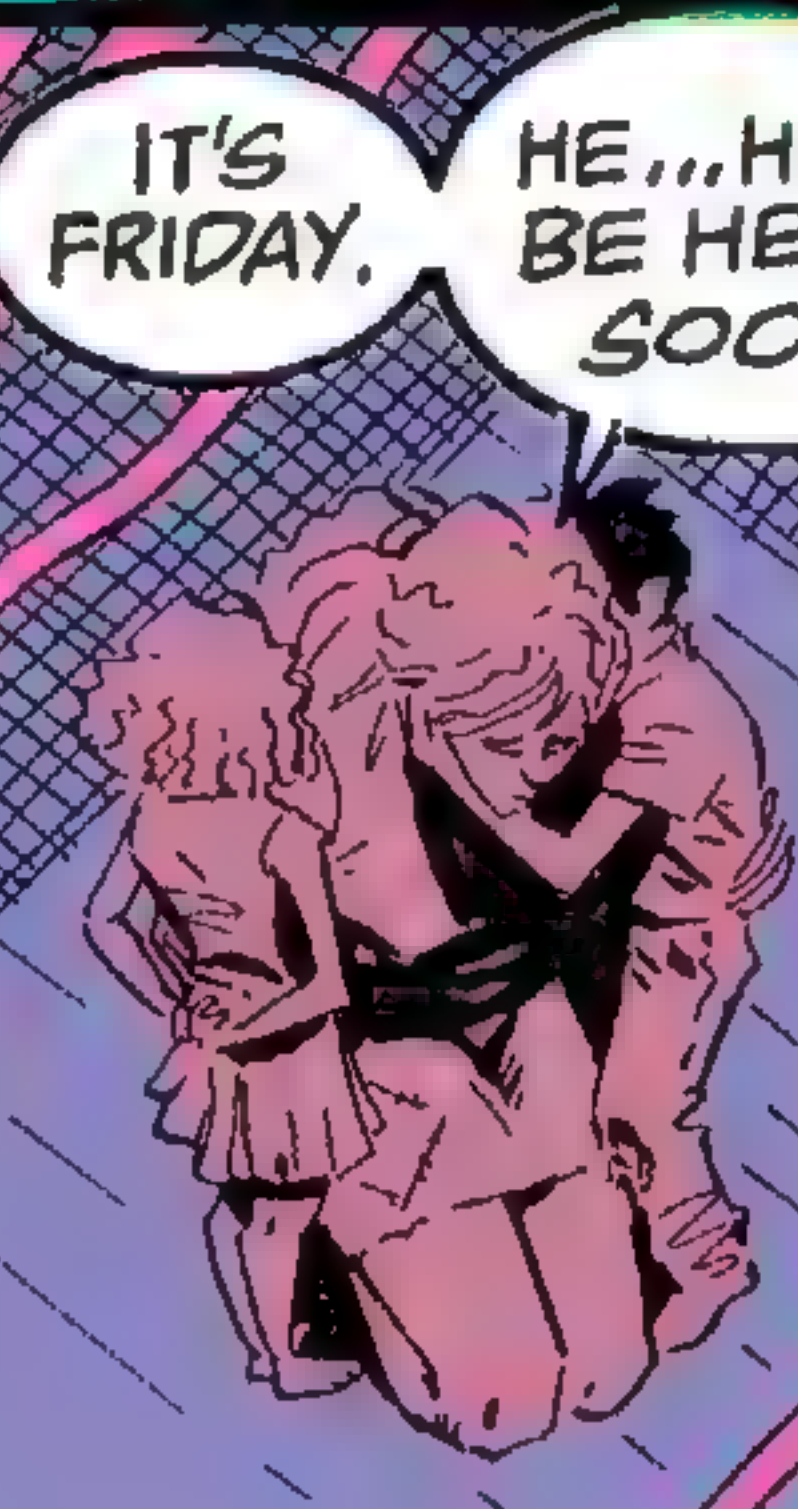


HE SITS ON THE ROOF,
MOTIONLESS, SILENT,
AS THE FEELING FLOODS
THROUGH HIM. NOT
PLEASURE--NOT EVEN
RELIEF THAT HE LIVES
WHILE HIS TARGET DIED...

A FEELING HE WISHES WAS
SATISFACTION...THOUGH IT
NEVER IS.



FOR THE SIXTY-SEVENTH
TIME, SCENES FROM HIS
BOYHOOD PLAY THEM-
SELVES OUT IN THE
THEATER OF HIS MIND...



IT'S
FRIDAY.

HE...HE'LL
BE HERE
SOON!



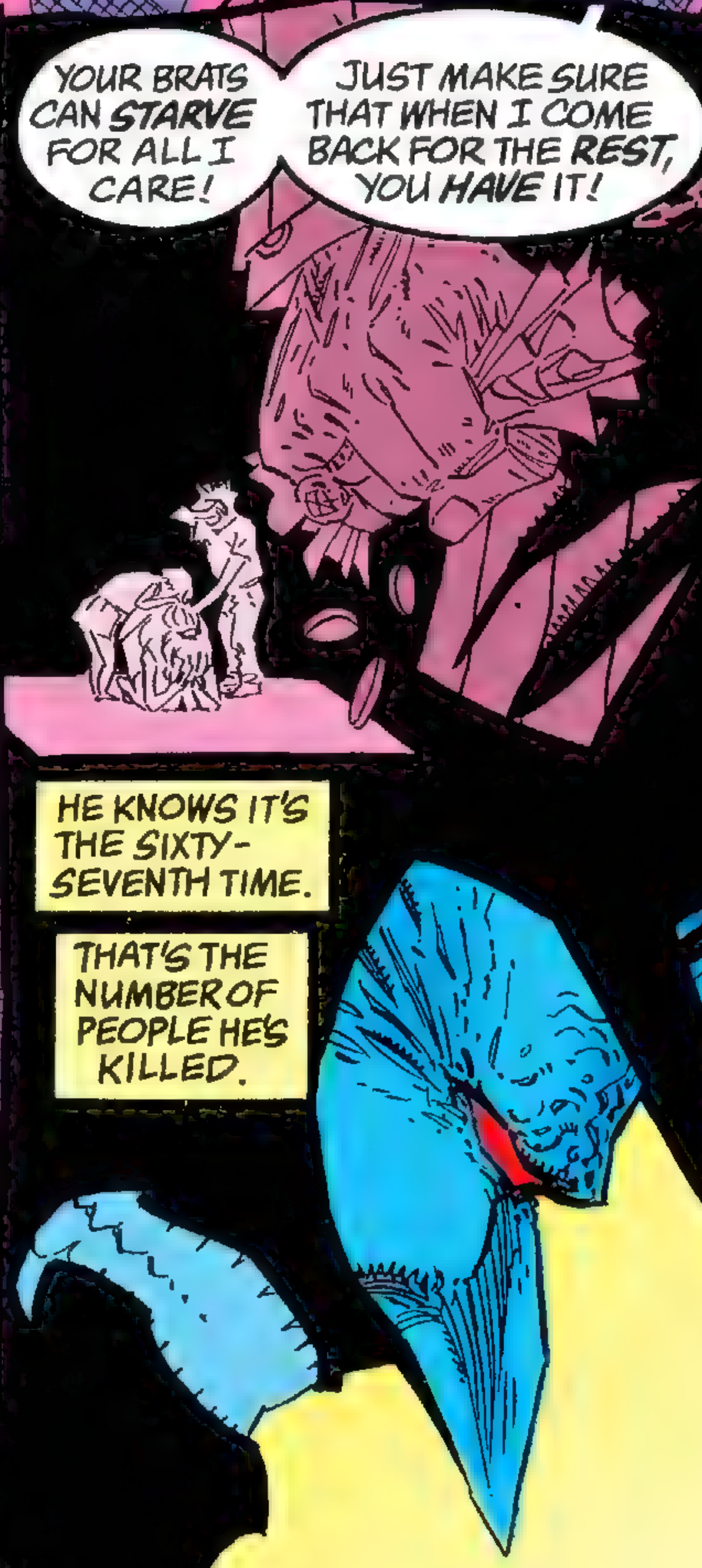
I KNOW
YOU'RE IN
THERE!
OPEN UP,
DAMN
YOU!

RAP
RAP
RAP



PLEASE--MY WELFARE
CHECK DIDN'T COME!
I ONLY HAVE ENOUGH
MONEY LEFT FOR
FOOD FOR THE
CHILDREN!

YOU SHOULD
HAVE THOUGHT
OF THAT WHEN
YOU TOOK OUT
THE LOAN.



YOUR BRATS
CAN STARVE
FOR ALL I
CARE!

JUST MAKE SURE
THAT WHEN I COME
BACK FOR THE REST,
YOU HAVE IT!

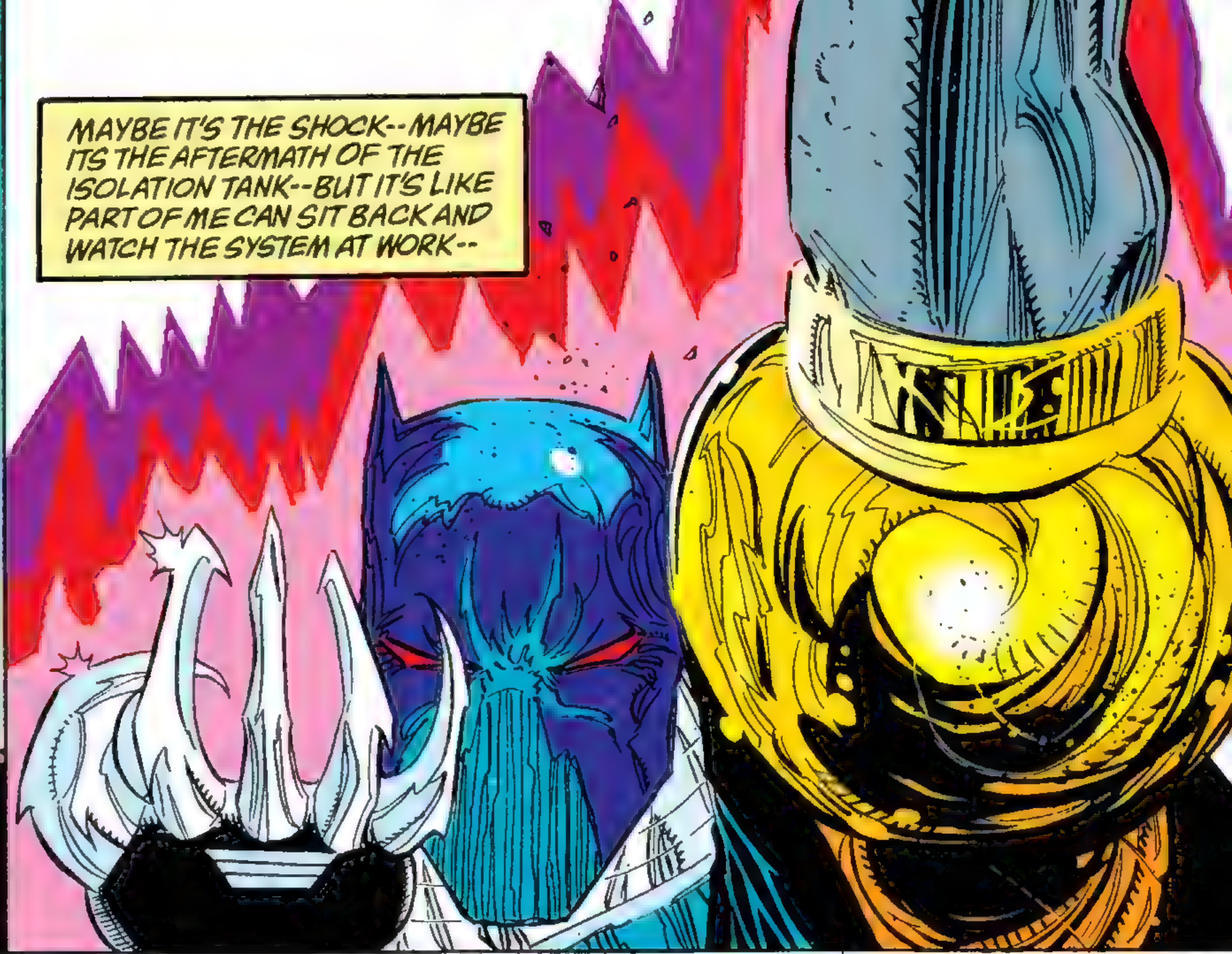
HE KNOWS IT'S
THE SIXTY-
SEVENTH TIME.

THAT'S THE
NUMBER OF
PEOPLE HE'S
KILLED.

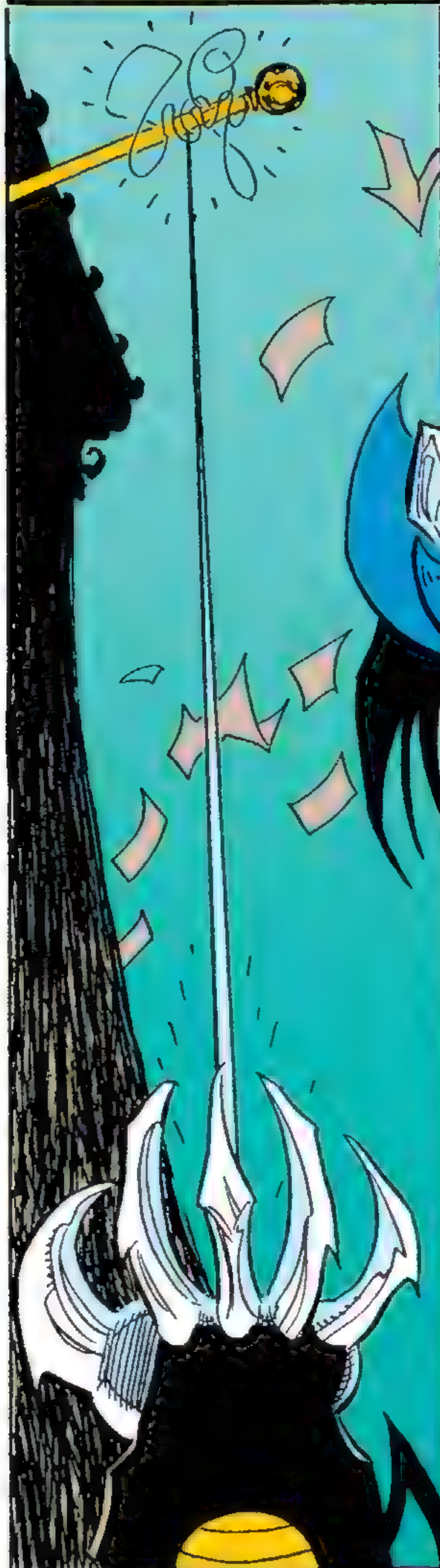


THEN FROM BELOW,
THE SOUND OF
METAL ON STONE--

MAYBE IT'S THE SHOCK-- MAYBE
IT'S THE AFTERMATH OF THE
ISOLATION TANK-- BUT IT'S LIKE
PART OF ME CAN SIT BACK AND
WATCH THE SYSTEM AT WORK--



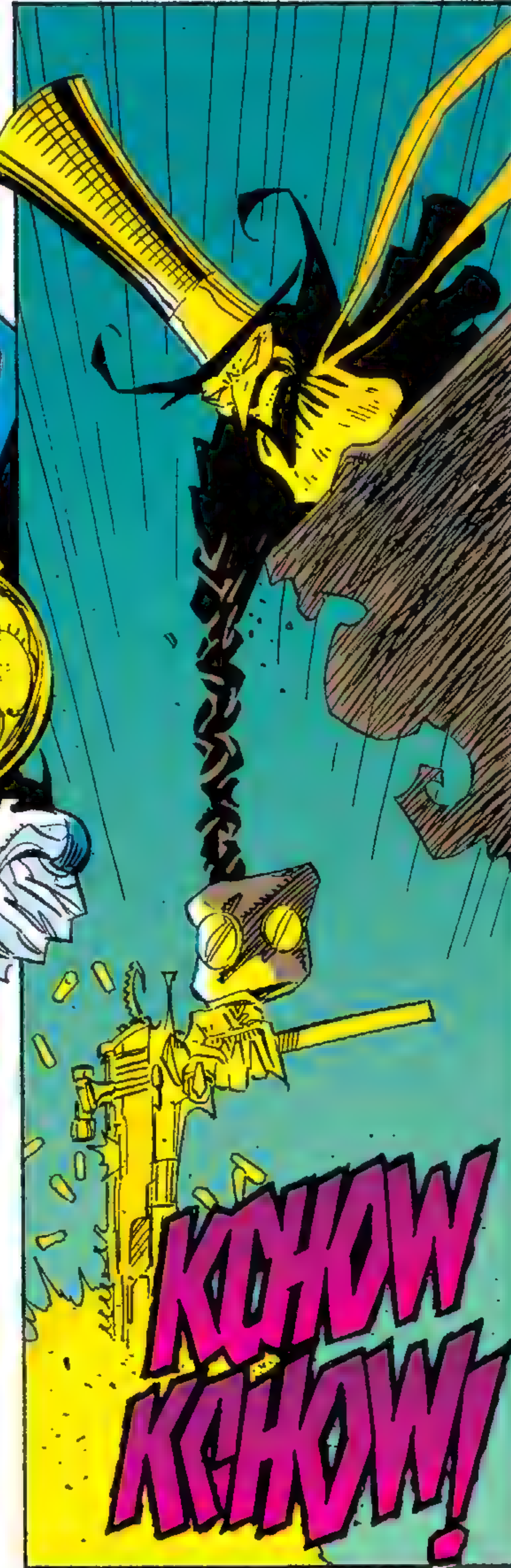
REALITY CHANGES AS A
NEW PROGRAM SWITCHES
ON IN MY HEAD.



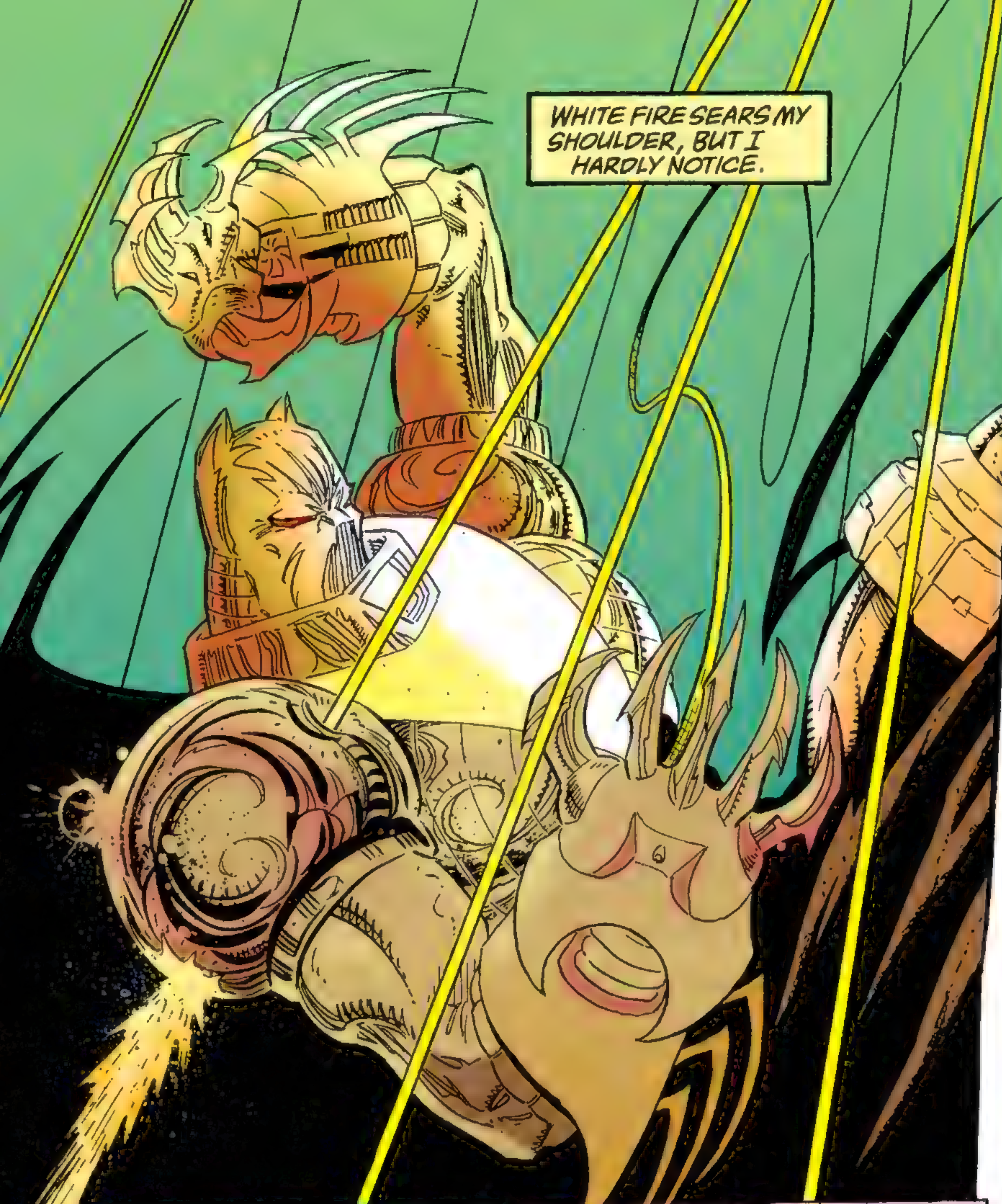
CAN'T DELAY. WHOEVER MY
ATTACKER IS, HE'LL WANT
TO FINISH THE JOB--



HORMONES FLOOD MY
BRAIN, AND THE PAIN OF
MY WRENCHED ARM FADES.



**KOHOW
KOHOW!**



WHITE FIRE SEARS MY
SHOULDER, BUT I
HARDLY NOTICE.



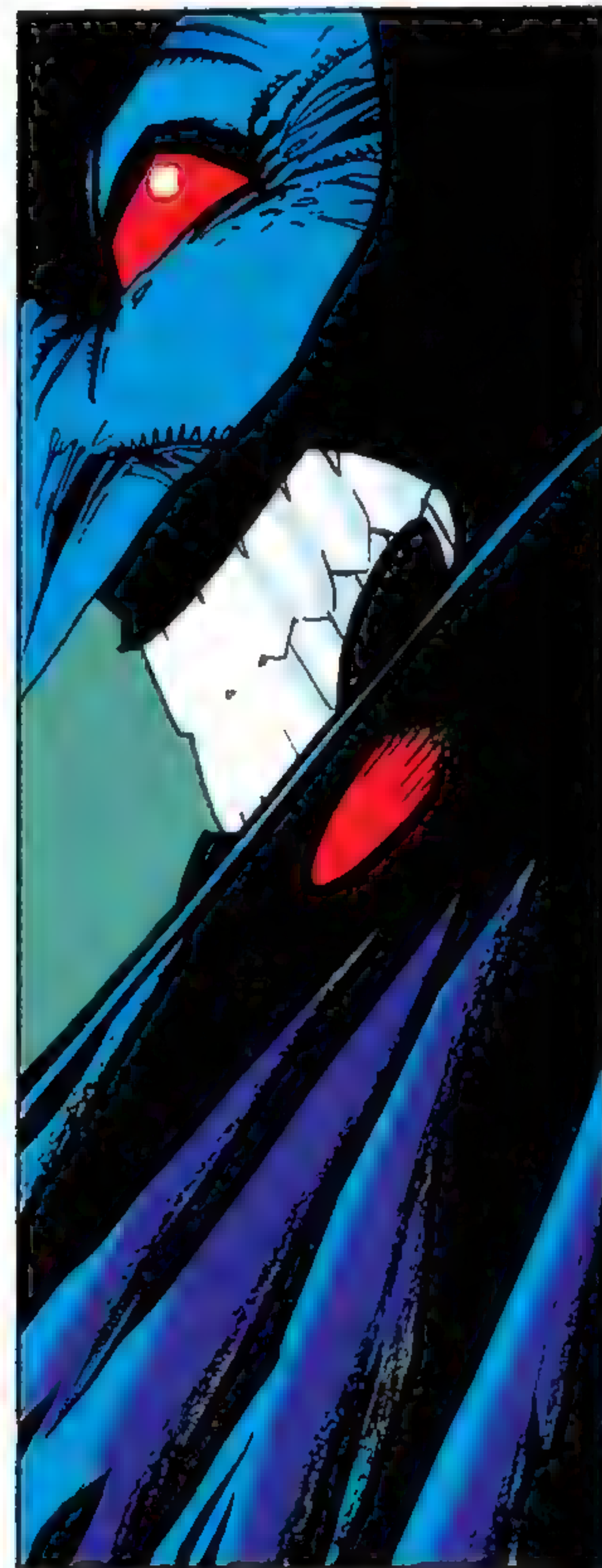
MY MIND'S TOO BUSY
CALCULATING ANGLES--
VELOCITY--

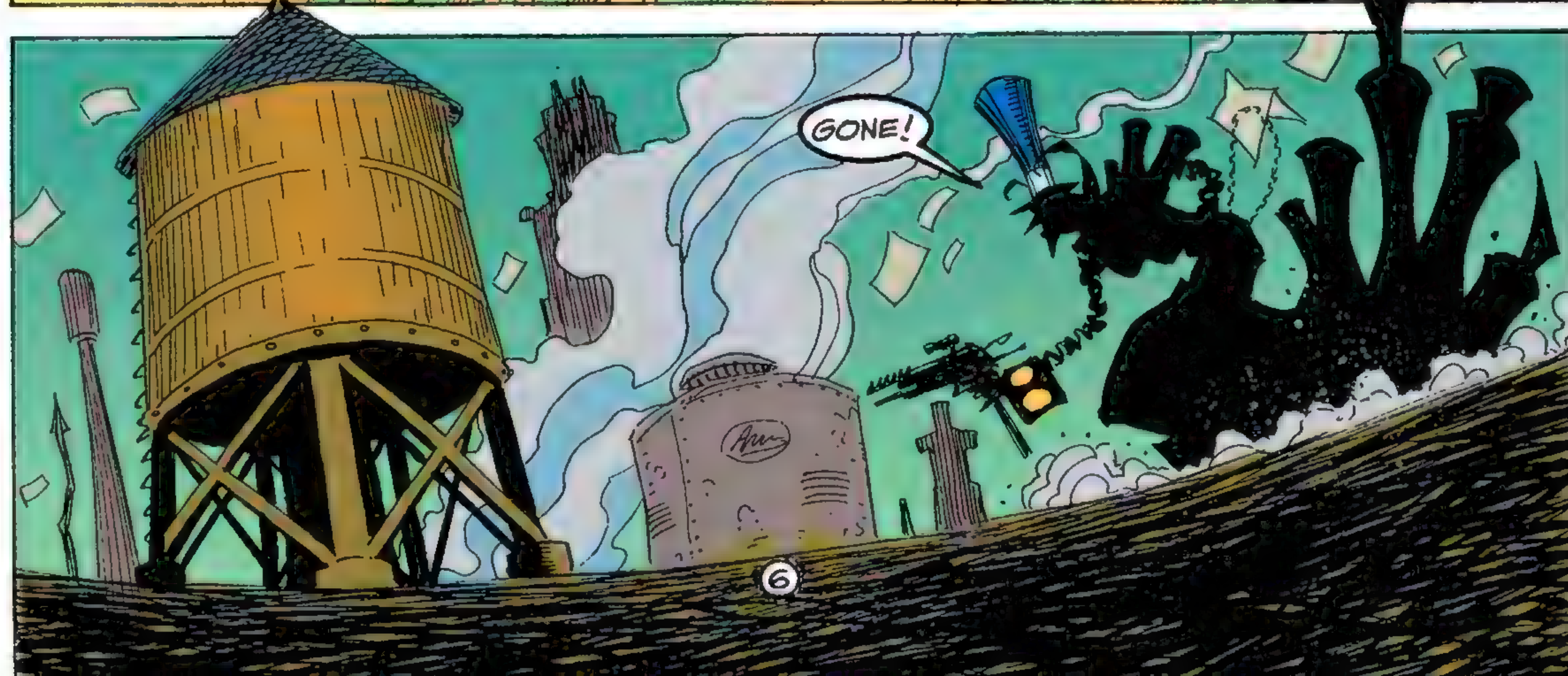
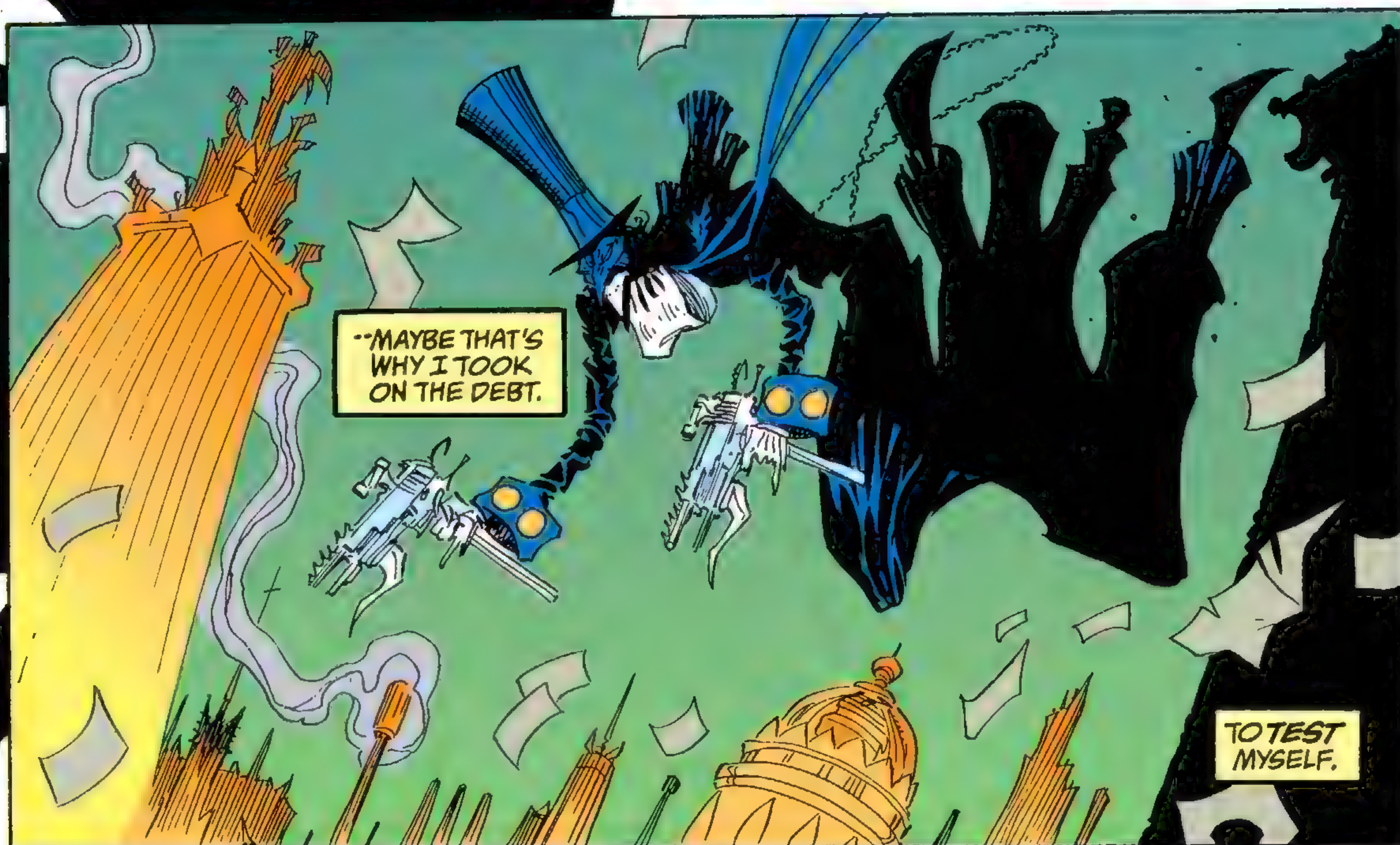


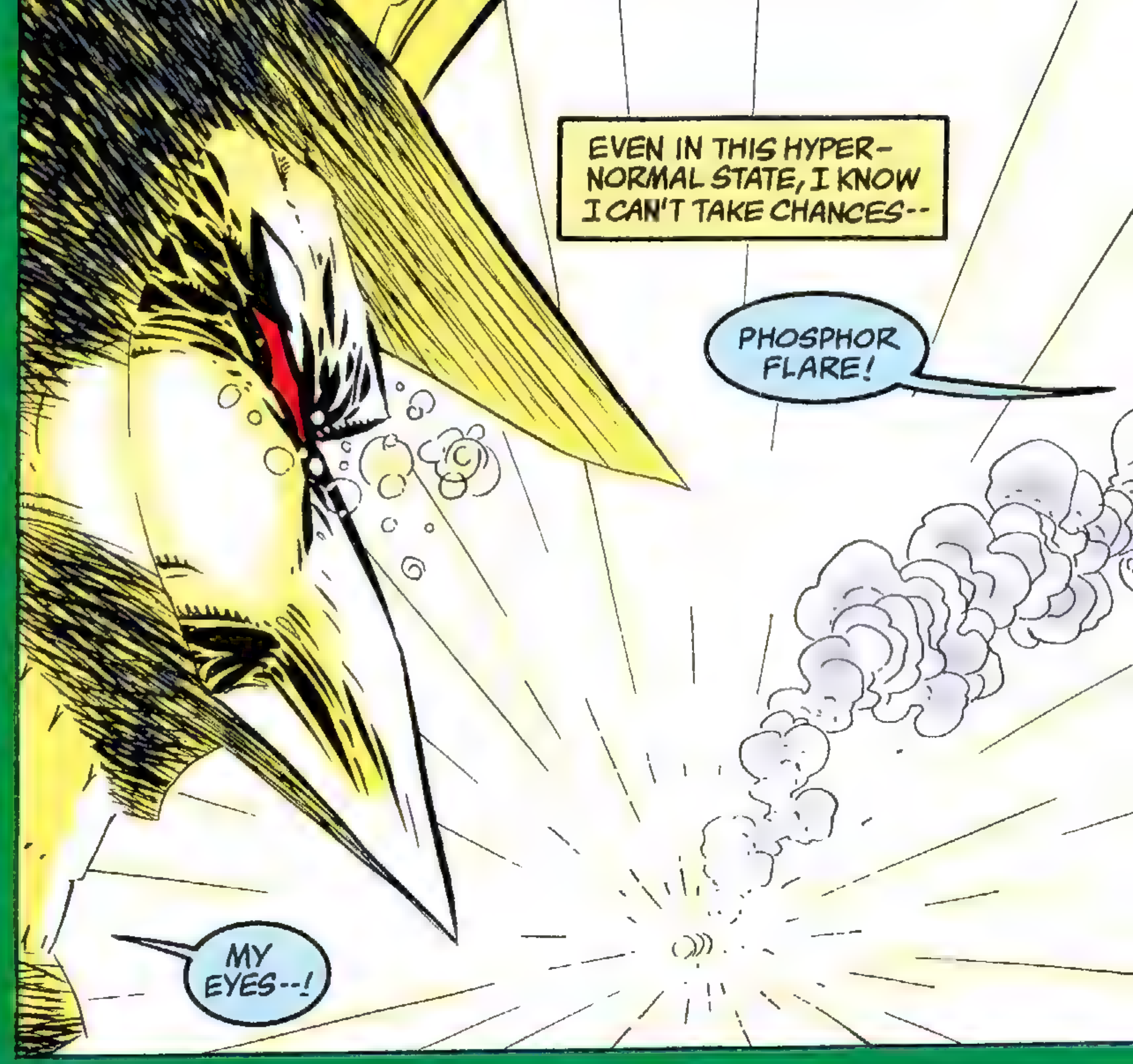
WUMP



COOLLY, DELIBERATELY,
I LIFT AN ARM THAT BY
RIGHTS SHOULD BE IN A
PLASTER CAST--



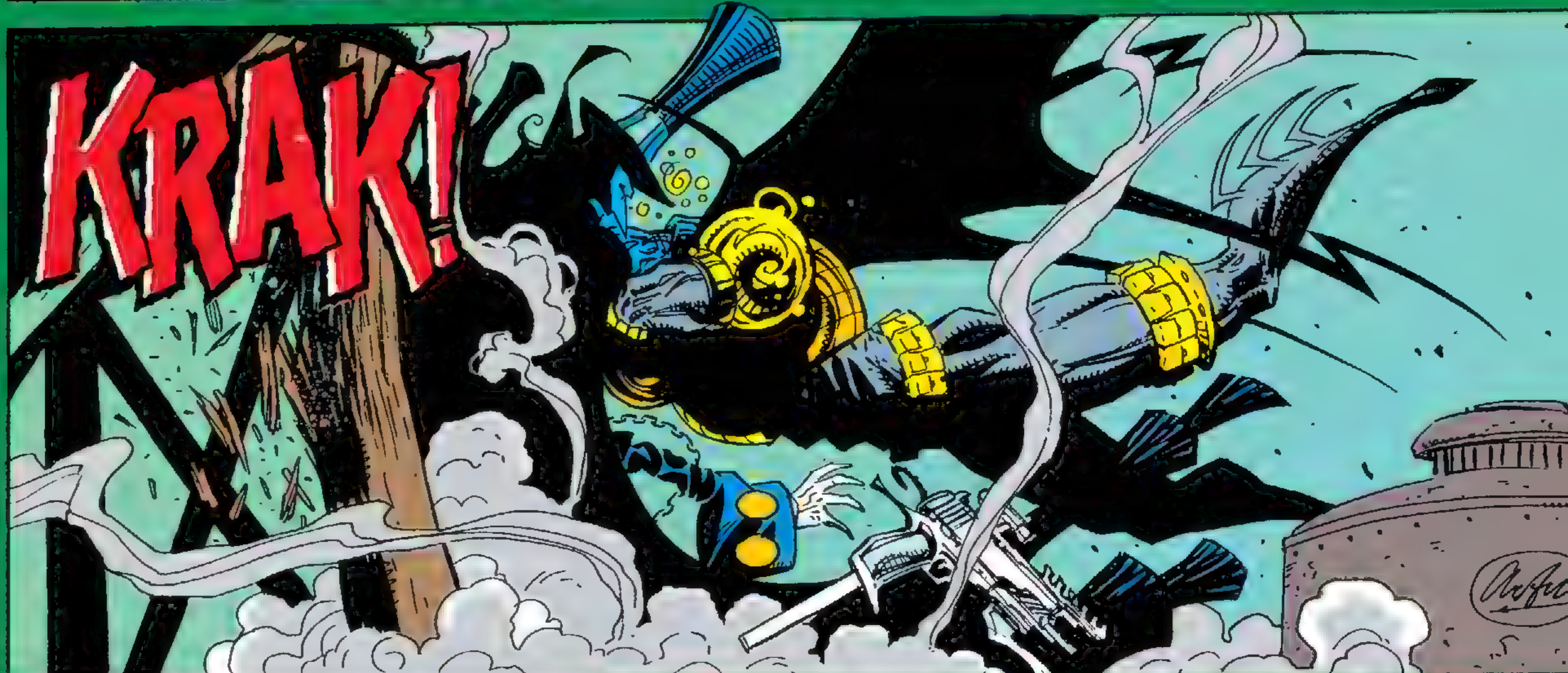




EVEN IN THIS HYPER-NORMAL STATE, I KNOW I CAN'T TAKE CHANCES--

PHOSPHOR FLARE!

MY EYES--!

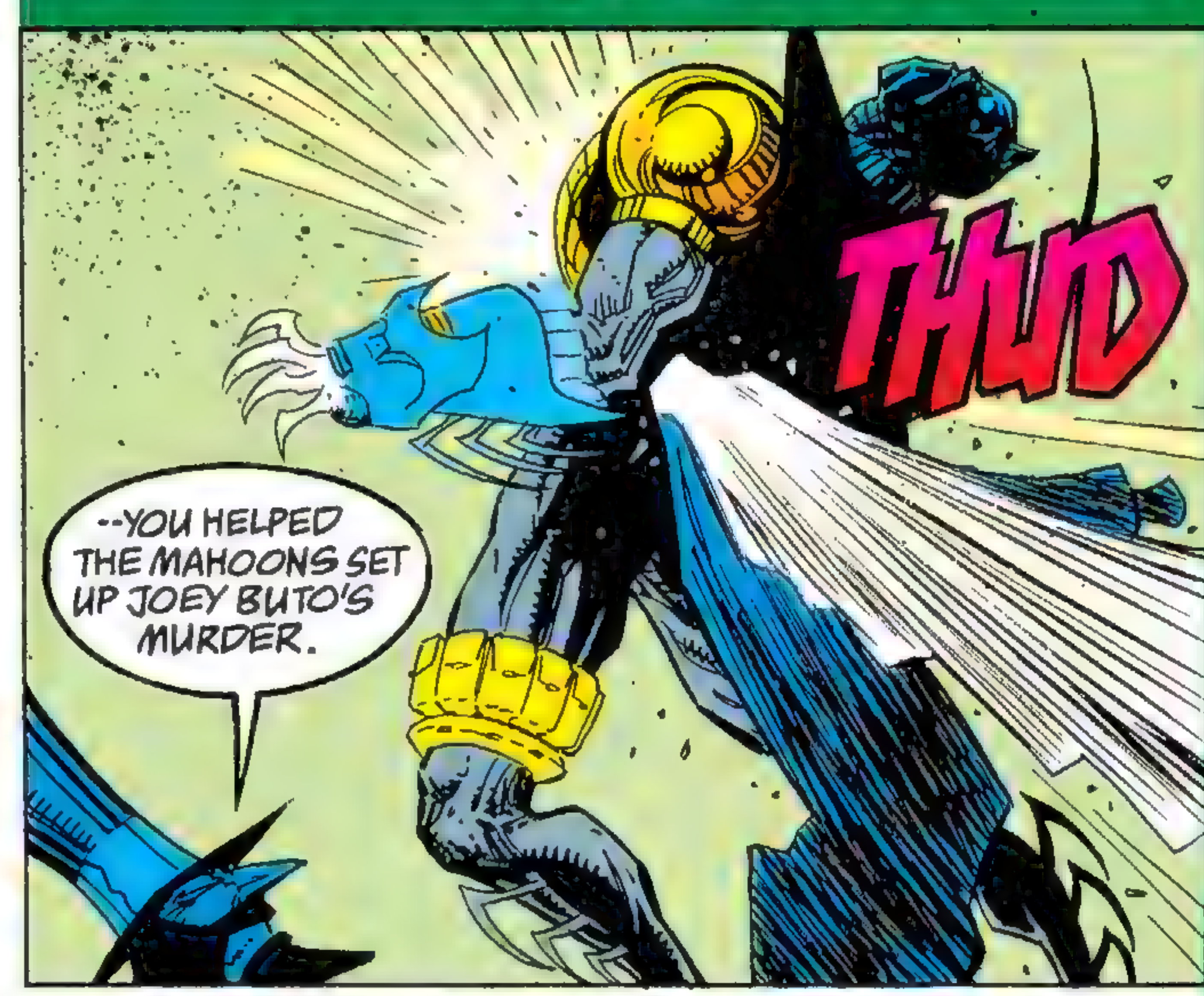


KRAK!



THIS IS THE ONLY CHANCE YOU GET! WHY ARE YOU AFTER ME? TALK!

YOU OWE SOMEBODY, BATMAN--



THUD

--YOU HELPED THE MAHOONS SET UP JOEY BUTO'S MURDER.

BENEATH THE CLOTHING HIS
MUSCLES ARE WHIPCORD.
THIS MAN KNOWS HOW TO
FIGHT.

IT'S MY
FUNCTION TO
MAKE SURE YOU
REPAY THE
DEBT!

YOU
FOOL!
YOU'VE
GOT THE
WRONG--

UNNH!

WAPP!

AN EYE
FOR AN EYE,
BATMAN--

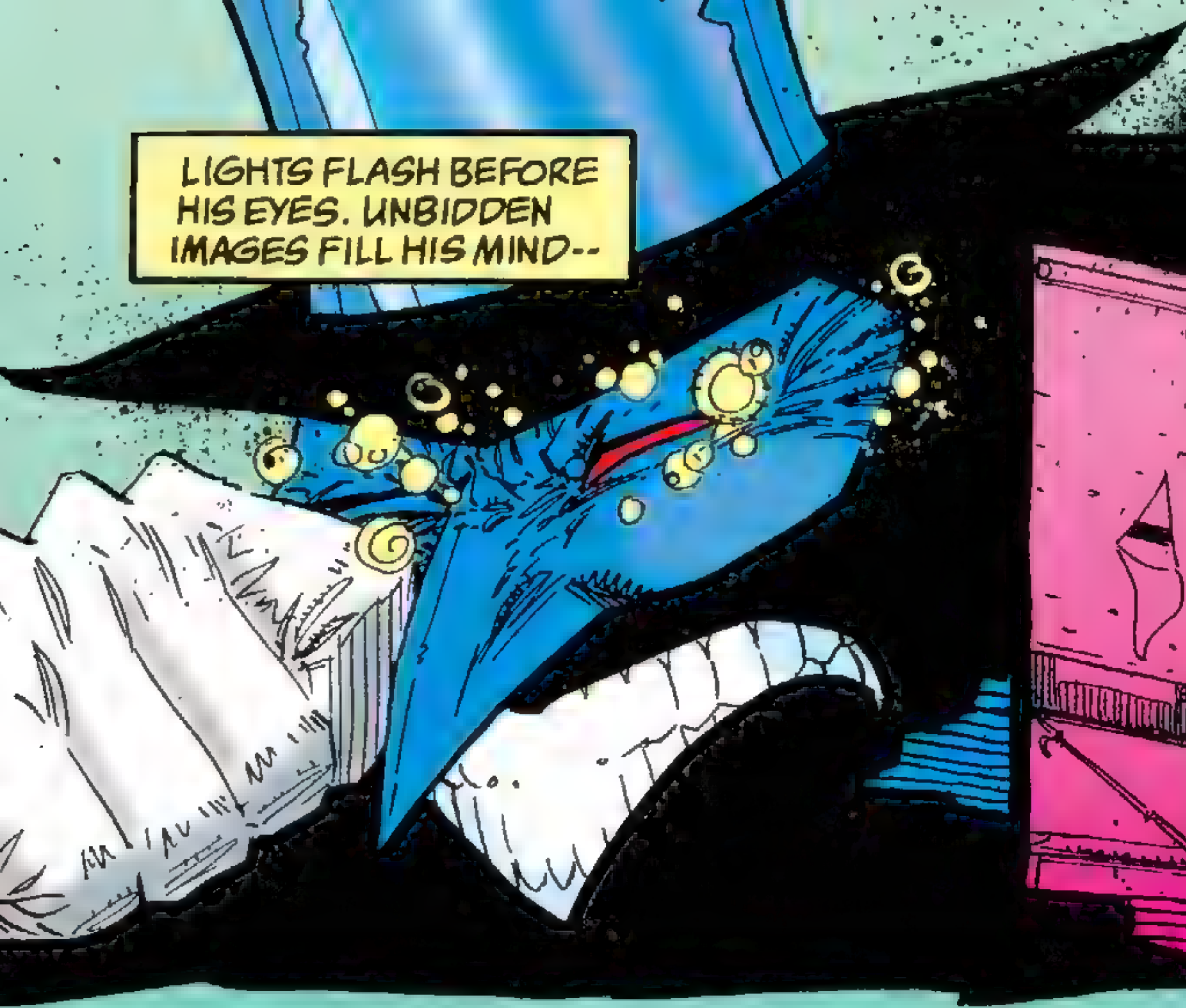
A TOOTH
FOR A
TOOTH!

ROK

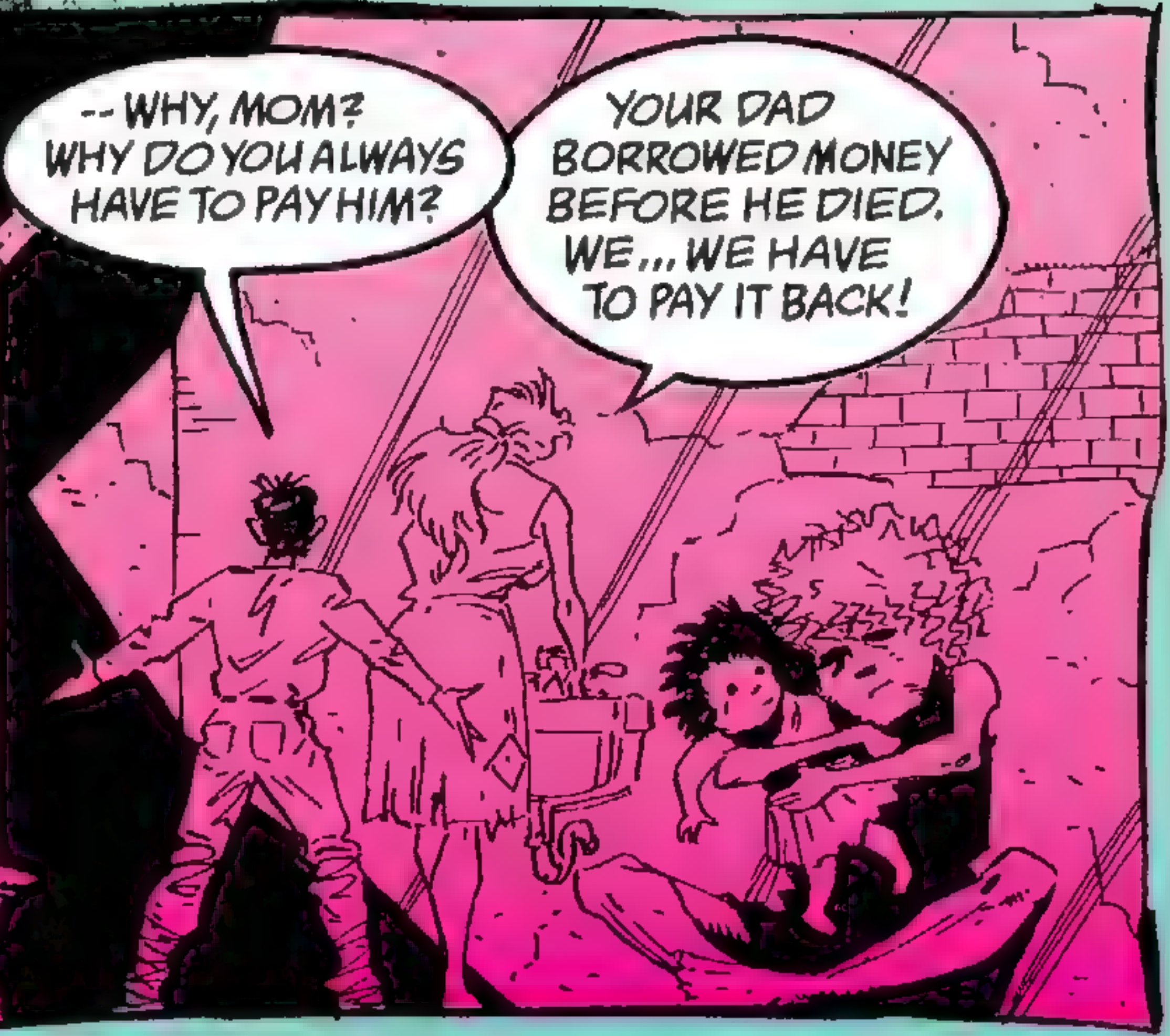
THAT'S THE
TALLY MAN'S
LAW!

KELLOW!

THUD

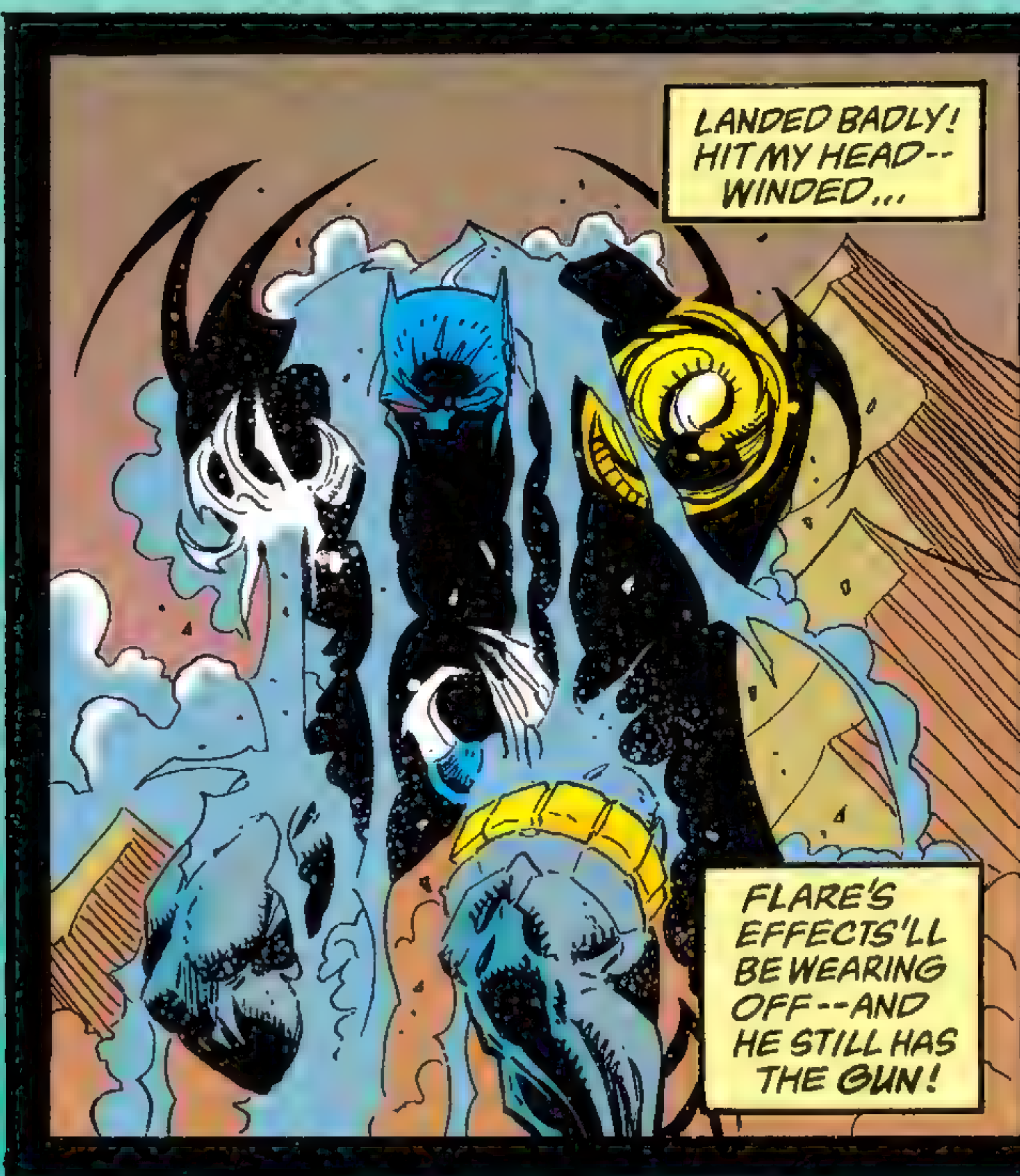


LIGHTS FLASH BEFORE HIS EYES. UNBIDDEN IMAGES FILL HIS MIND--



-- WHY, MOM? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO PAY HIM?

YOUR DAD BORROWED MONEY BEFORE HE DIED. WE... WE HAVE TO PAY IT BACK!

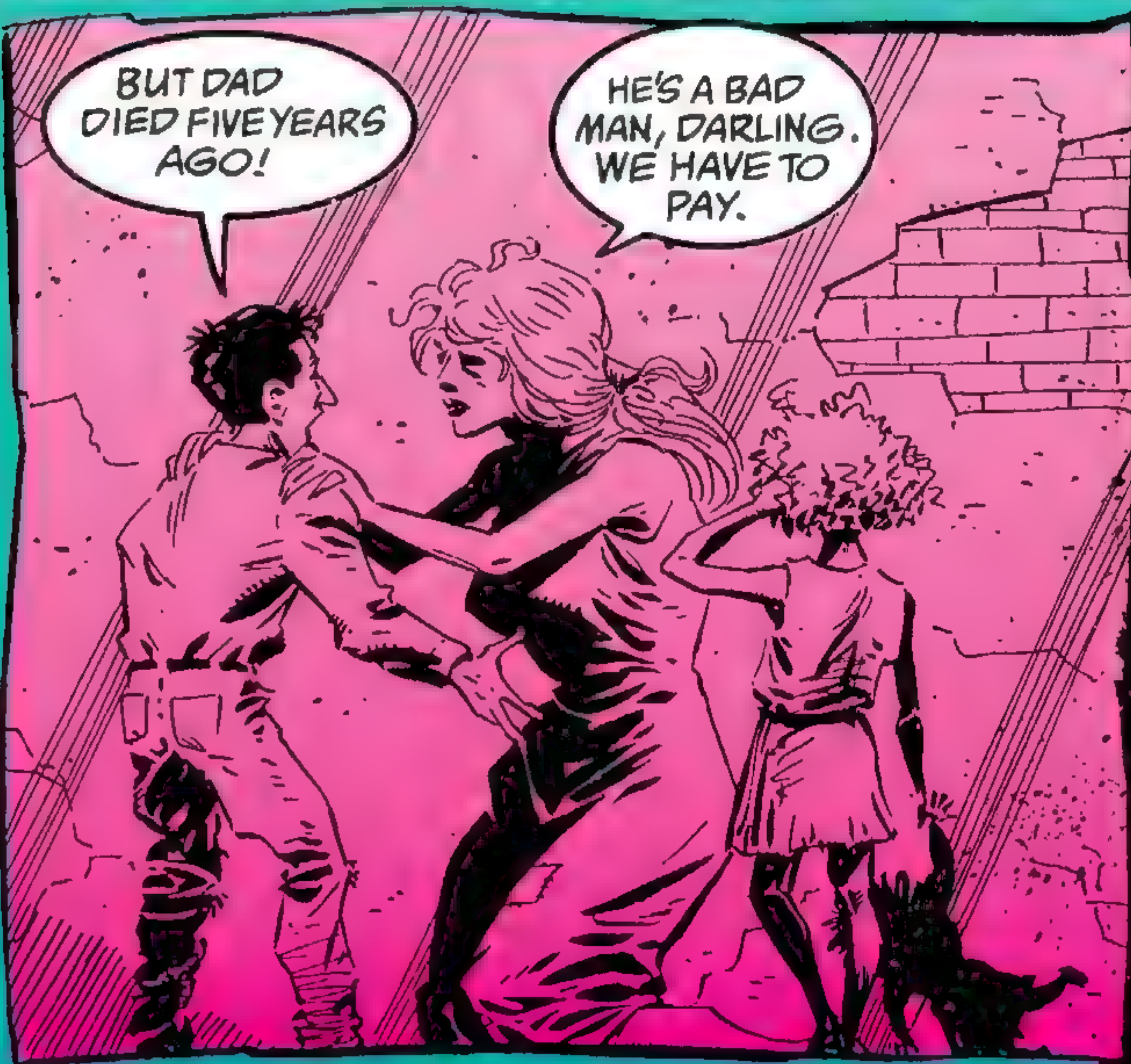


LANDED BADLY! HIT MY HEAD-- WINDED...

FLARE'S EFFECTS'LL BE WEARING OFF--AND HE STILL HAS THE GUN!



BUT HURT OR NOT, I HAVE THE SYSTEM!



BUT DAD DIED FIVE YEARS AGO!

HE'S A BAD MAN, DARLING. WE HAVE TO PAY.



EVERYBODY HAS TO PAY THE TALLY MAN!

HE REMEMBERS THE LONG,
GRINDING MONTHS--THE HUNGER--
THE SMILE ON THE FACE OF HIS
LITTLE SISTER--

I-I'M
SORRY--IT'S
SHORT.

ELIZA'S
BEEN ILL. I--
I BOUGHT HER
A DOLL....!

SMACK!

YOU WERE
WARNED WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN!

NOW YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE
TO LEARN THE
HARD WAY!

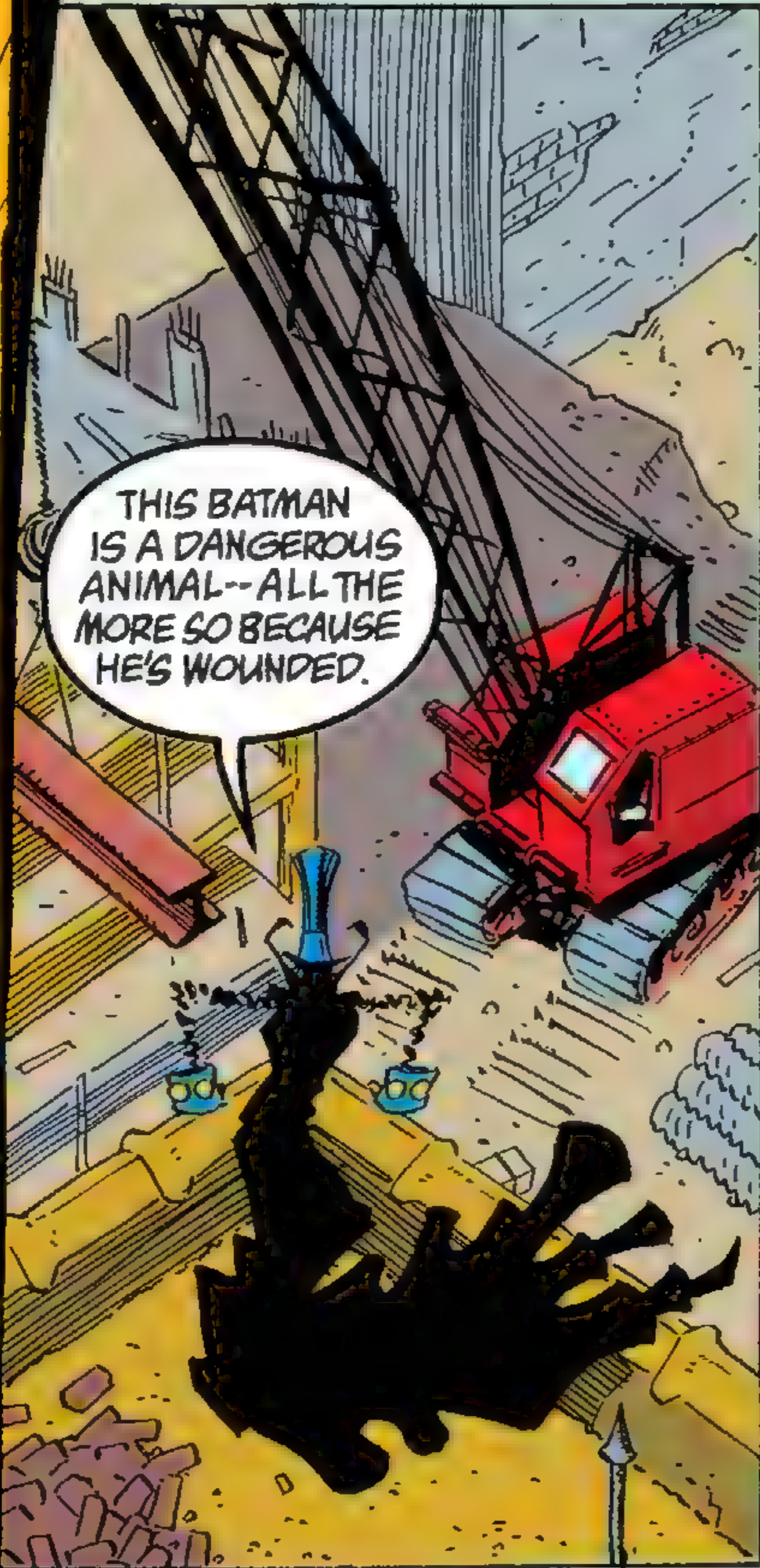
LEAVE
MY MOM
ALONE!

KRAK!

LEAVE
HER! LEAVE
HER! LEAVE
HER!



ENOUGH!



THIS BATMAN IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL-- ALL THE MORE SO BECAUSE HE'S WOUNDED.



HE MUST BE HUNTED LIKE ONE!

STRANGE, HOW THINGS WORK OUT-- THAT I SHOULD BE THE HUNTED, NOT THE HUNTER. IRONIC, TOO--



BRUCE WAYNE'S BATMAN MUST HAVE STUMBLERD ONTO SOME BACKSTABBING DEAL WITH BUTO AND THE MAHOONS. SO WHOEVER HIRED THIS TALLY MAN CREEP FIGURES BATMAN MUST HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.



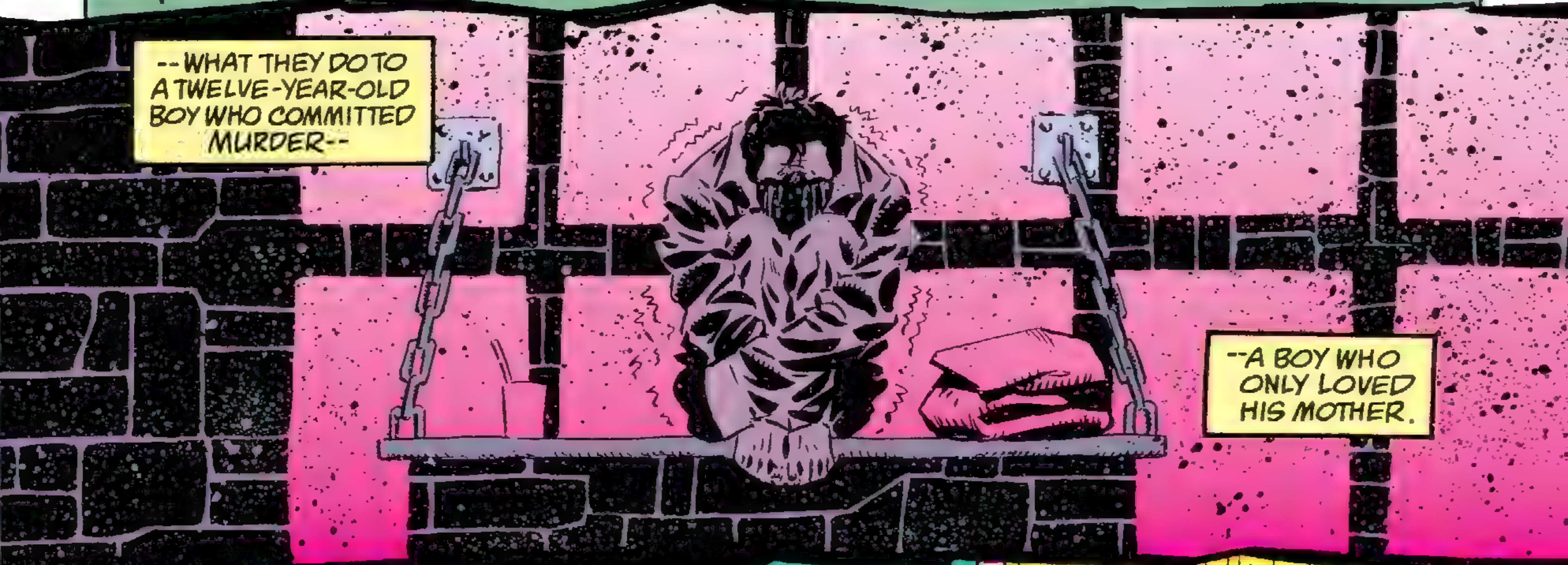
SUDDENLY, I FEEL LIKE LAUGHING.

I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM...

...AND NOW I MIGHT DIE BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE DOESN'T KNOW EITHER!



NO JOB'S EVER TAKEN
THIS LONG BEFORE. HE
FINDS IT HARDER TO
PRESS THE IMAGES
BACK--



--WHAT THEY DO TO
A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD
BOY WHO COMMITTED
MURDER--

--A BOY WHO
ONLY LOVED
HIS MOTHER.



NO! ANGRILY HE
BRUSHES THE
MEMORIES AWAY.
HE MADE HIS
DECISION. HE'S
STUCK TO IT
SIXTY-SEVEN
TIMES.

NO... ONLY
SIXTY-SIX.



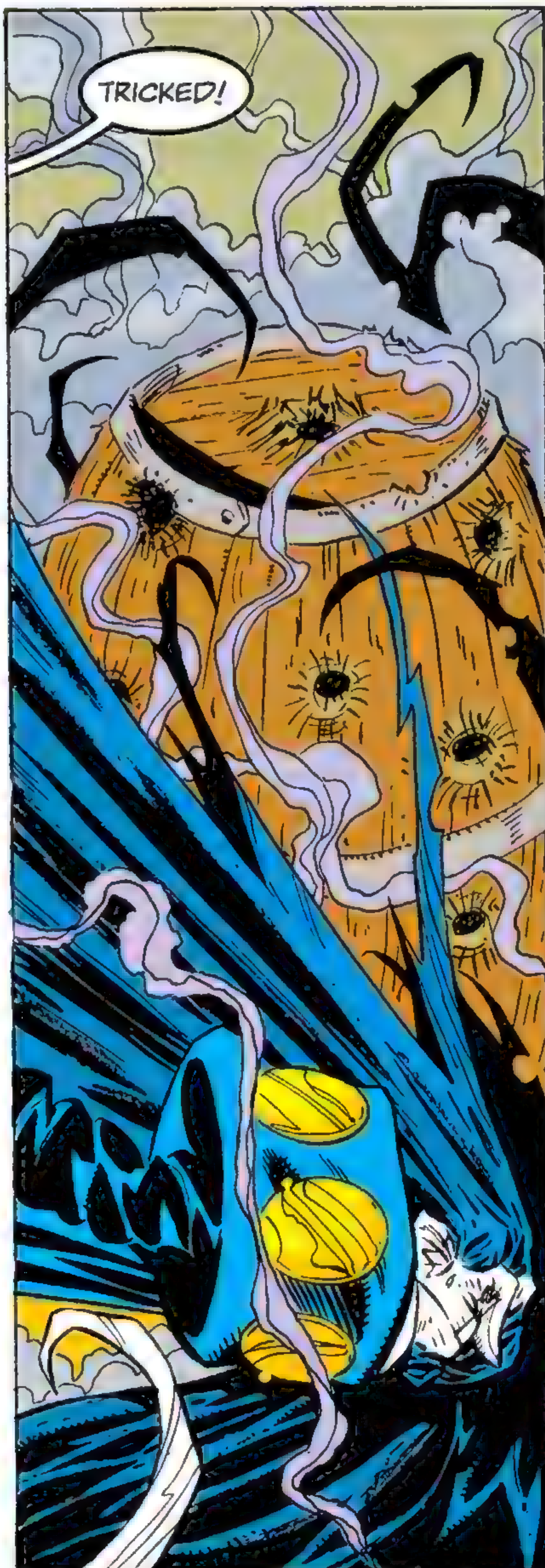
SIXTY-
SEVEN!

KCHOW
KCHOW!



VIP SPAK!

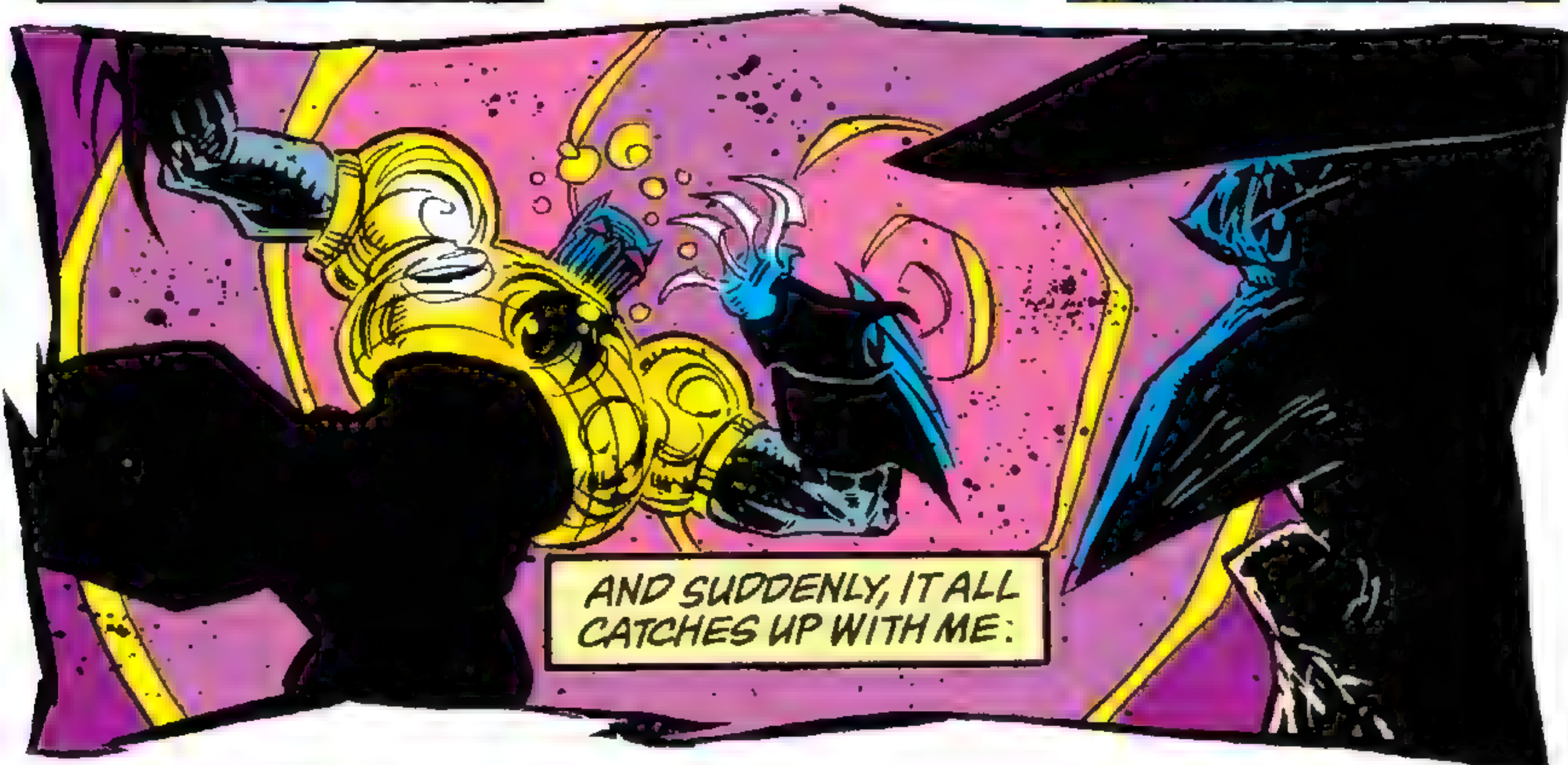
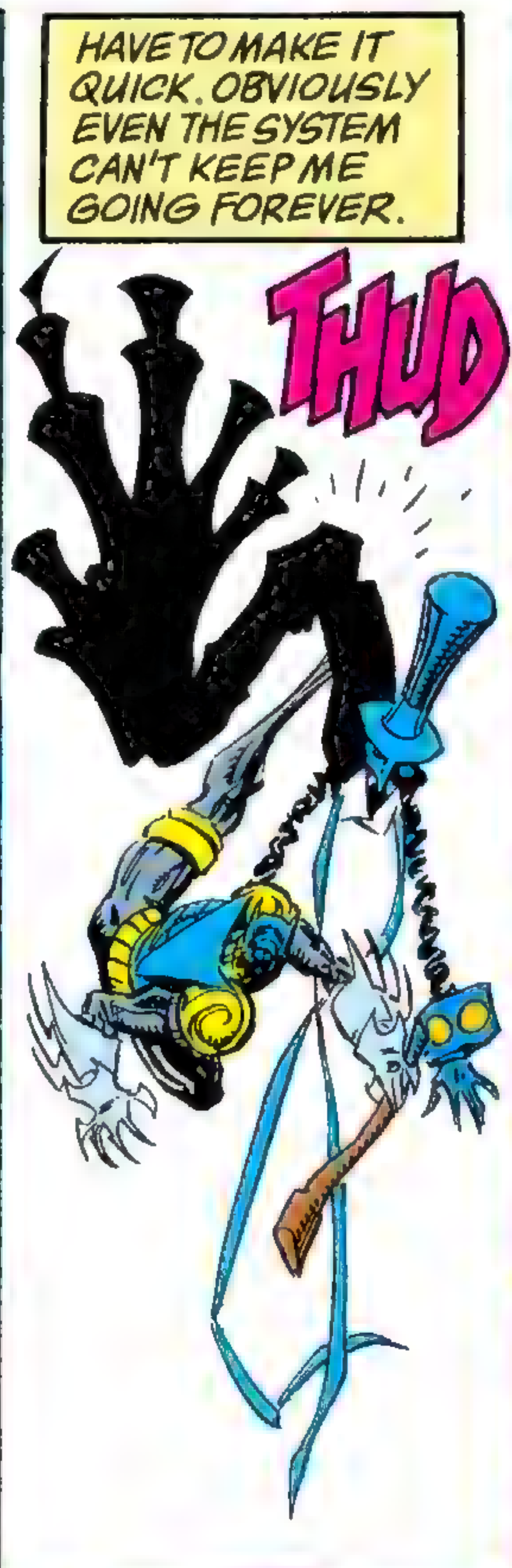
ZING





WHAT
THE--?

FFFSSSH





I TRY TO MOVE,
BUT I'M EXHAUSTED.

"I"... "I"... I KEEP USING
THE WORD, BUT I DON'T
KNOW WHO I MEAN. IS
THIS ME...?

I REMEMBER THE
ISOLATION TANK, THE
SOOTHING DARKNESS
OF THE WOMB. WAS
THAT ME...?

THE DARKNESS
CALLS ME, SOFTLY.

I FEEL LIKE I'M
COMING HOME.

AND THEN MY FATHER'S
VOICE, IMPERIOUS, COLD--

ON
YOUR FEET,
BOY!

YOU ARE
AZRAEL! ANGEL
OF VENGEANCE!
YOU WERE NOT
MADE TO DIE!

ON
YOUR FEET,
AZRAEL!



EVERYTHING'S GONE QUIET.
MAYBE IT'S ALL OVER AT LAST.

MAYBE HE WON'T
REMEMBER THE
TAUNTS--THE
BULLYING--THE
PAIN--

MOMMA'S
BOY! MOMMA'S
BOY!

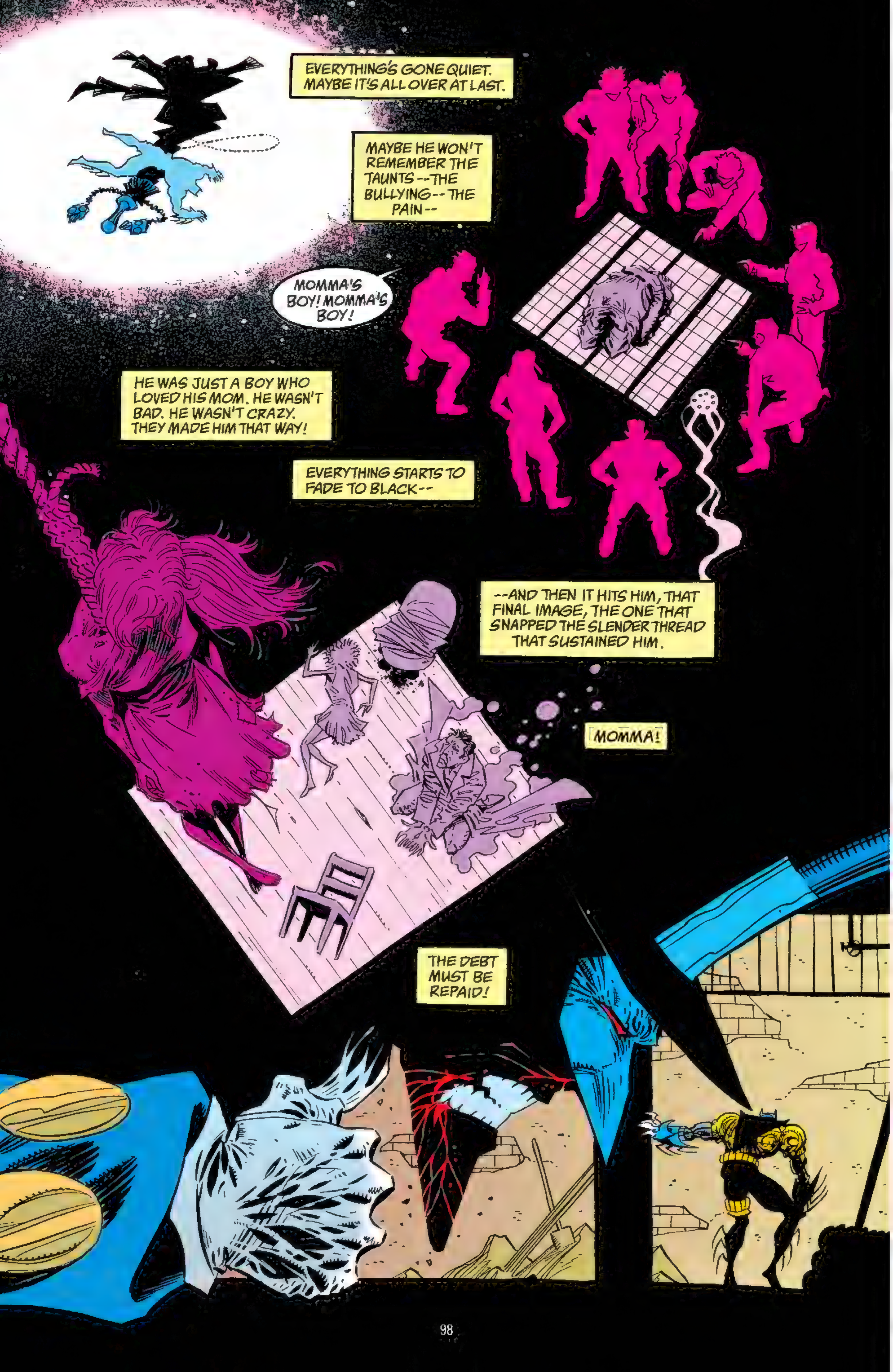
HE WAS JUST A BOY WHO
LOVED HIS MOM. HE WASN'T
BAD. HE WASN'T CRAZY.
THEY MADE HIM THAT WAY!

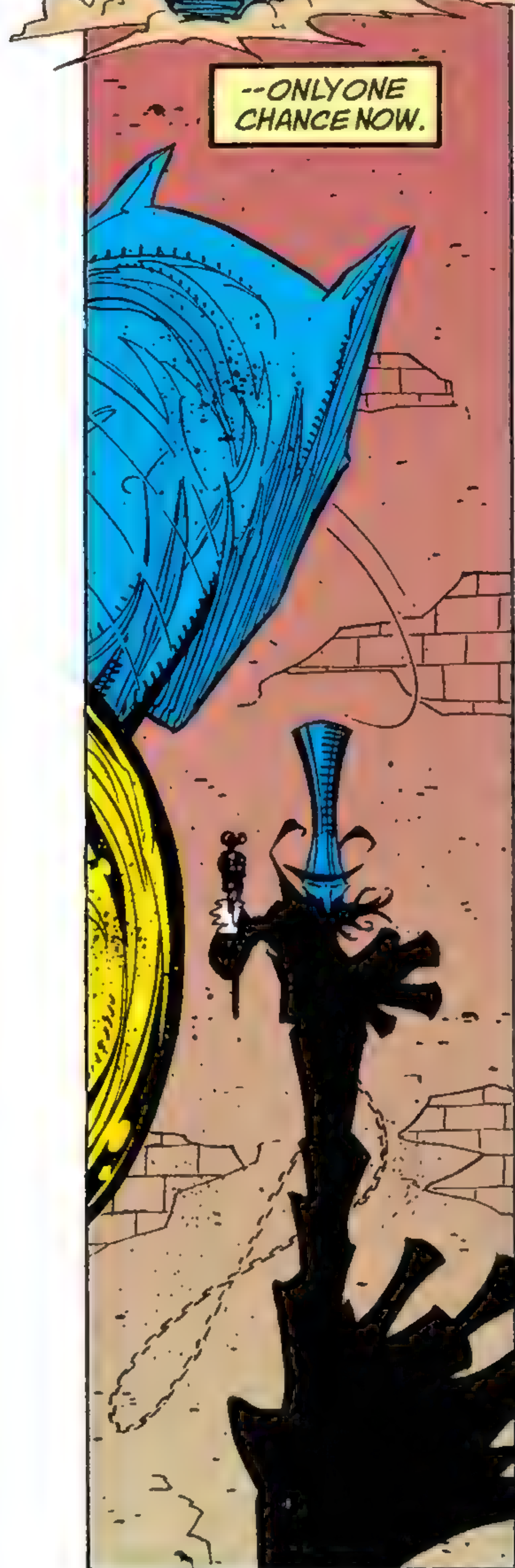
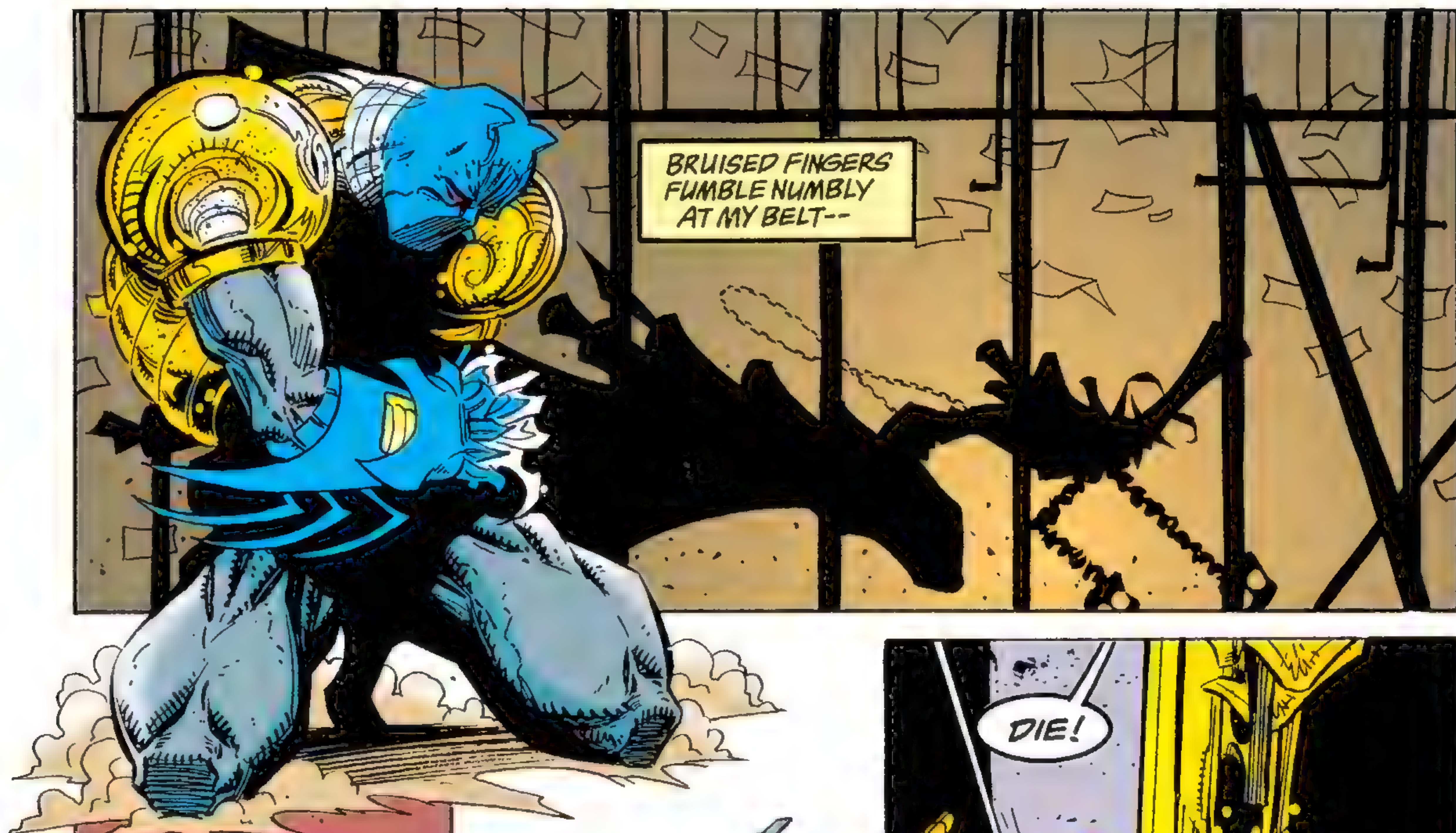
EVERYTHING STARTS TO
FADE TO BLACK--

--AND THEN IT HITS HIM, THAT
FINAL IMAGE, THE ONE THAT
SNAPPED THE SLENDER THREAD
THAT SUSTAINED HIM.

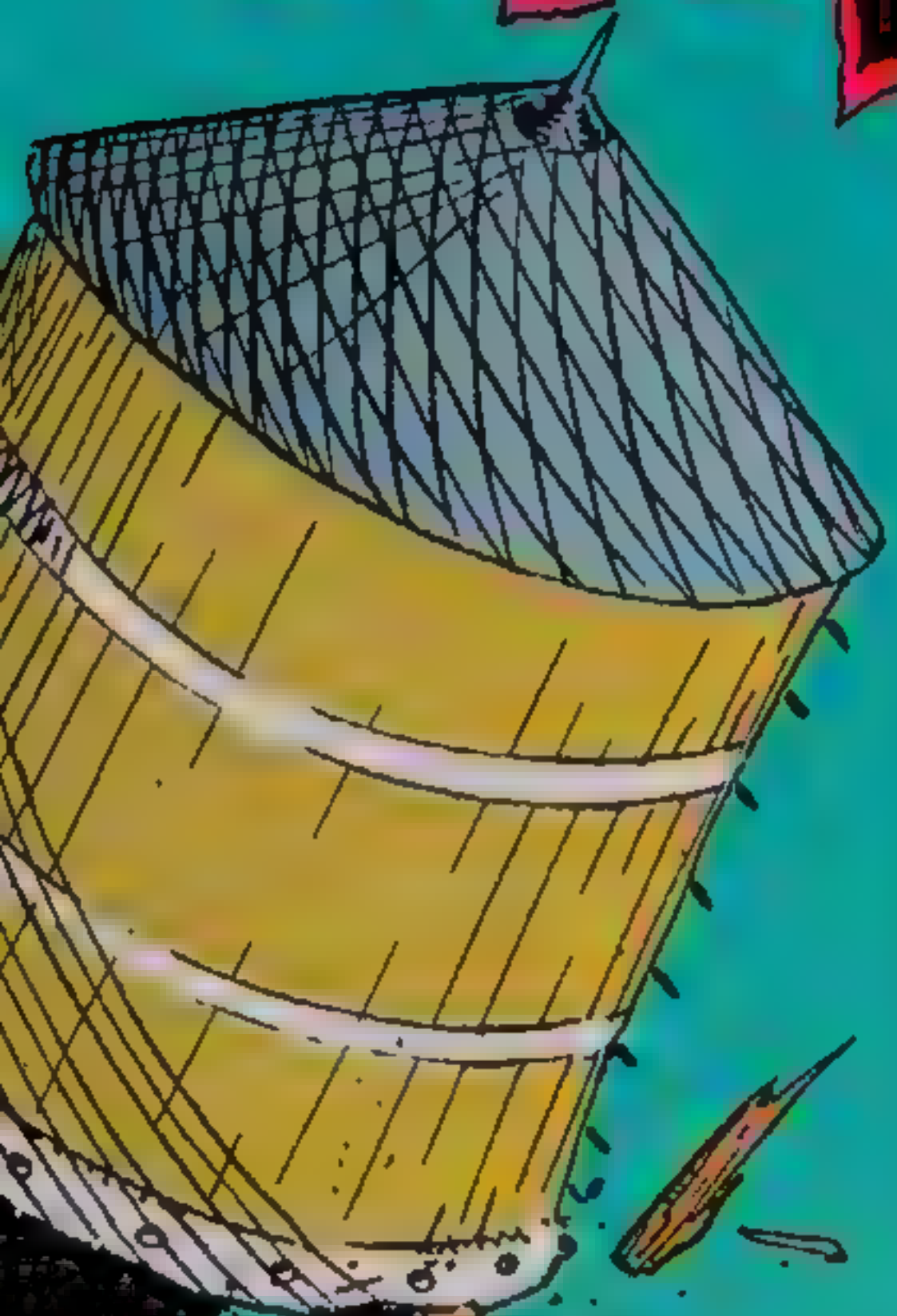
MOMMA!

THE DEBT
MUST BE
REPAID!

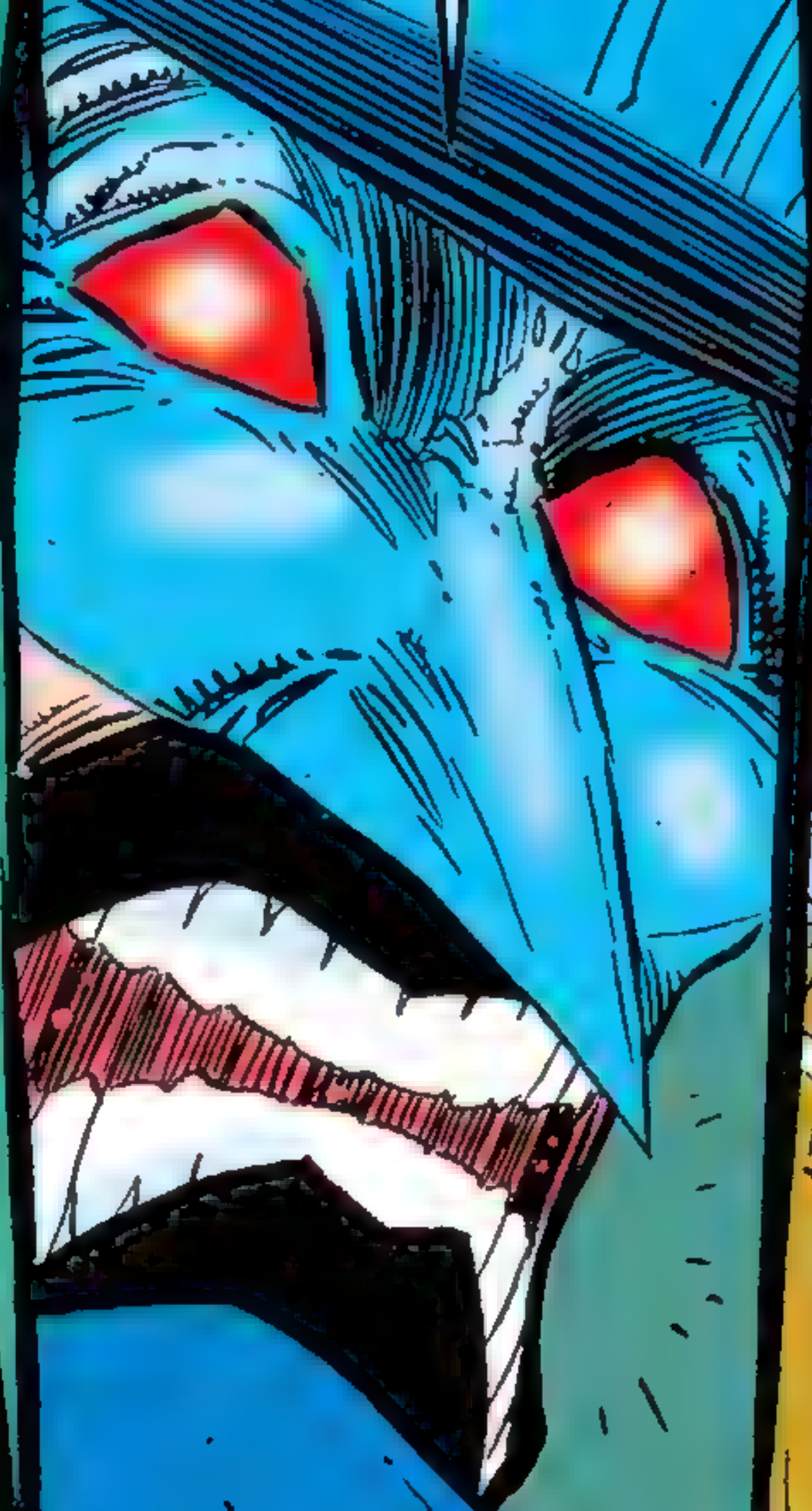




KRAAK

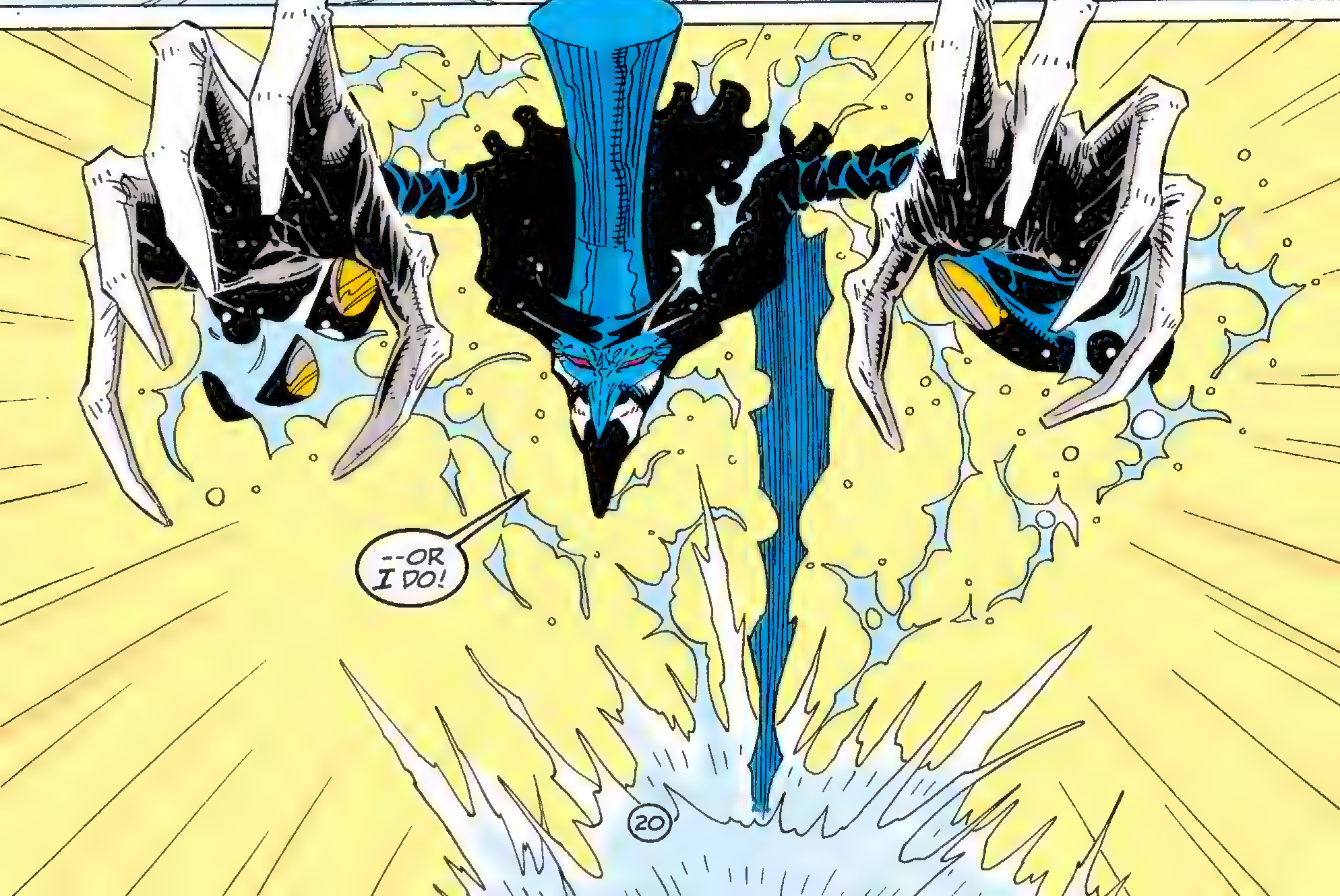
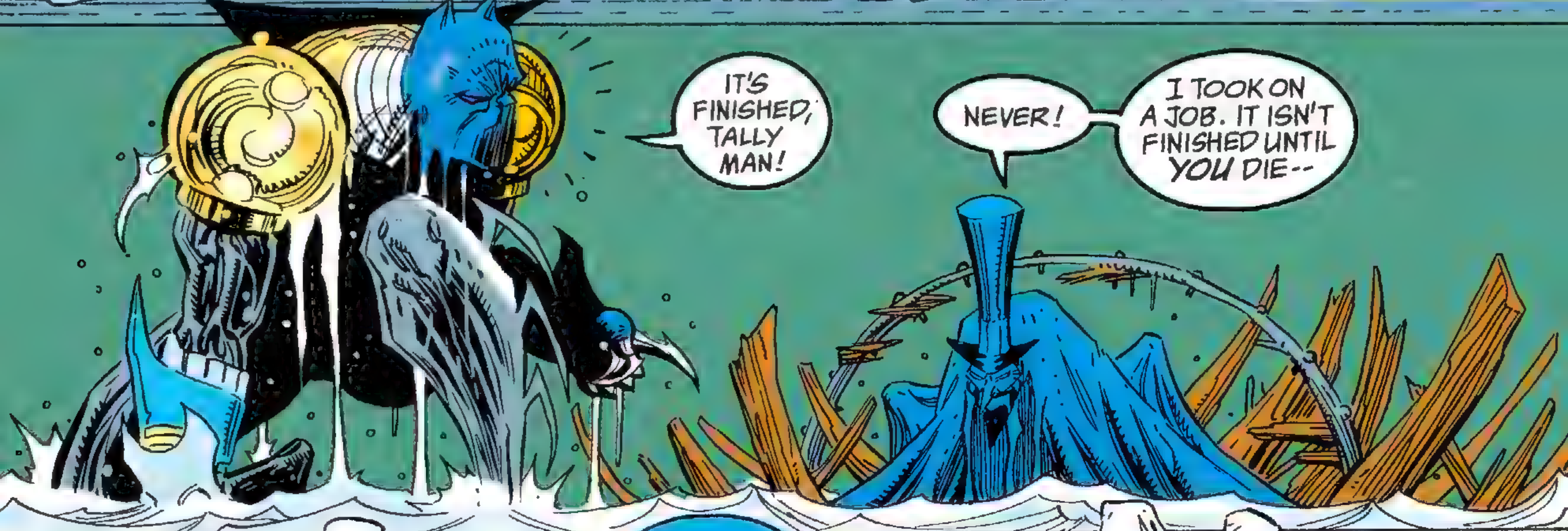
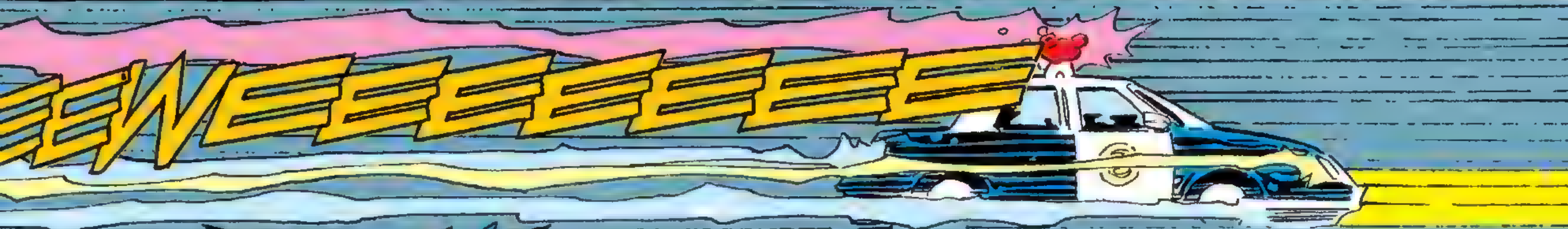
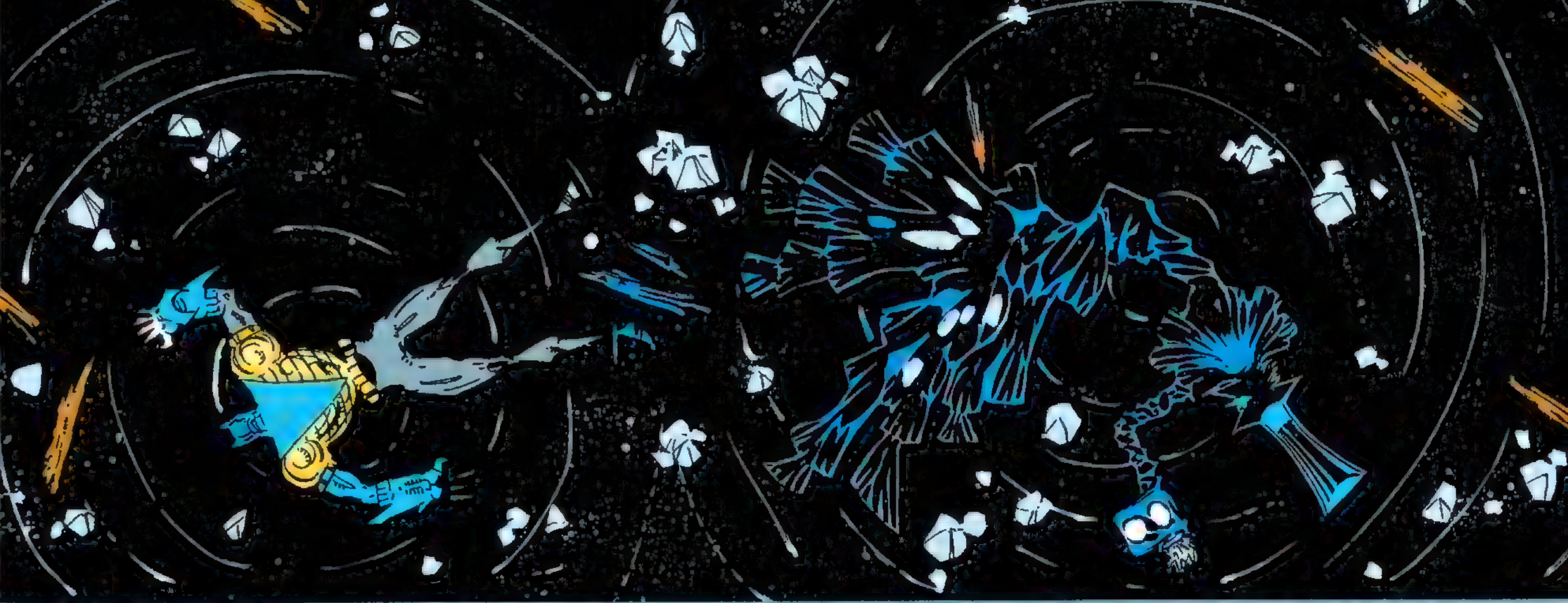


THE
WATER
TANK--!



**KERRASH!
SPLOOSH!!**





I THOUGHT THE SYSTEM HAD EXHAUSTED ITSELF. BUT SUDDENLY THERE'S AN EXPLOSION IN MY MIND. AND A COLD WIND BLOWING THROUGH MY HEART--

I'VE HAD ENOUGH! WE PLAY IT YOUR WAY!

WAKK

KRAKK!

YOUR QUARREL WASN'T WITH ME!

I'M NOT YOUR PUNY BATMAN!

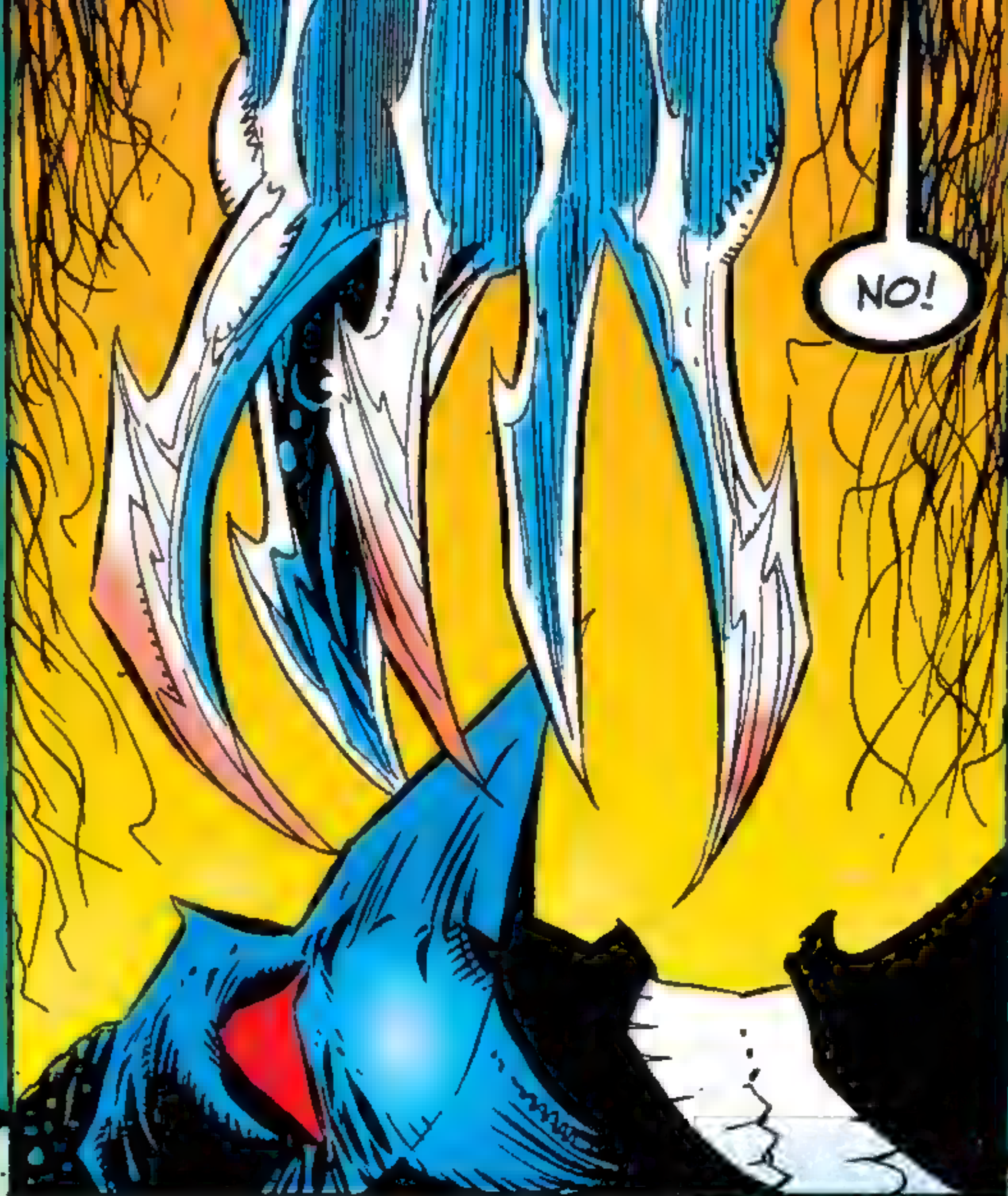
BAM!

CHOKK!

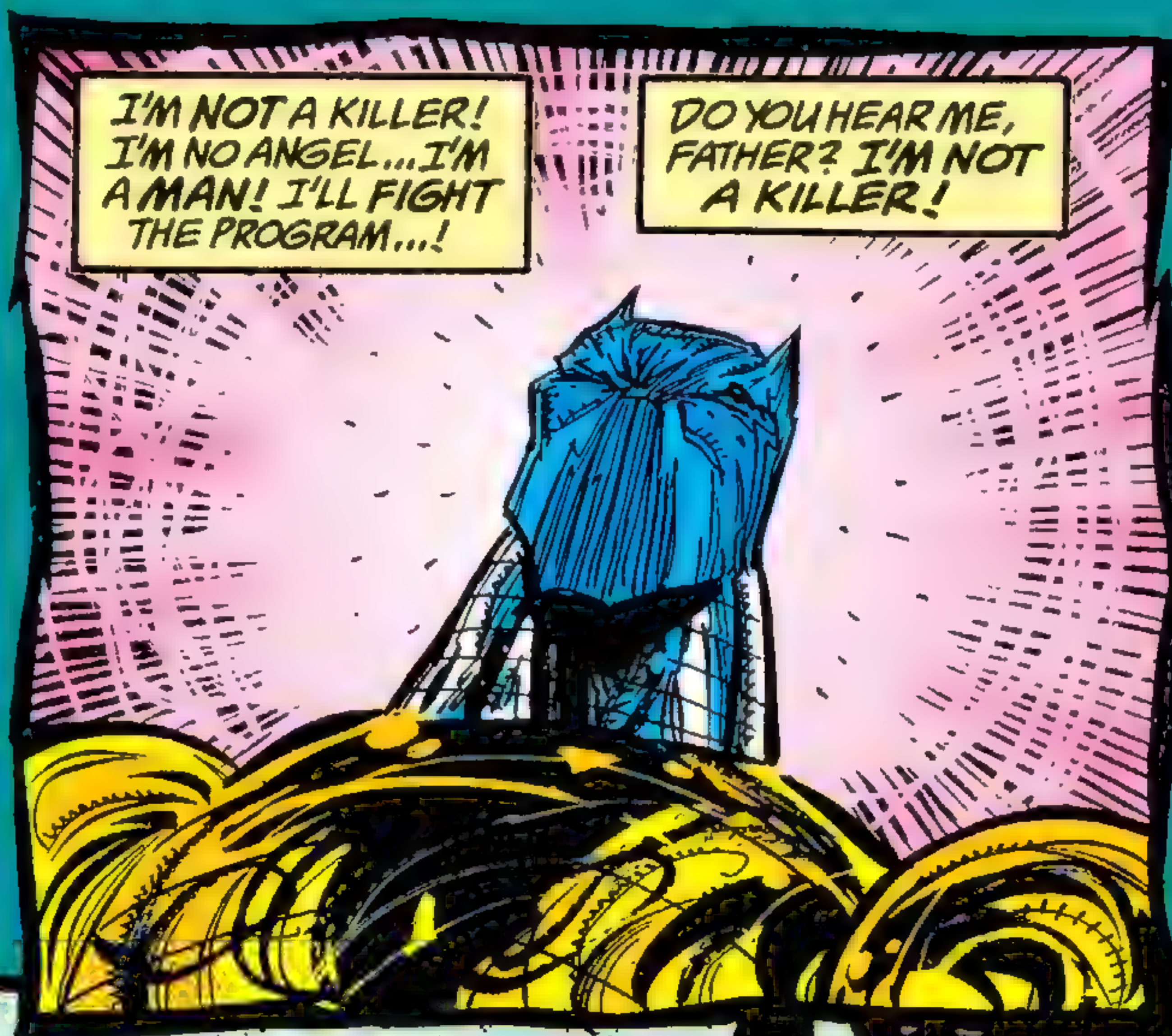
I'M THE PUNISHING ANGEL!

AZRAEL--

--HARBINGER OF DEATH!

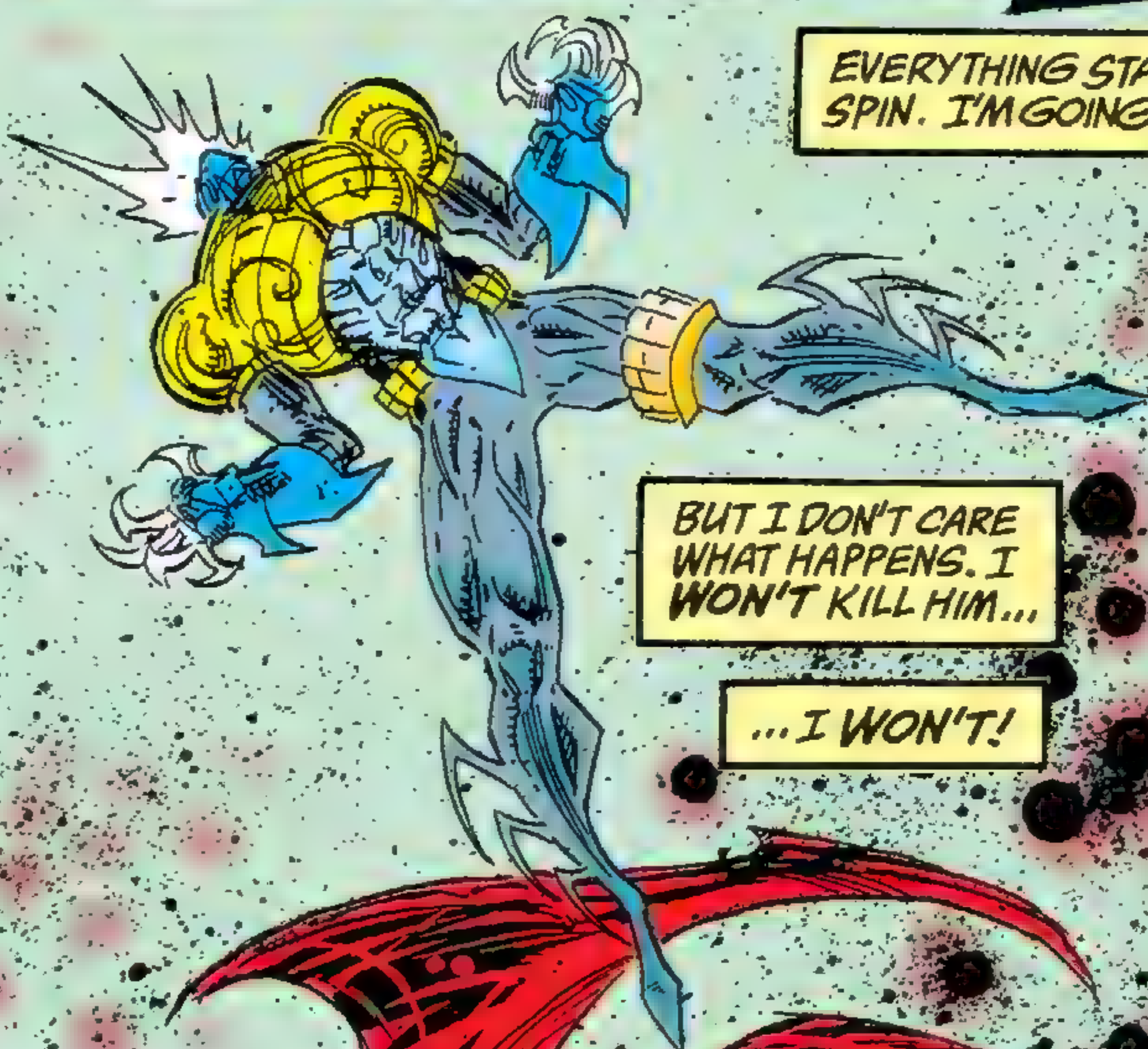


NO!



I'M NOT A KILLER!
I'M NO ANGEL... I'M
A MAN! I'LL FIGHT
THE PROGRAM...!

DO YOU HEAR ME,
FATHER? I'M NOT
A KILLER!

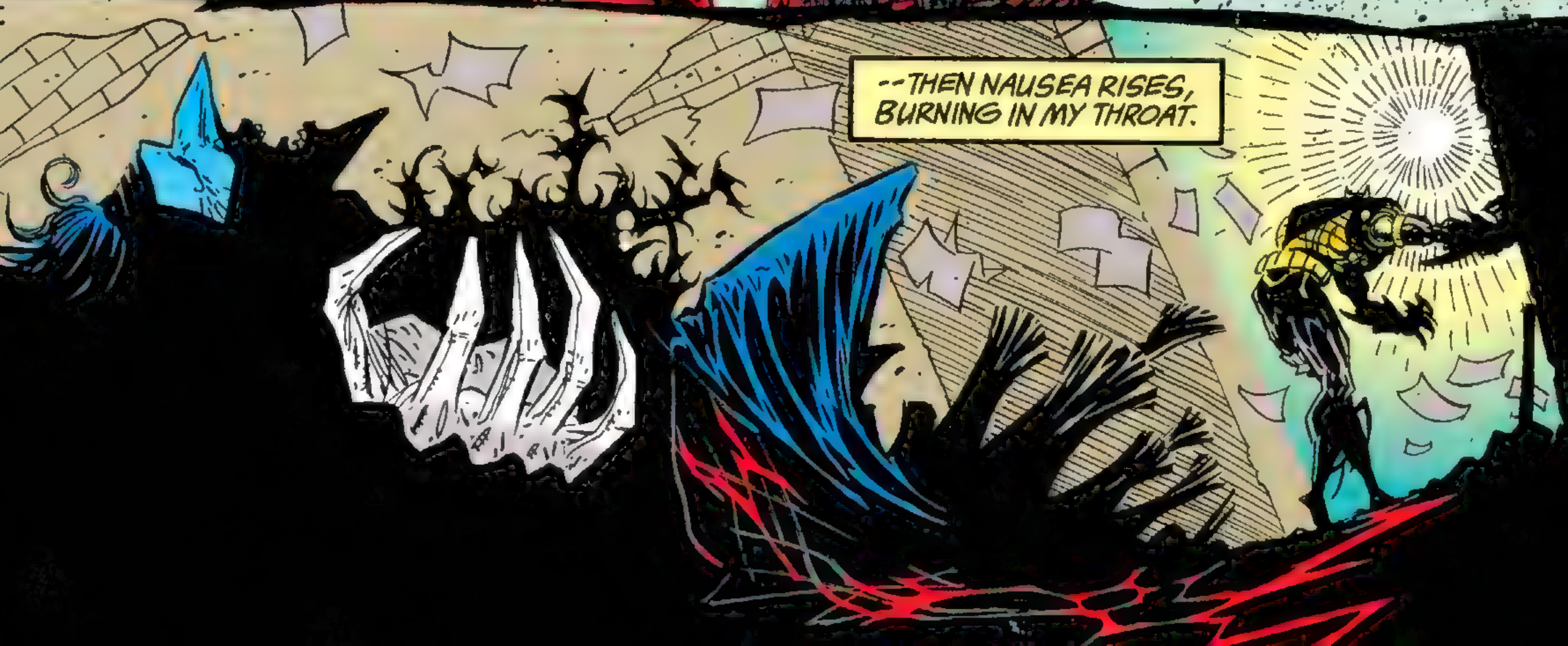


EVERYTHING STARTS TO
SPIN. I'M GOING MAD!

BUT I DON'T CARE
WHAT HAPPENS. I
WON'T KILL HIM...

...I WON'T!

DIMLY I'M AWARE OF
METAL ON FLESH... OF
FRESH BLOOD SPURTING--



--THEN NAUSEA RISES,
BURNING IN MY THROAT.



THERE--!



CALLER
SAID TWO. OTHER
ONE MUST'VE GOT
AWAY!



ONE'A THESE
COSTUMED CREEPS.
NOBODY I RECOG-
NIZE. YOU,
KITCH?

NO.



STILL
ALIVE...
CHEEZ!

OH MY GOD!
THAT'S EVIL,
BULLOCK!
EVIL!

YEAH...LOOKS
LIKE THE MAN IS
REALLY STARTIN'
TO PLAY HARD-
BALL!



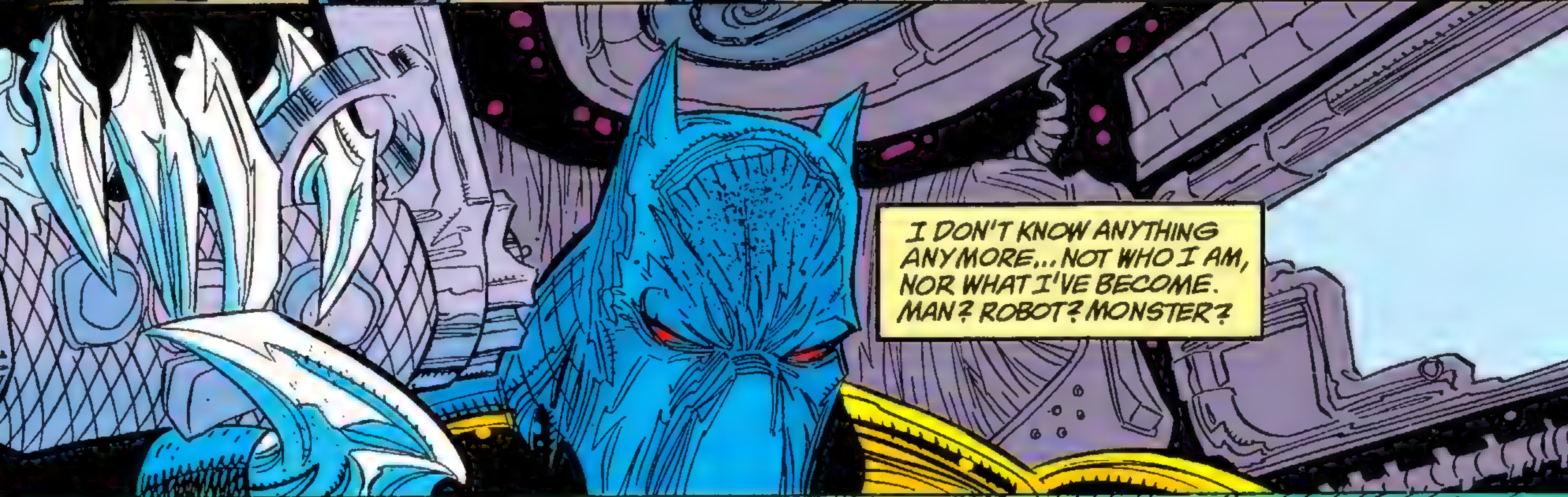
I DON'T BELIEVE
I DID THAT!

NOT TO ANOTHER HUMAN
BEING...EVEN ONE WHO
WAS TRYING TO KILL ME.

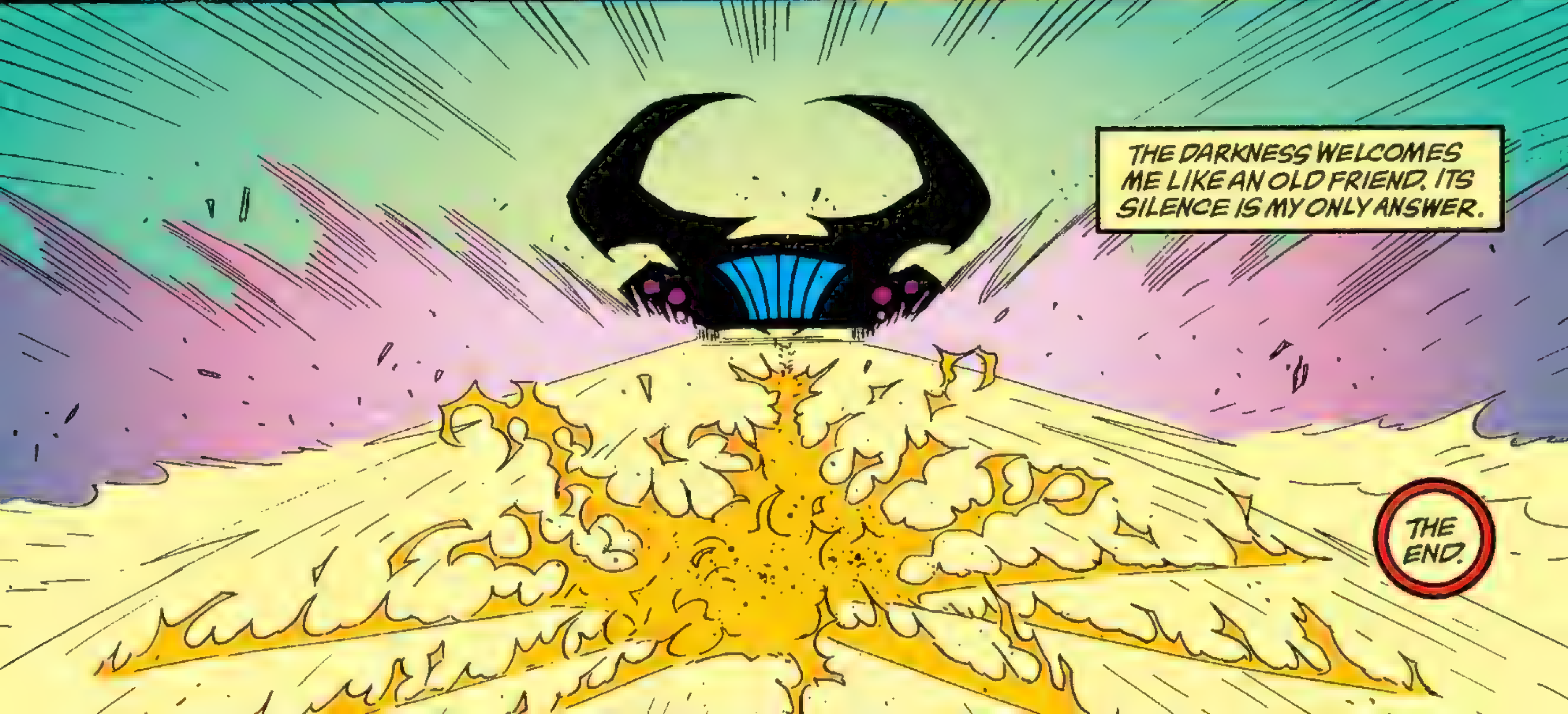
IT WAS THE SYSTEM! WHEN I
TRIED TO FIGHT ITS ORDERS,
EVERYTHING WENT CRAZY. IT
WASN'T MY FAULT!

BUT IF IT WAS
THE SYSTEM...

...AND IF I BEAT
THE SYSTEM...JUST
PLAIN WHY?



I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING
ANYMORE...NOT WHO I AM,
NOR WHAT I'VE BECOME.
MAN? ROBOT? MONSTER?



THE DARKNESS WELCOMES
ME LIKE AN OLD FRIEND. ITS
SILENCE IS MY ONLY ANSWER.

THE
END.

Cover art by KELLEY JONES

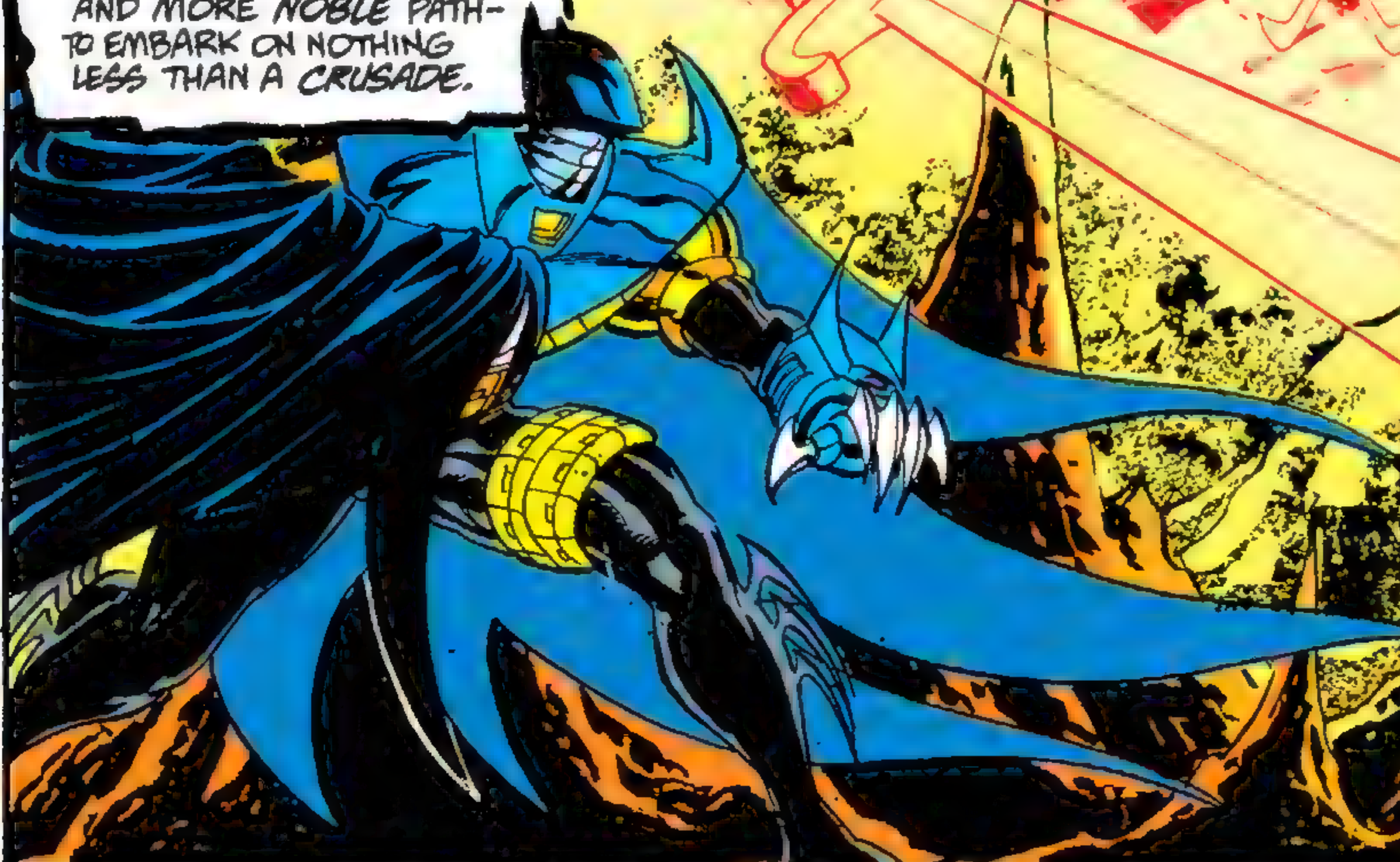


THE APPARITION OF
SAINT DUMAS--
MY PATRON--AGAIN...

HEAR ME
WELL, DARK
ANGEL, AND HEED
MY WORDS.

AS THE AVENGER
AZRAEL, YOU SERVED
AS ASSASSIN IN MY
NAME, ALTHOUGH NO
ONE BEGGED MY LEAVE,
NO ONE ASKED MY WILL.

NOW I STATE MY WILL:
YOU MUST ATONE FOR
YOUR PAST, LEAVING THE
BASE WAYS OF THE ASSASSIN
BEHIND--TO MARK A NEW
AND MORE NOBLE PATH--
TO EMBARK ON NOTHING
LESS THAN A CRUSADE.



YOU MUST NOW
BECOME A PROTECTOR
AND DEFENDER
OF LIFE.



YOU MUST DO
JUSTICE TO THIS
NEW DARKNESS IN
WHICH YOU HAVE
CLOAKED YOURSELF.



YOU
MUST
PROVE
YOURSELF...

SKEE EEE SKEEE

...WORTHY.



SKEEE SKEE EEE

MORE THAN A
DREAM, BUT STILL...
ALL IN MY MIND?
AND IF SO...THE
SYSTEM...OR MY OWN
IMAGINATION?



EITHER WAY, THE
MESSAGE WAS TRUTH.
IT IS A CRUSADE...

CODE NAME: NEKROS

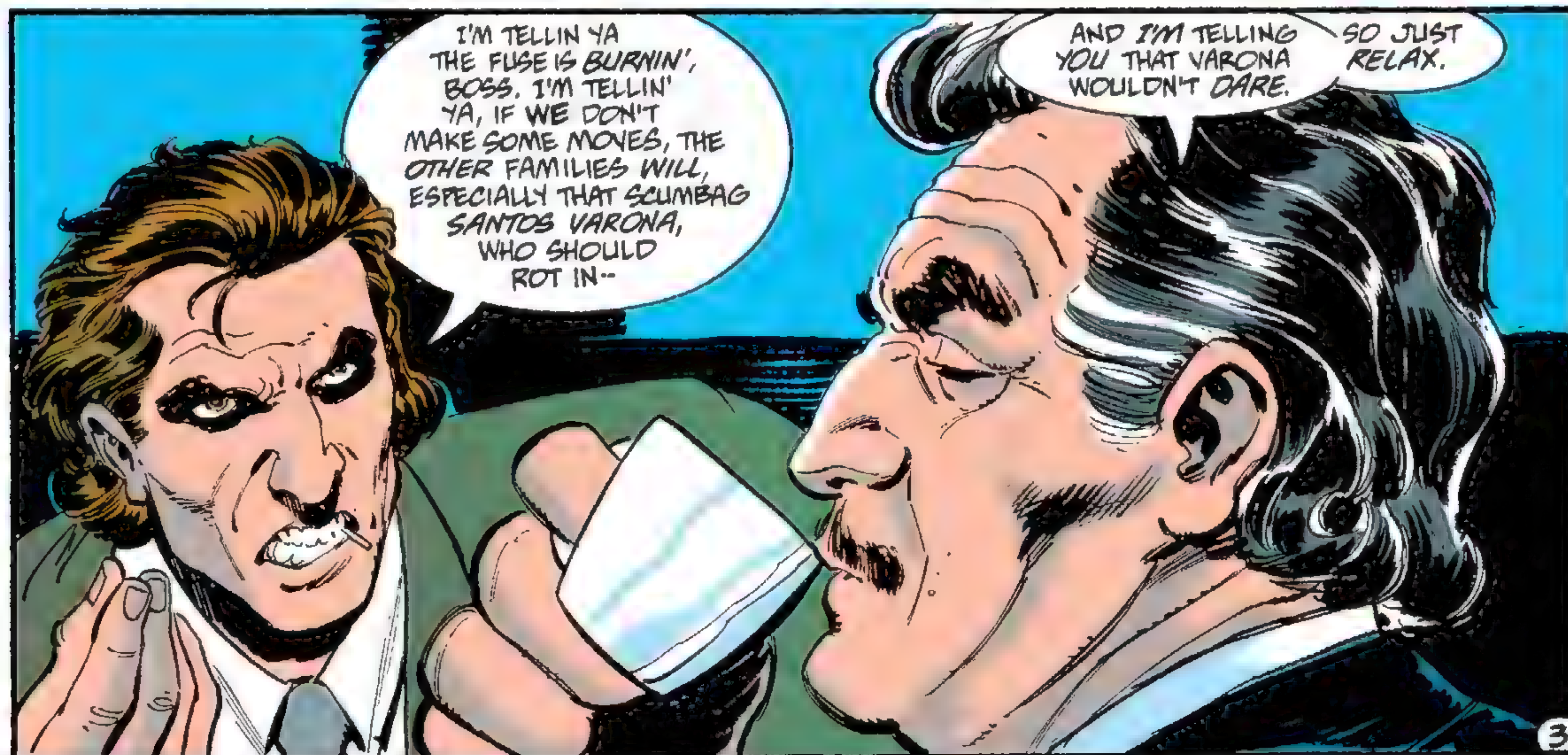
AND BANE WAS JUST
THE BEGINNING.

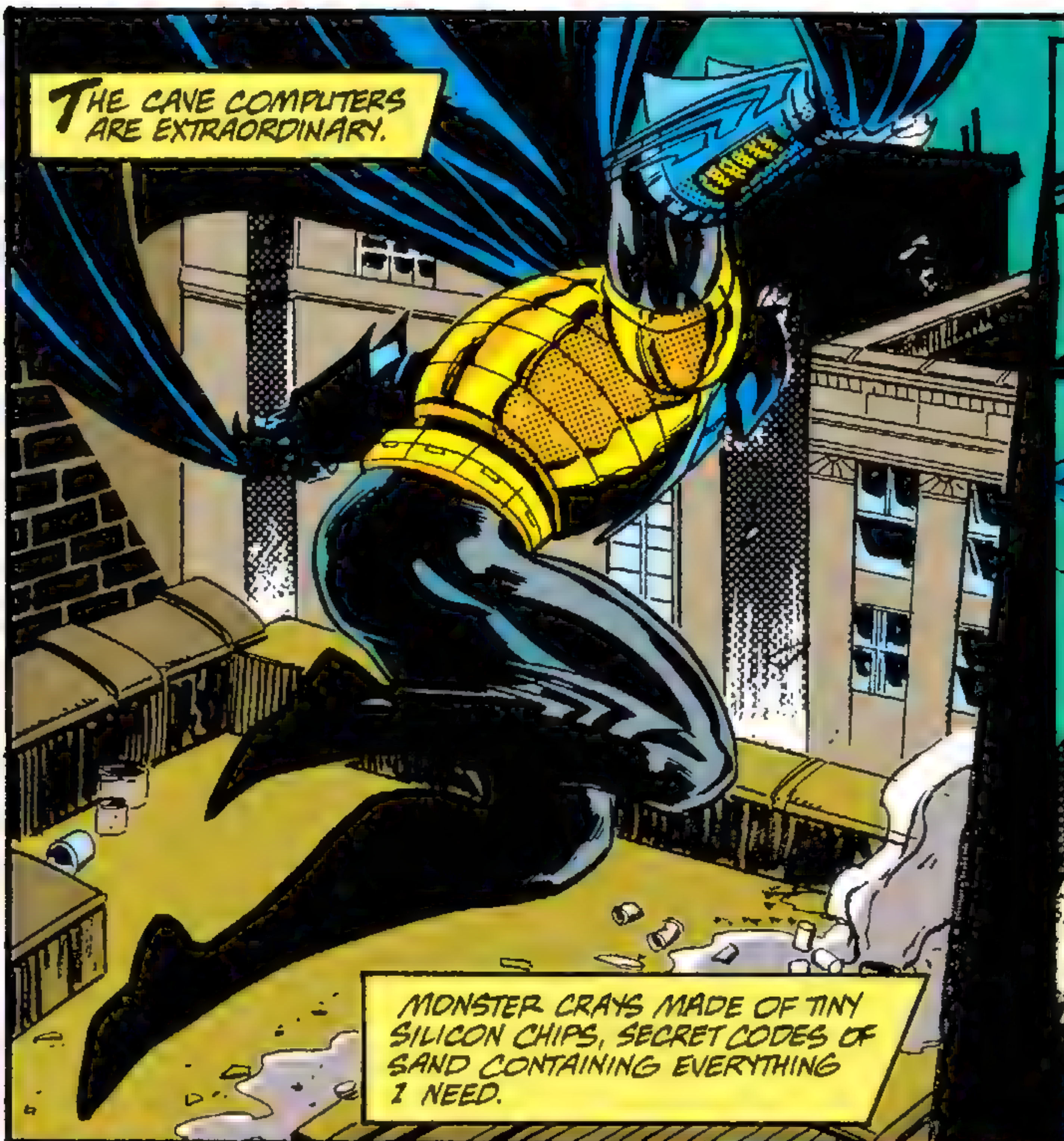
NOW THAT THE DEVIL IS
DOWN, ALL HELL IS
LEADERLESS AND
WAITING TO EXPLODE.

ONLY A FOOL, OR A
VERY DARK ANGEL,
WOULD DESCEND
INTO THE FALLOUT.

I'M READY.

DOUG MOENCH WRITER MIKE MANLEY ARTIST ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST KEN BRUZENAK LETTERER JORDAN B. GORFINKEL ASSISTANT EDITOR DENNIS O'NEIL EDITOR BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE





THE CAVE COMPUTERS
ARE EXTRAORDINARY.

MONSTER CRAYS MADE OF TINY
SILICON CHIPS, SECRET CODES OF
SAND CONTAINING EVERYTHING
I NEED.



DETAILED FILES ON ALL THE CRIME
FAMILIES IN GOTHAM-KNOWN MEMBERS,
RAP SHEETS, SUSPECTED CRIMES,
CROSS-INDEXED ASSOCIATIONS...

...EVEN KNOWN
HANGOUTS.



YOU
SURE THE
DOOR'S
OPEN?

.75

PAID
TONY MYSELF,
FIVE LARGE
THIS AFTER-
NOON.



BUT I'M STILL LATE.

THEY DON'T NEED
THE SECRET CODES
OF COMPUTER DATA.

THEY OPERATE WITH
INSIDE KNOWLEDGE.

4



WHO'S THAT?

I THOUGHT TONY SAID THAT DOOR WAS--

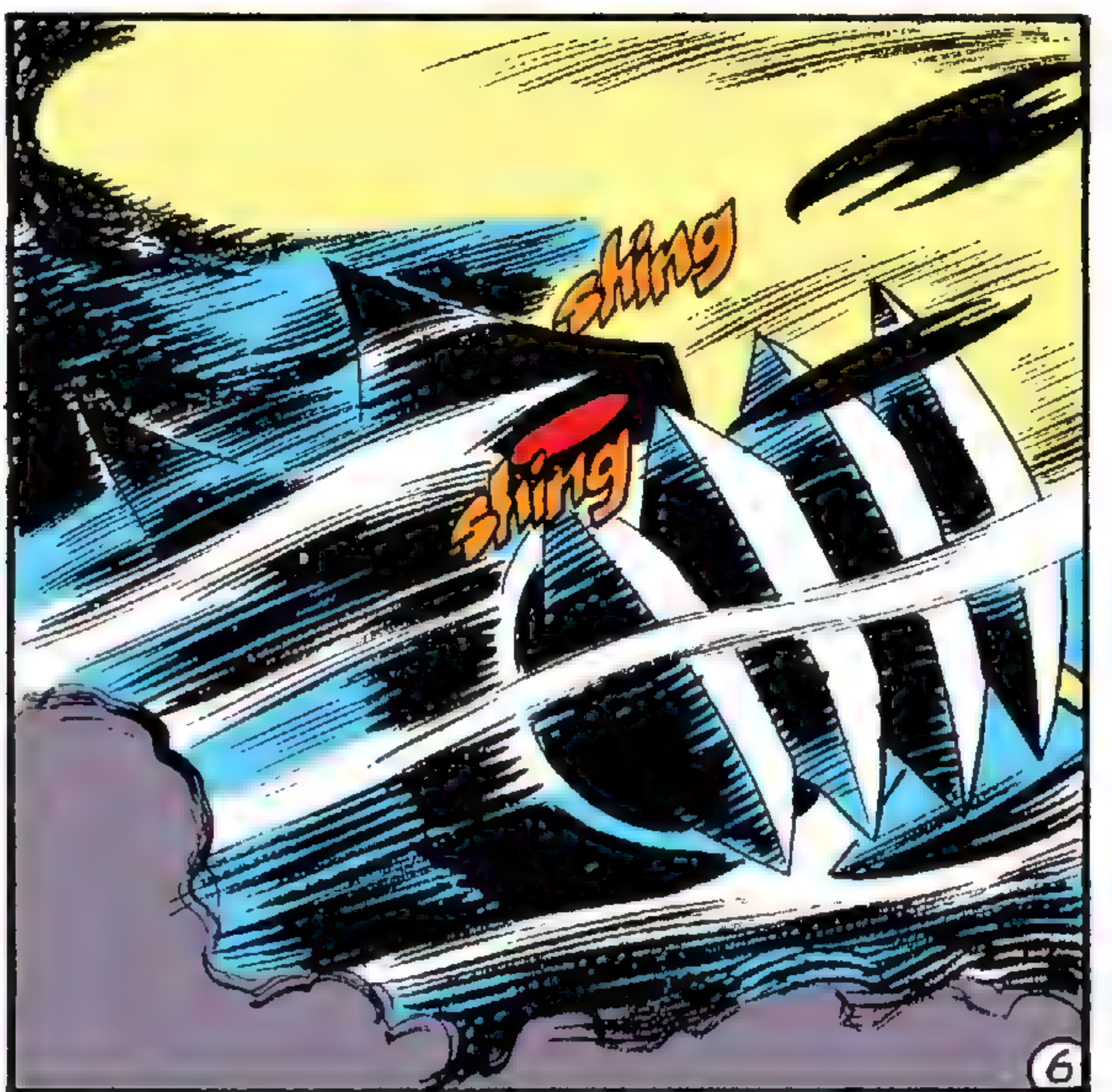
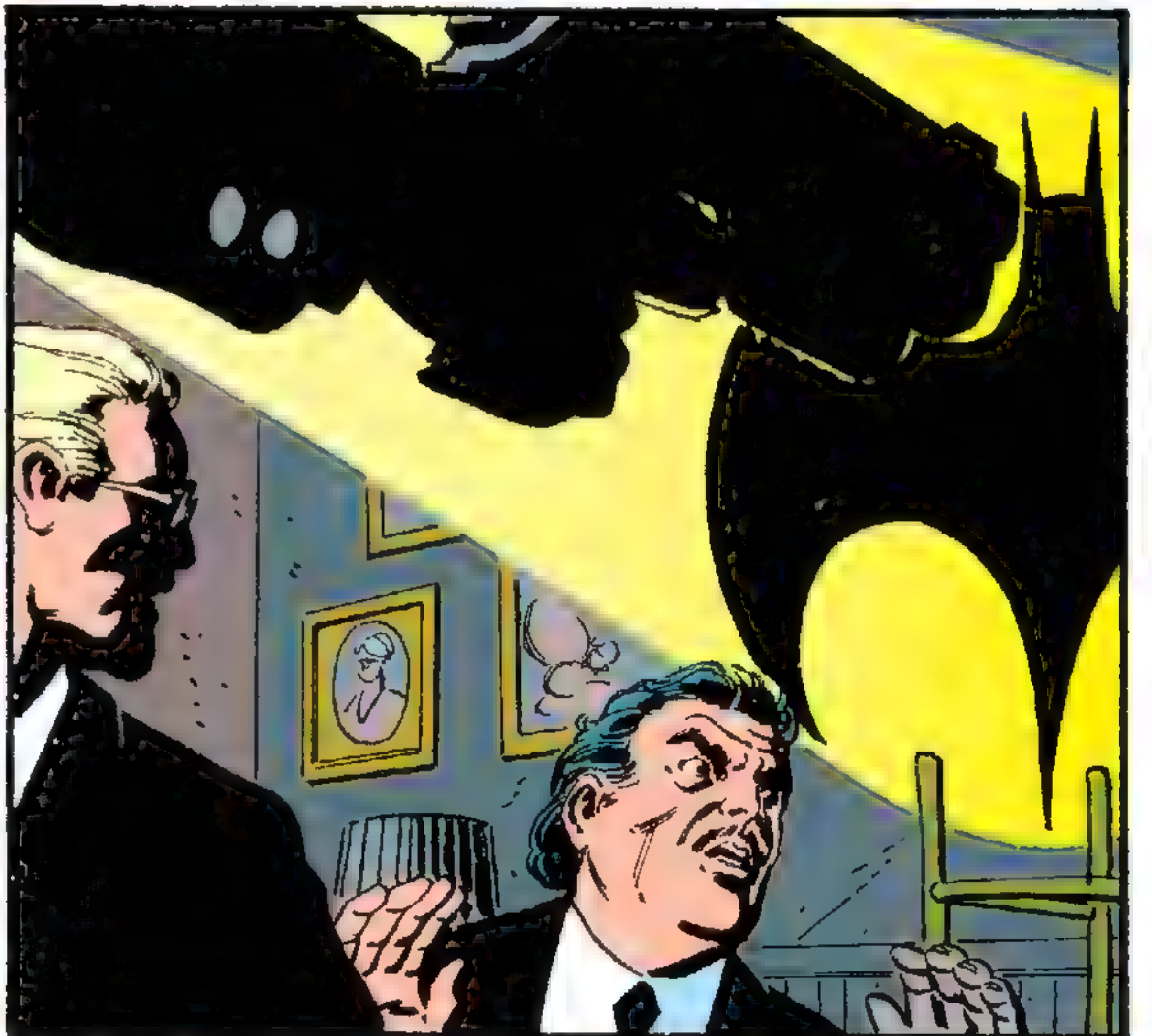
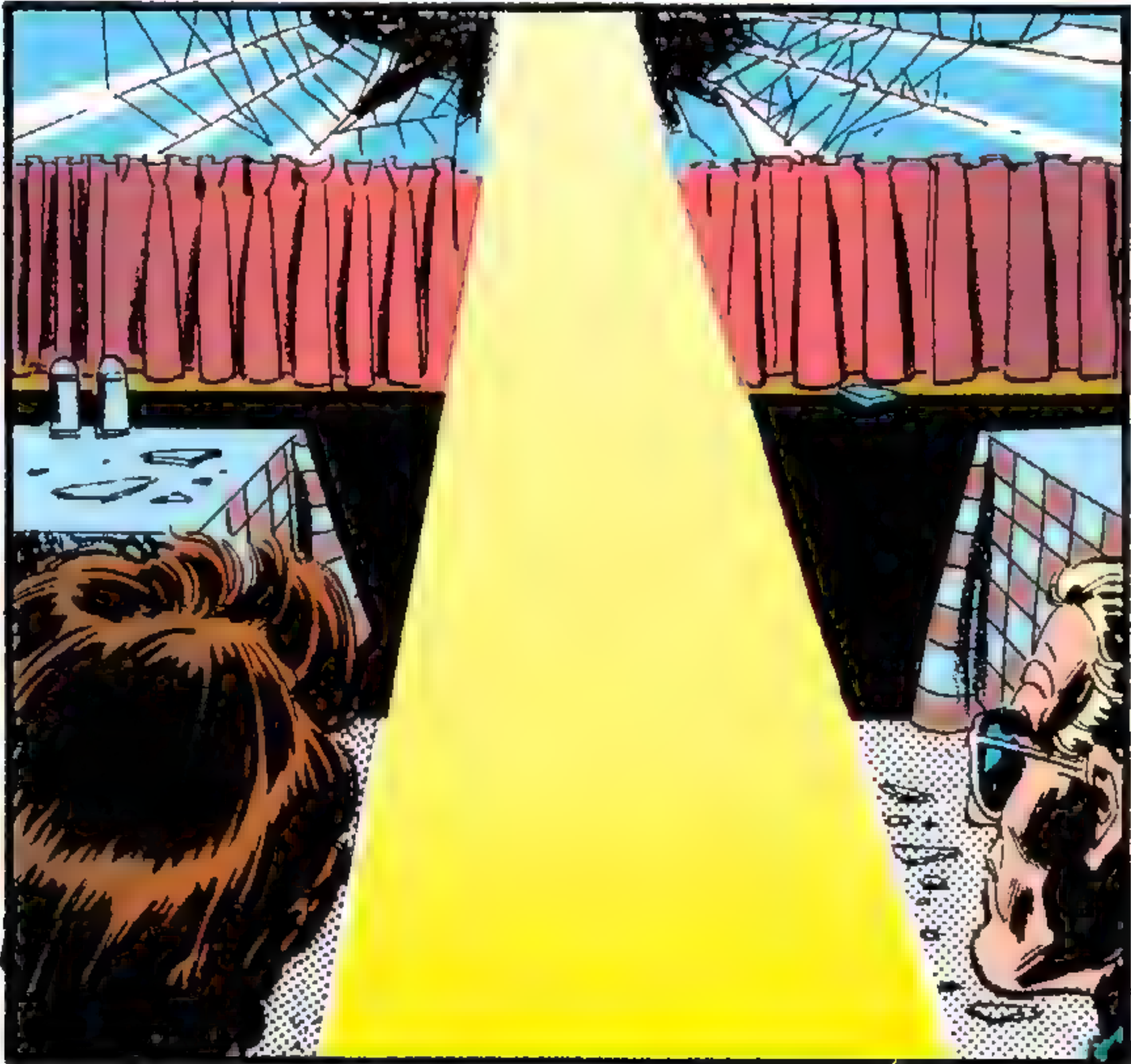
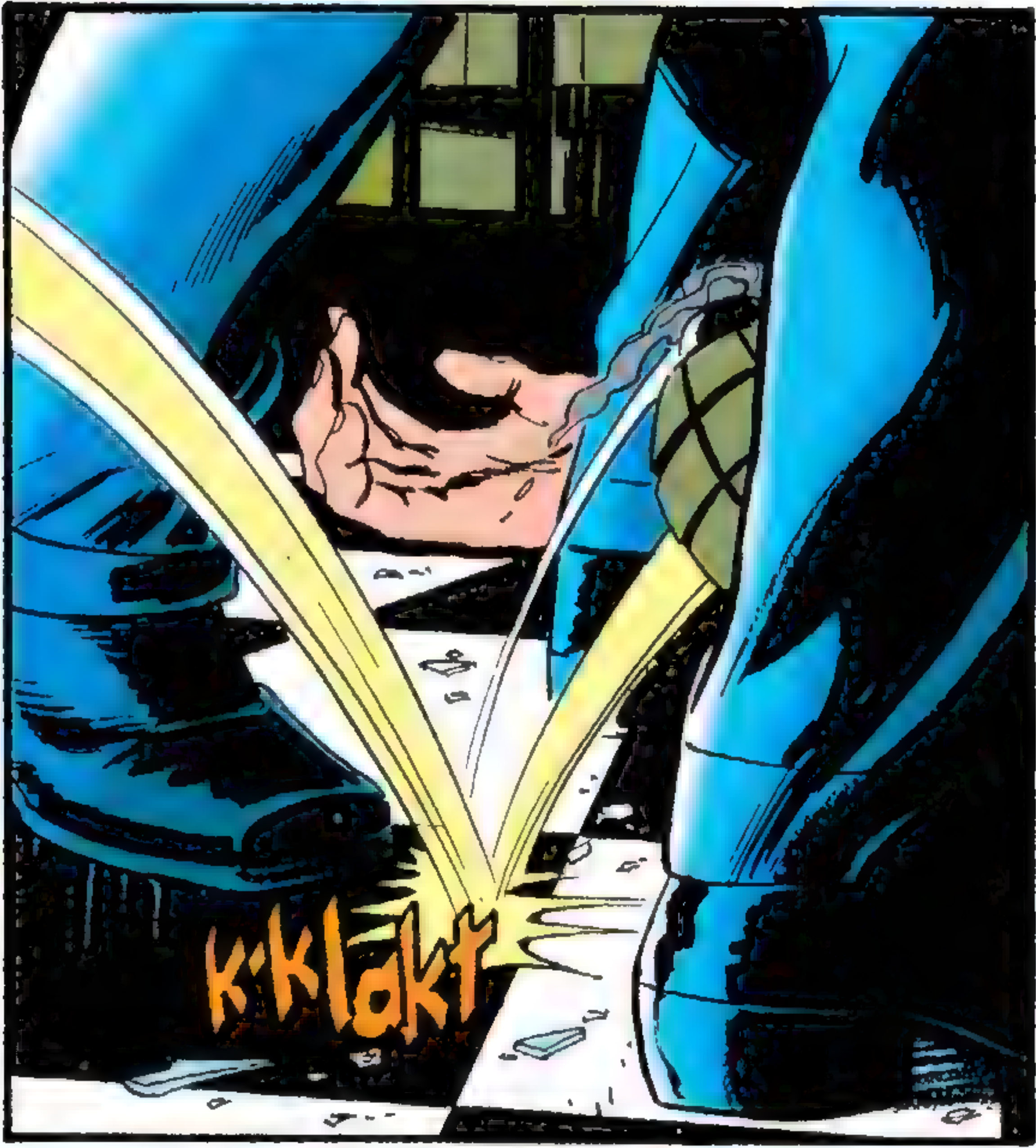
BRAM
BRAM
BRAM

BRAM
BRAM
BRAM

TOLD YA THE DOOR WAS OPEN.

YEAH, AND NOW WE COLLECT A NICE FAT BONUS FROM VARONA AFTER SENDING DON MERCANTE STRAIGHT TO--

KEESH







GLAD
I WAS ABLE
TO SAVE YOU,
MERCANTE.

WHY?
BECAUSE YOU THINK
YOU CAN HAND ME
OVER TO GORDON
AND PUT ME
AWAY?

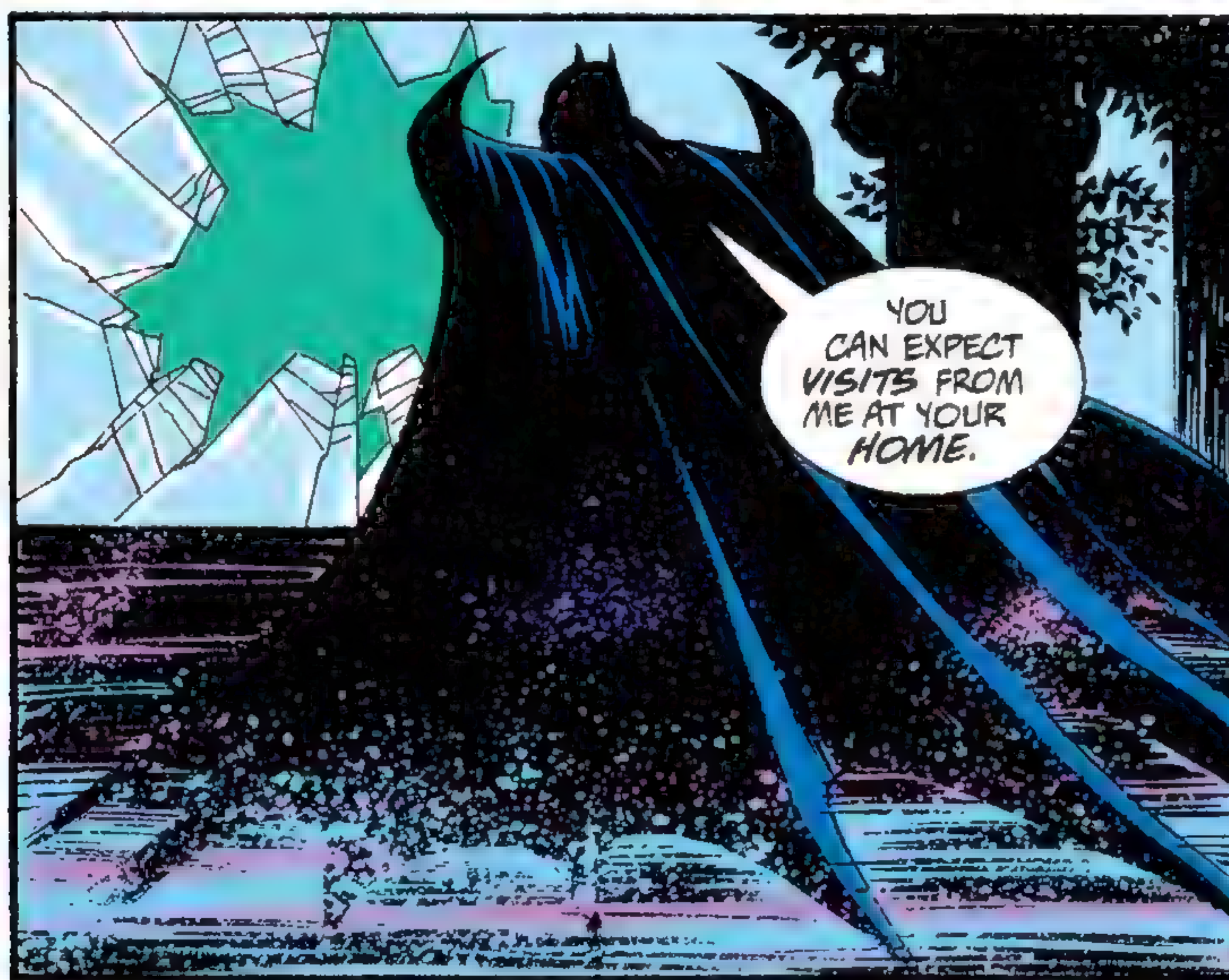
HEY,
YOU GOT
NOTHIN' ON
ME, FREAK...

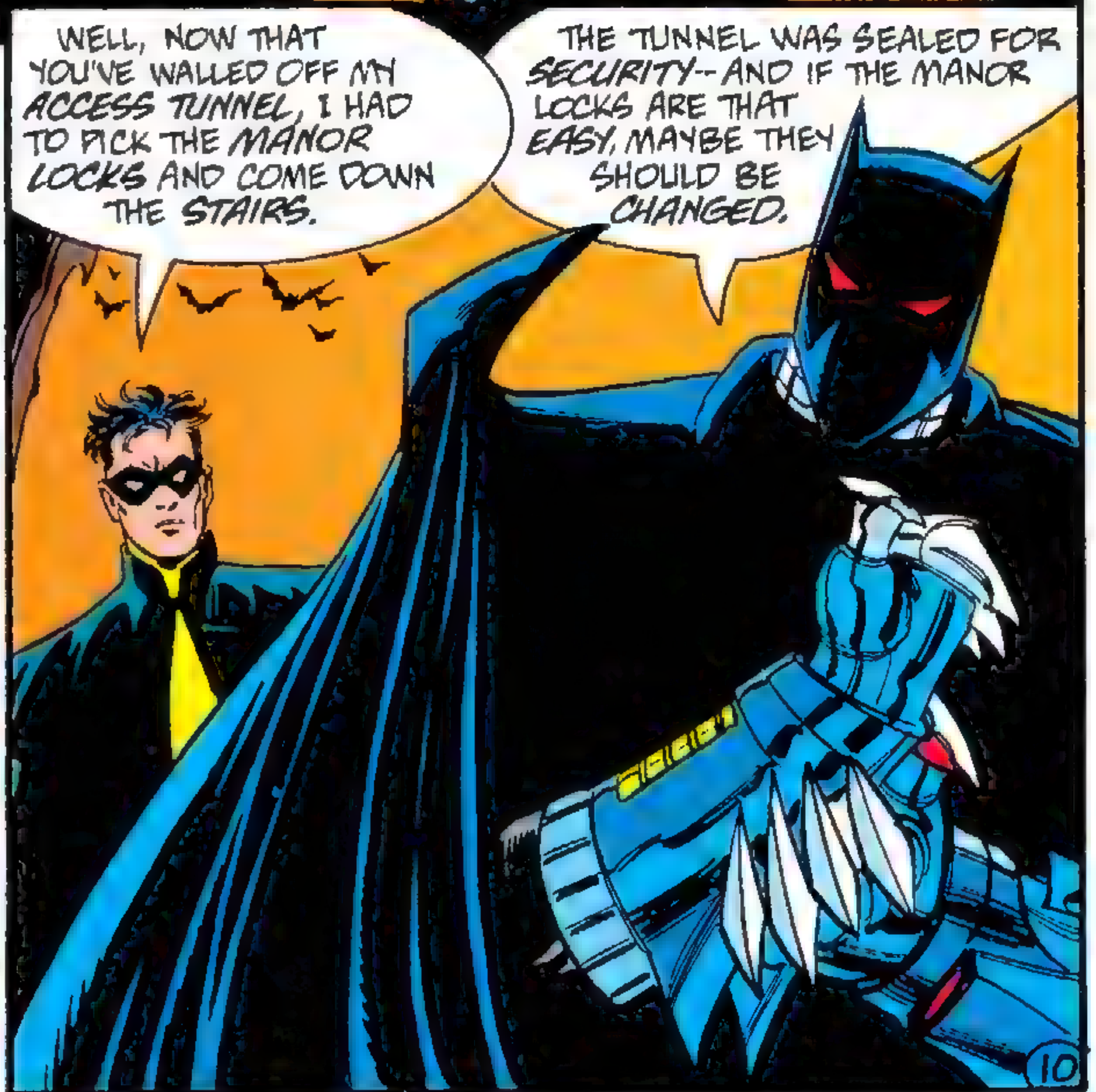
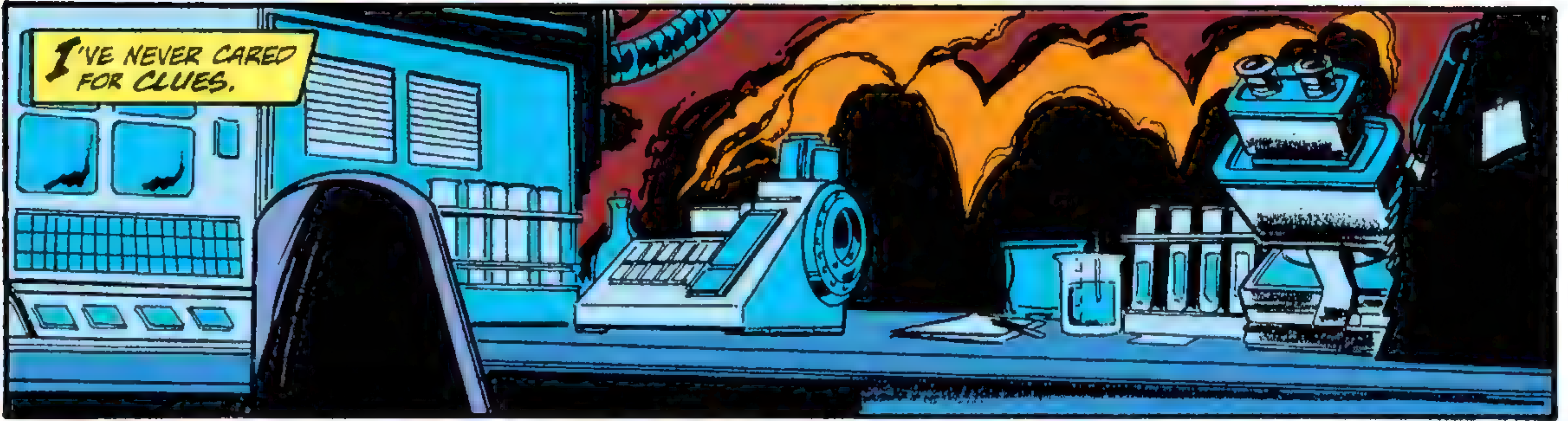
IT WAS
THESE TWO
JAMOKES
BUSTED IN
BLASTIN'

PRECISELY...

...WHICH
LEAVES YOU
FREE TO
GO.

FREE
TO RESUME
YOUR CRIMINAL
ACTIVITIES AND
ASSOCIATIONS.





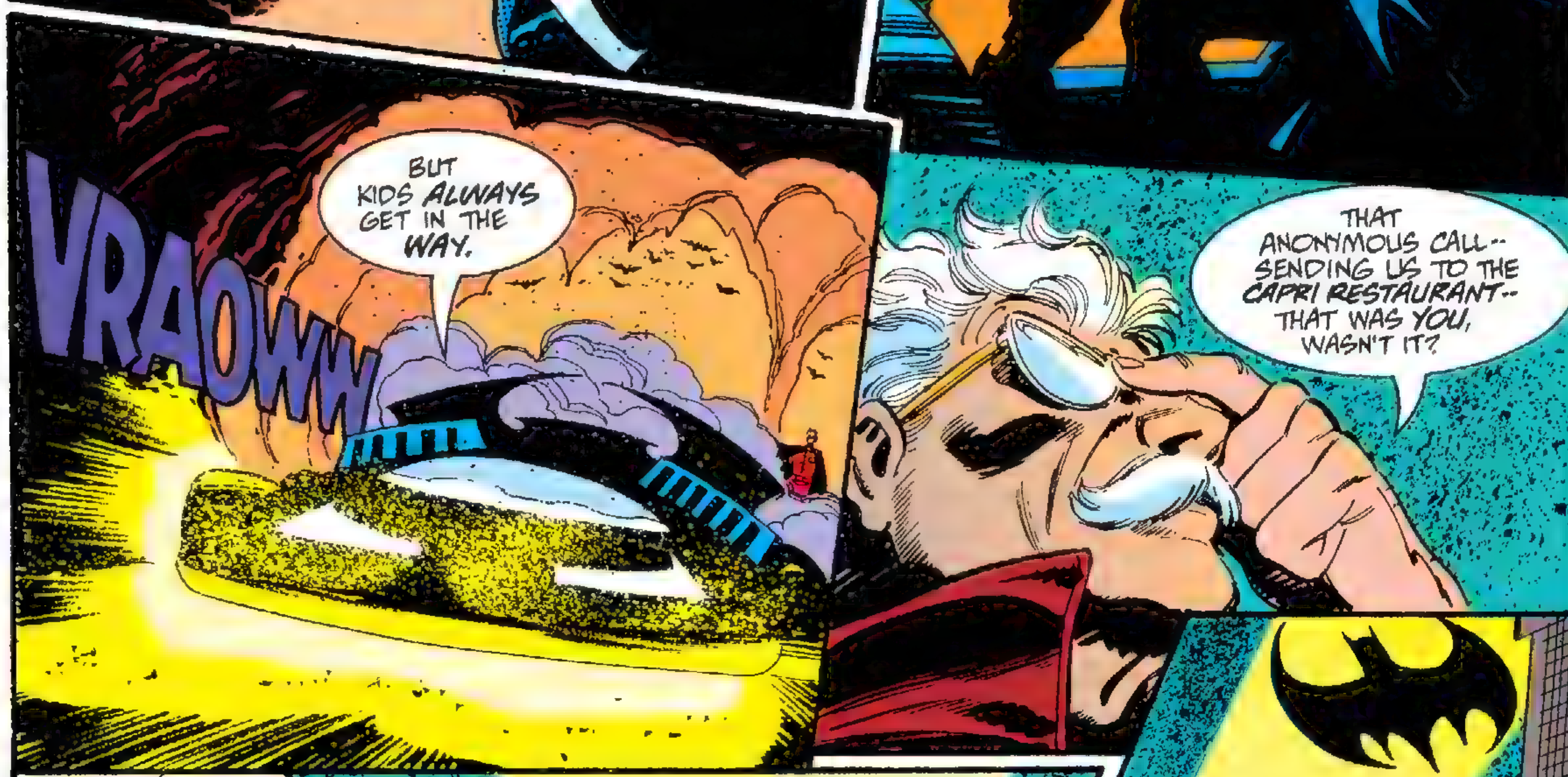


WAIT
A MINUTE,
JEAN PAUL--
SECURITY AGAINST
WHOM?

ANYONE WHO
GETS IN MY WAY--
ANYONE WHO TRIES
TO STOP ME,

AND THAT
INCLUDES
ME?

YOU
COULDN'T
STOP ME,



BUT
KIDS ALWAYS
GET IN THE
WAY,

THAT
ANONYMOUS CALL--
SENDING US TO THE
CAPRI RESTAURANT--
THAT WAS YOU,
WASN'T IT?

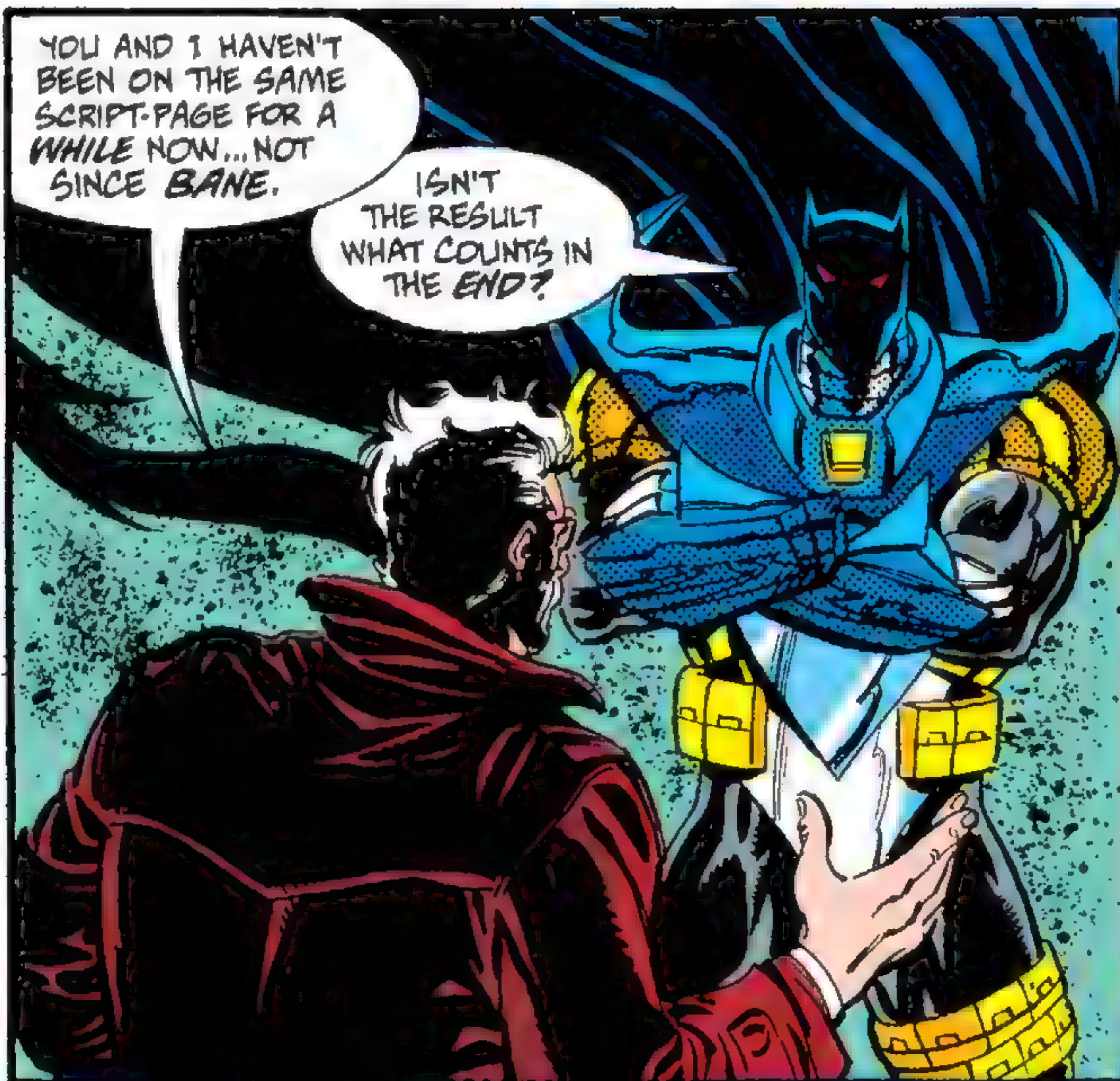


SOONER OR LATER,
THOSE TWO HITMEN
WOULD HAVE REVIVED
AND WORKED
THEMSELVES FREE,

BUT
INSTEAD, WE GOT
THERE IN TIME TO FIND
THE HITMEN'S PRINTS
ALL OVER THE GUNS
WHICH BALLISTICS TIED
TO THE MURDERS OF
THOSE TWO MERCANTE
SOLDIERS.

SO?

SO I'M
NOT TALKING
ABOUT THE
RESULT.



YOU AND I HAVEN'T BEEN ON THE SAME SCRIPT-PAGE FOR A WHILE NOW...NOT SINCE BANE.

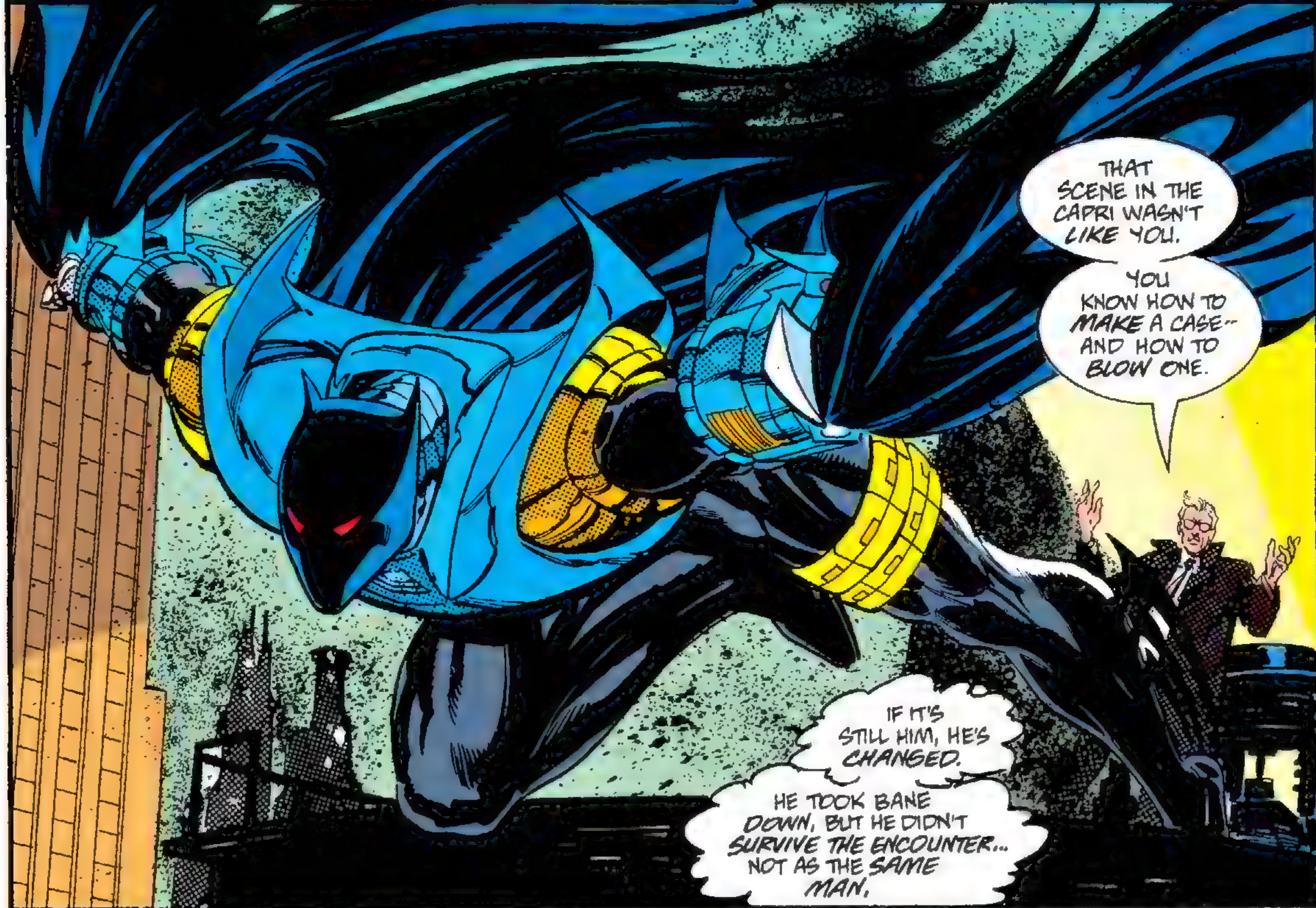
ISN'T THE RESULT WHAT COUNTS IN THE END?



I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MEANS--AND THOSE HITMEN WERE SLICED UP.

NO DOUBT THE PATTERN MATCHES THOSE NEW BLADES ON YOUR KNUCKLES.

WHAT'S THE POINT, GORDON?



THAT SCENE IN THE CAPRI WASN'T LIKE YOU.

YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE A CASE--AND HOW TO BLOW ONE.

IF IT'S STILL HIM, HE'S CHANGED.

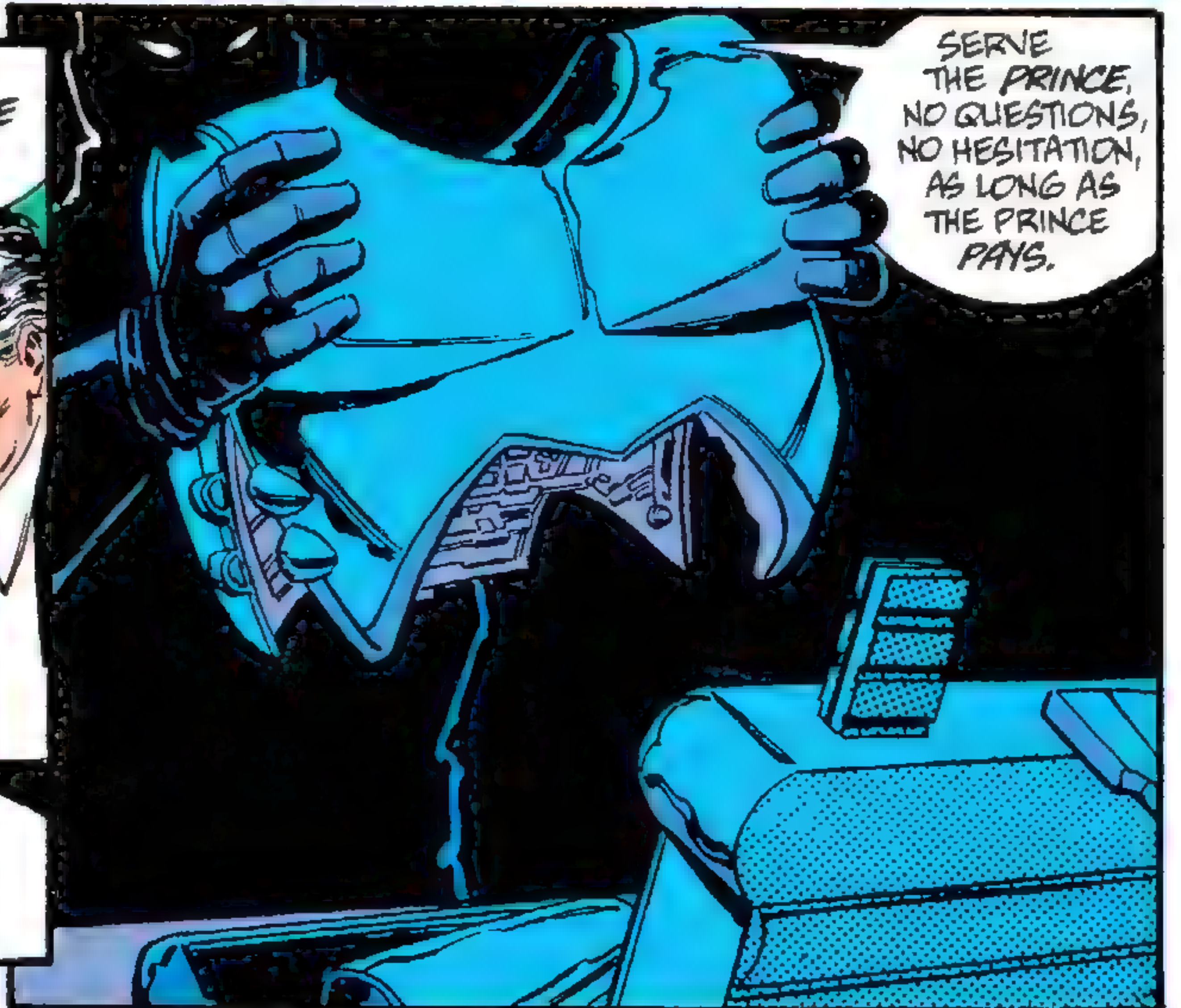
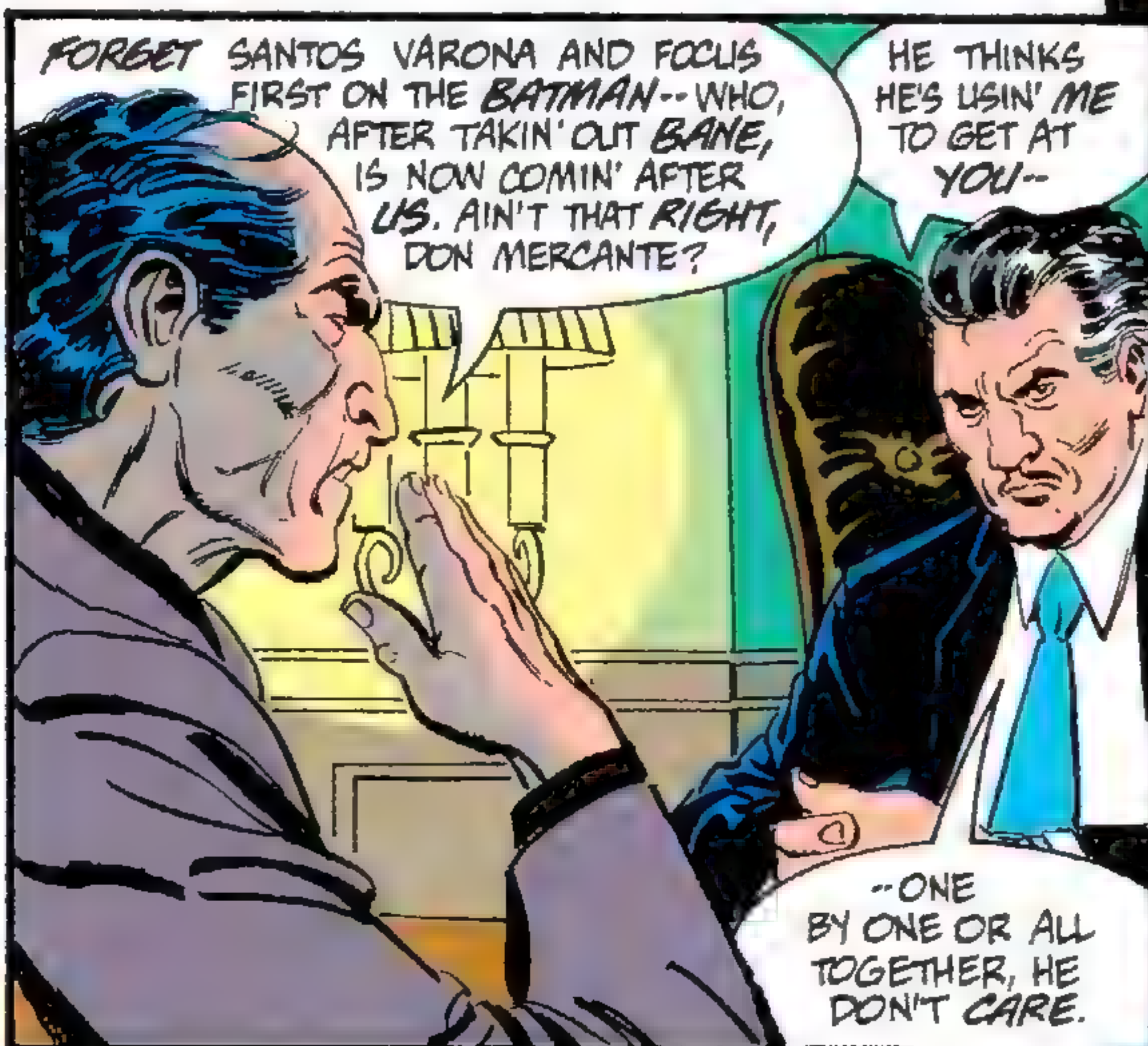
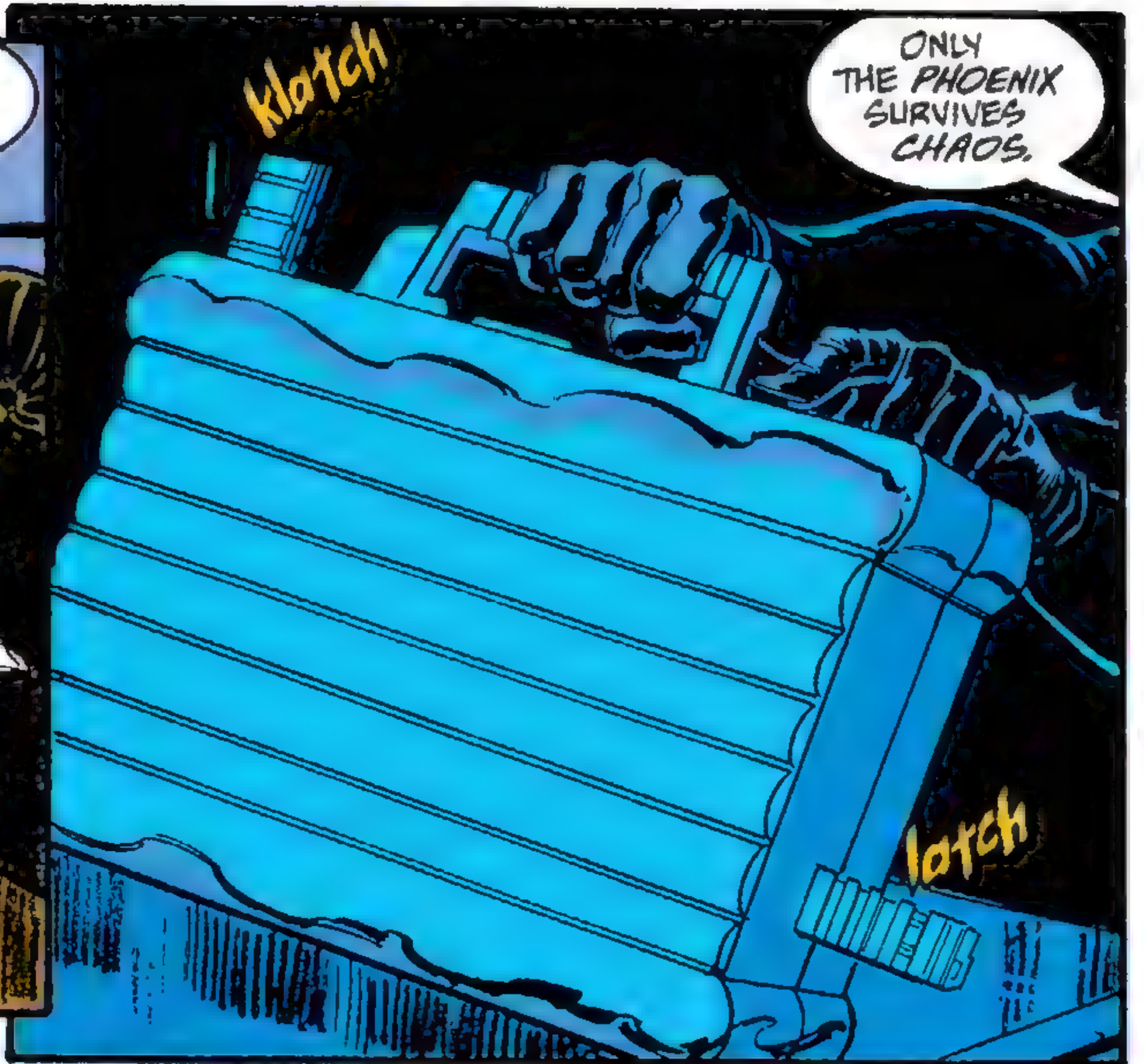
HE TOOK BANE DOWN, BUT HE DIDN'T SURVIVE THE ENCOUNTER... NOT AS THE SAME MAN.



ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY HERE?

EVERYBODY EXCEPT SANTOS.

VARONA AINT SHOWIN'--SAYS HE'S IN A POSITION OF STRENGTH NOW, GOT NO REASON TO MAKE DEALS.





BUT A FEW YEARS BACK, A FORMER MERCENARY IN COVERT OPERATIONS GOT INTERESTED IN THE POTENTIAL OF MK-ULTRA-

--THE AGENCY'S DRUG AND MIND-CONTROL EXPERIMENTS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO CREATE "SLEEPER" AGENTS FOR LATER ACTIVATION.

MY VISION IS CLEAR, FOCUSED, AND MINE EYES WILL SEE THE GLORY.

WITH ENOUGH LSD AND HYPNOTIC BRAINWASHING, A GOOD HANDLER COULD CREATE THE PERFECT "MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE"--AN UNWITTING AGENT WILLING AND ABLE TO DO ANYTHING, USUALLY ASSASSINATION.

THE FORMER MERCENARY DECIDED TO CUT OUT THE MIDDLEMAN AND BECOME HANDLER AND AGENT.

WILL IS EVERYTHING, AND WITH ENOUGH WILL, EVEN THE MOTH DEFIES THE FLAME.

prukt

WHAT ARE YOU--?

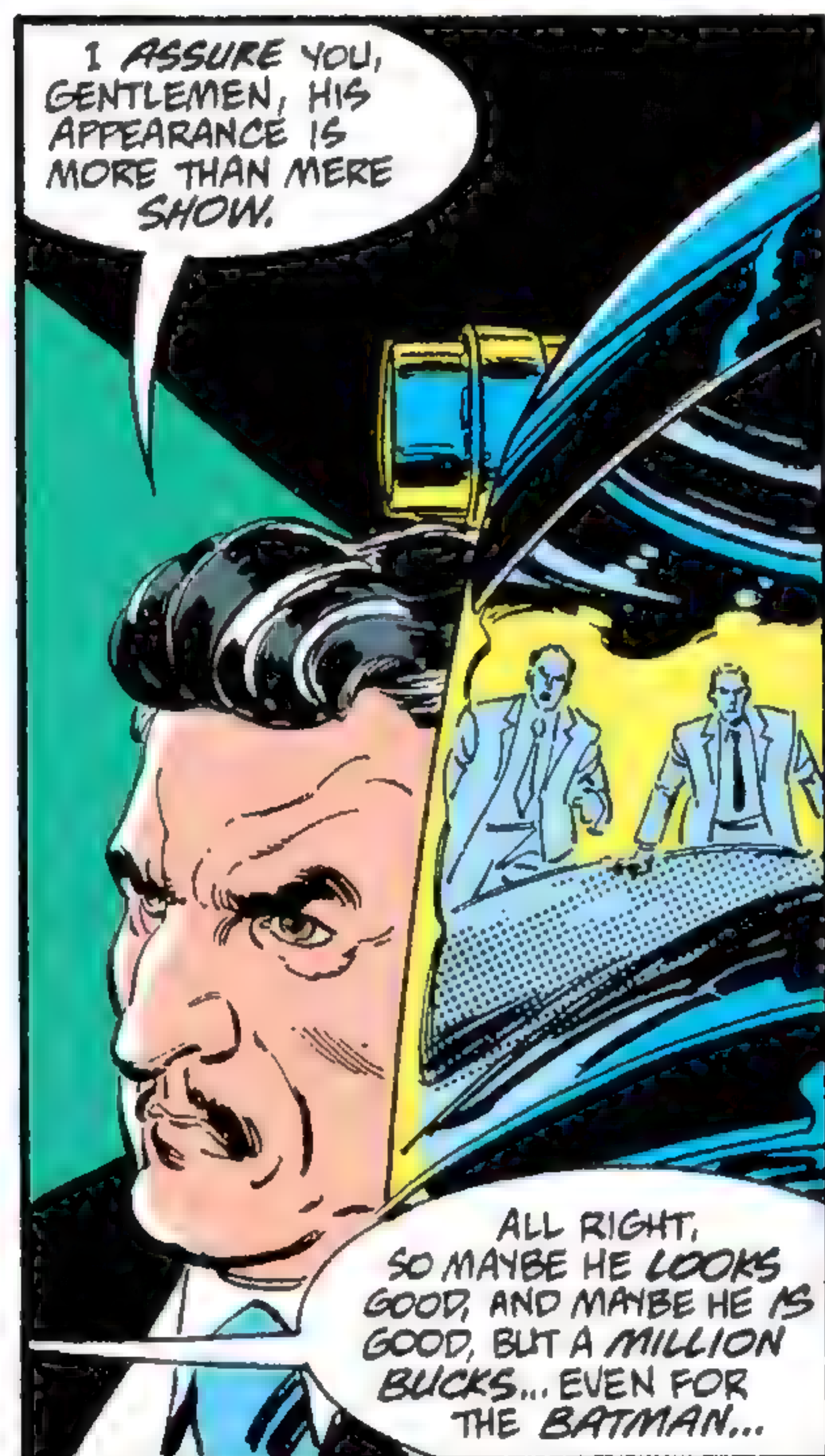
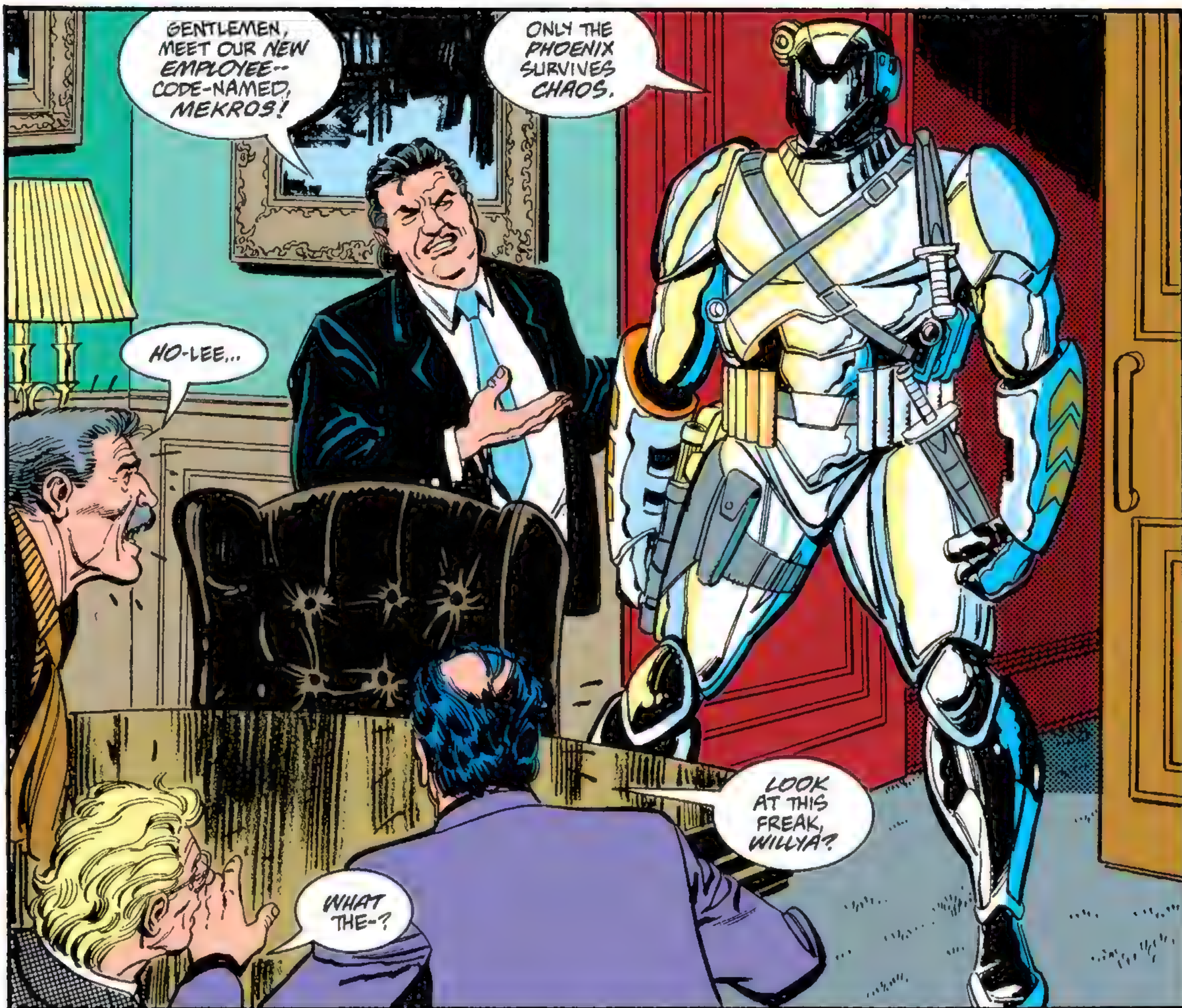
HE BECAME HIS OWN SUBJECT, USING SELF-HYPNOSIS AND OTHER TECHNIQUES TO BRAINWASH HIMSELF--AND IT WORKED.

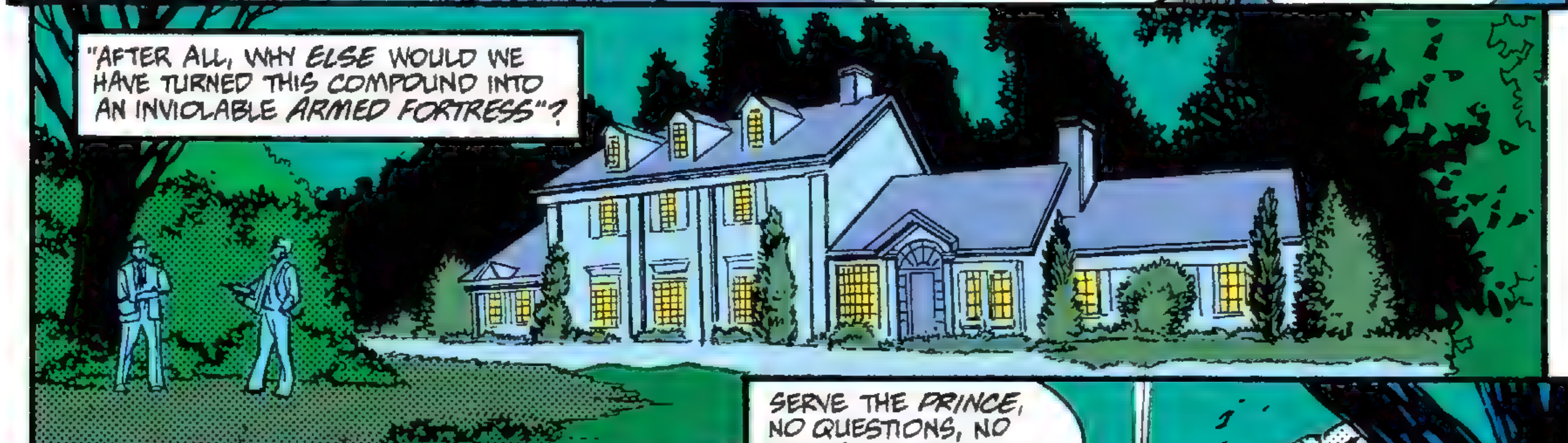
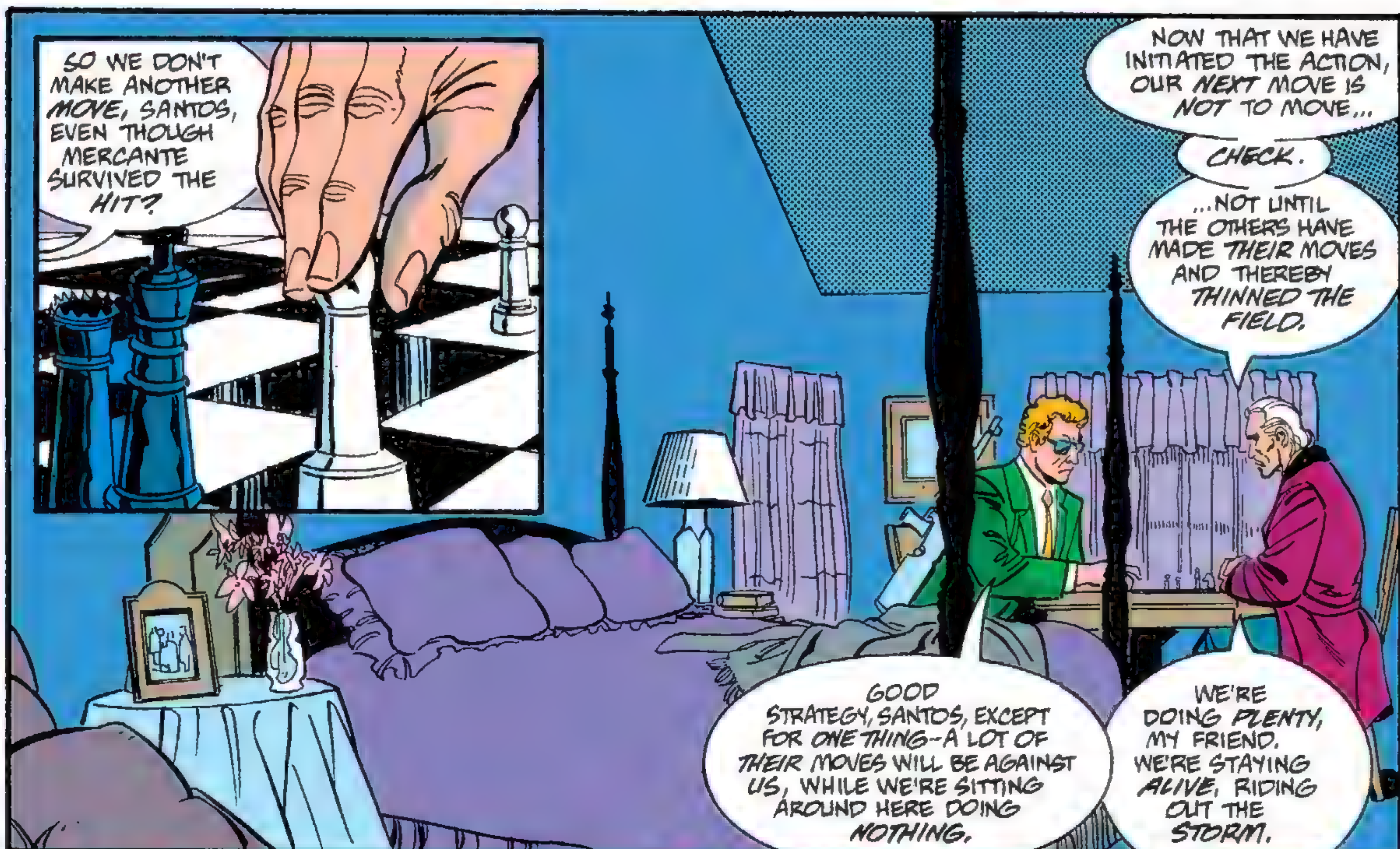
SINCE THEN, HE'S BEEN ACTIVE ALL OVER THE WORLD--A SELF-MADE PERFECT ASSASSIN--AT ONE MILLION PER CONTRACT.

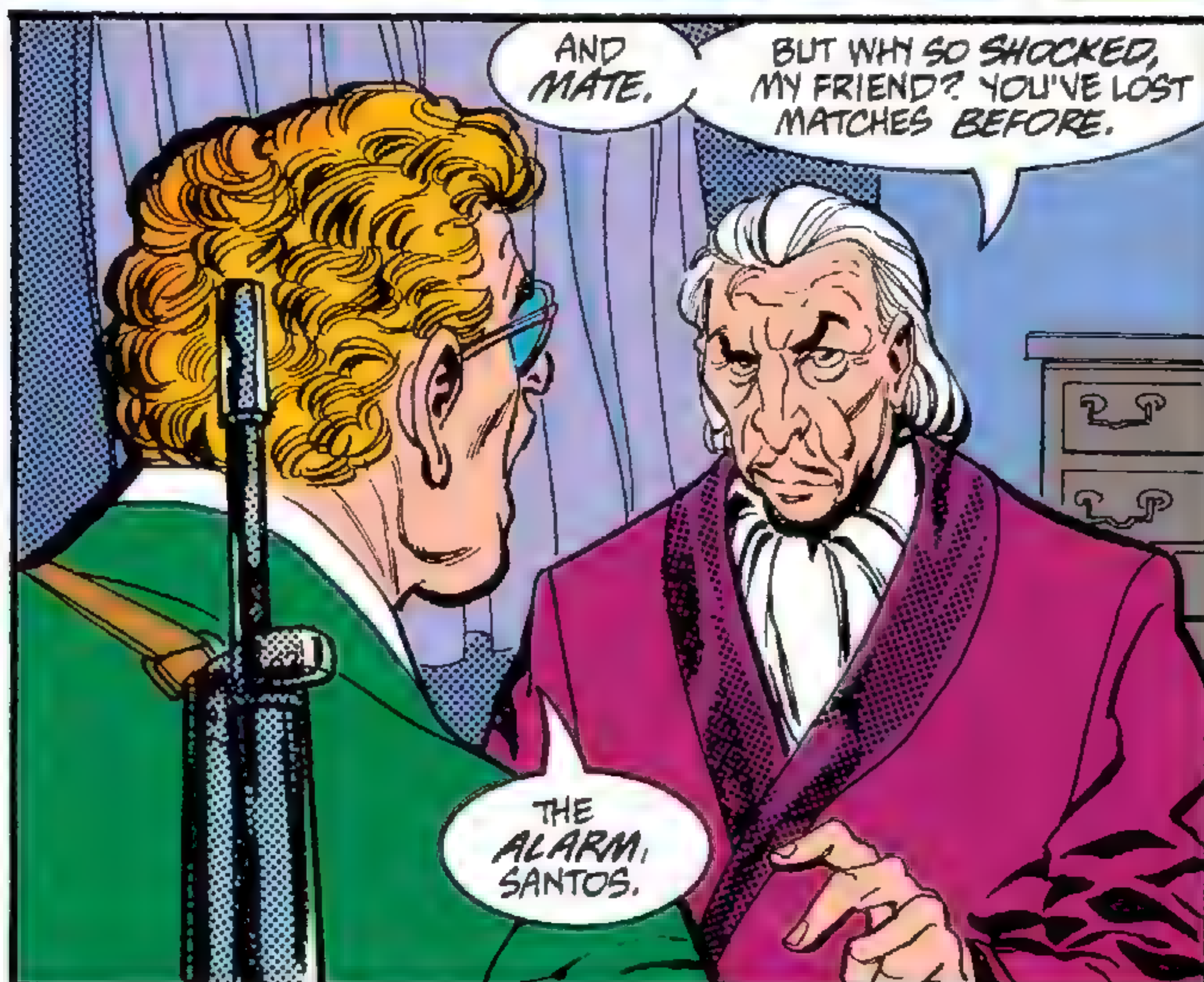
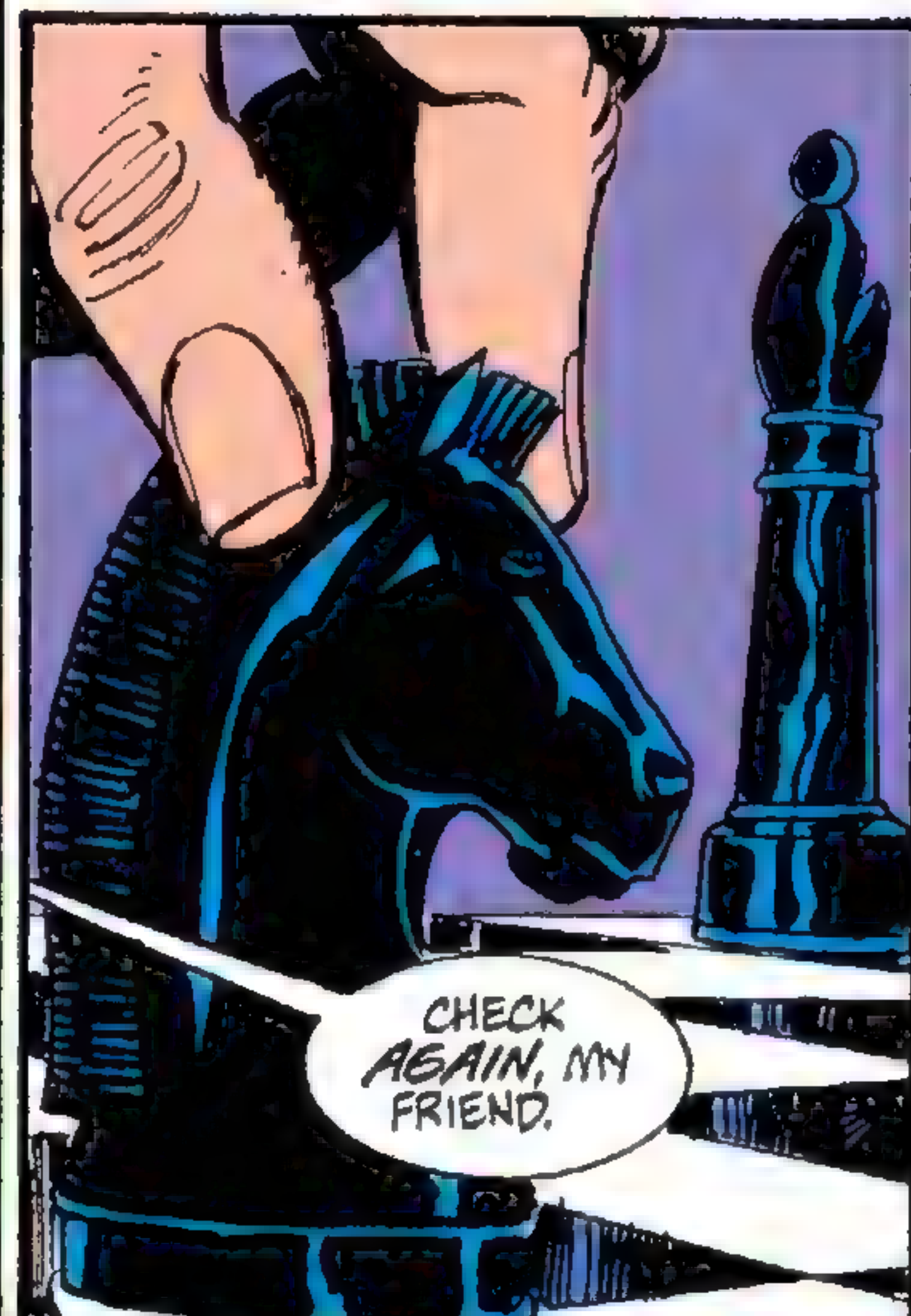
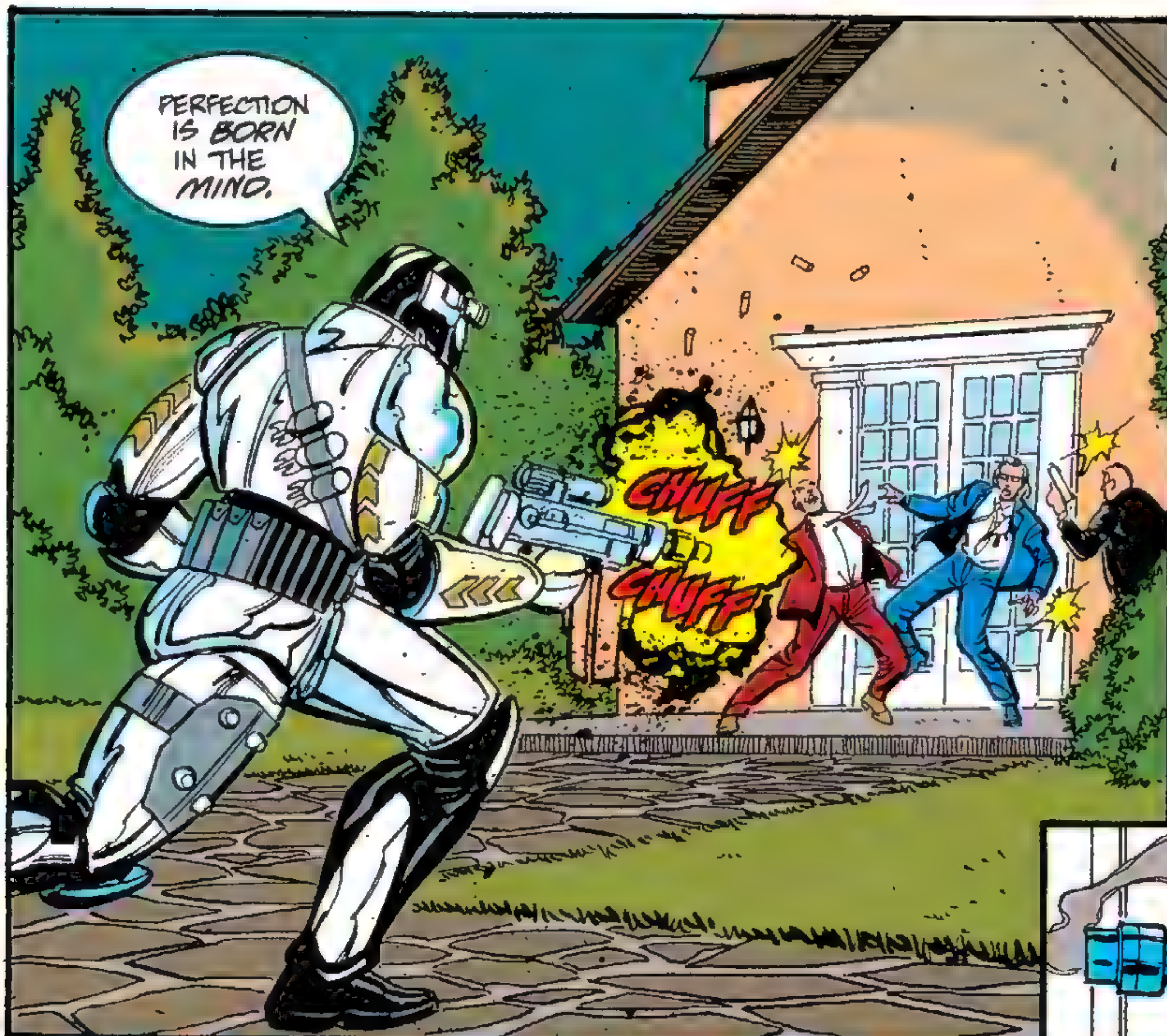
ALL RIGHT, SO THERE'S SOME SELF-CONTROLLED ZOMBIE ROBOT WHO'S THE BEST HITMAN IN THE WORLD--SO WHAT?

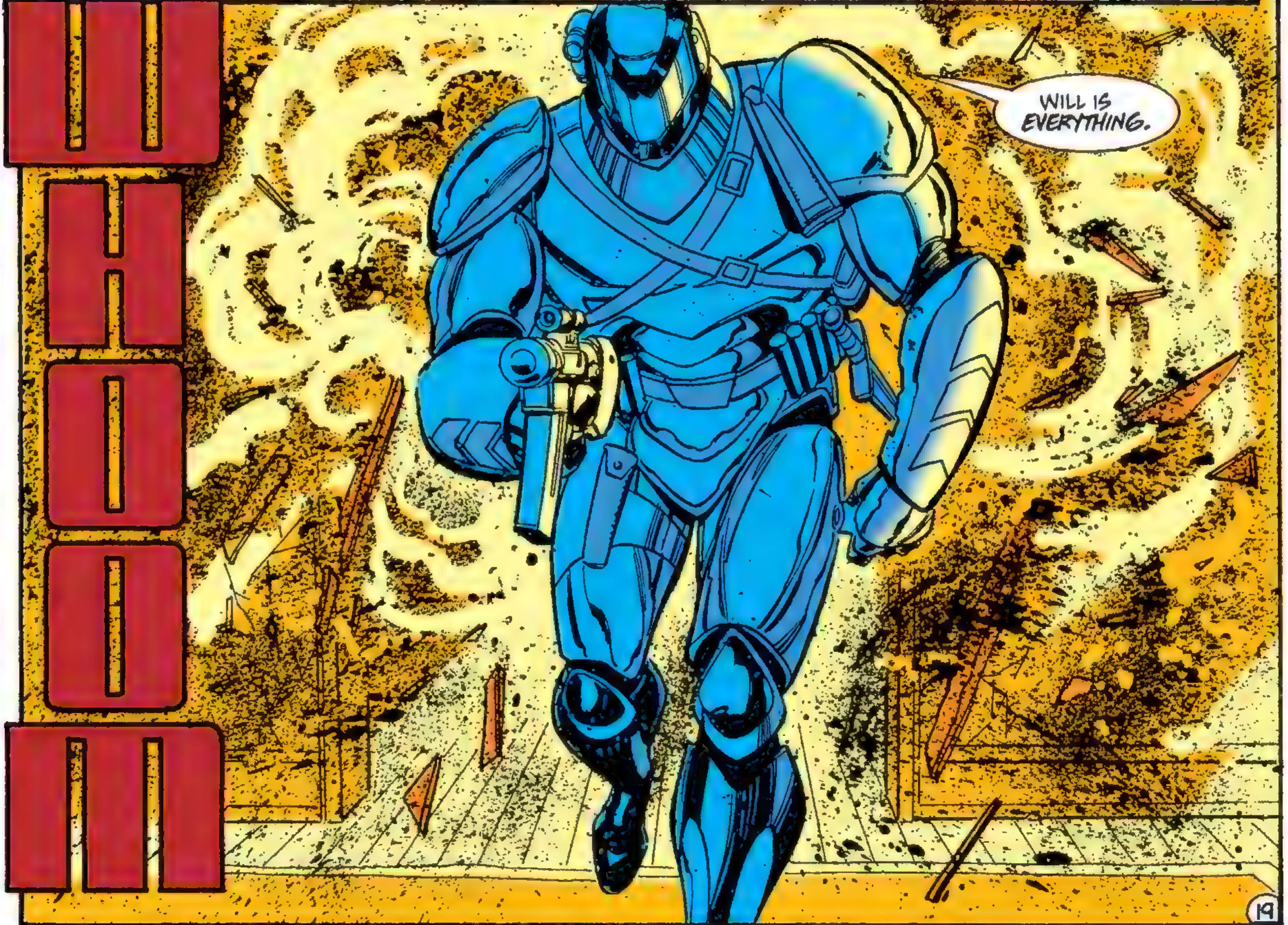
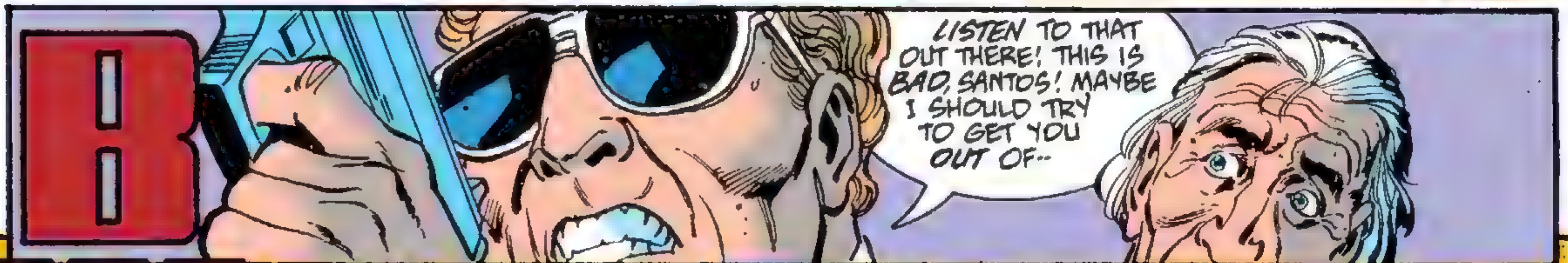
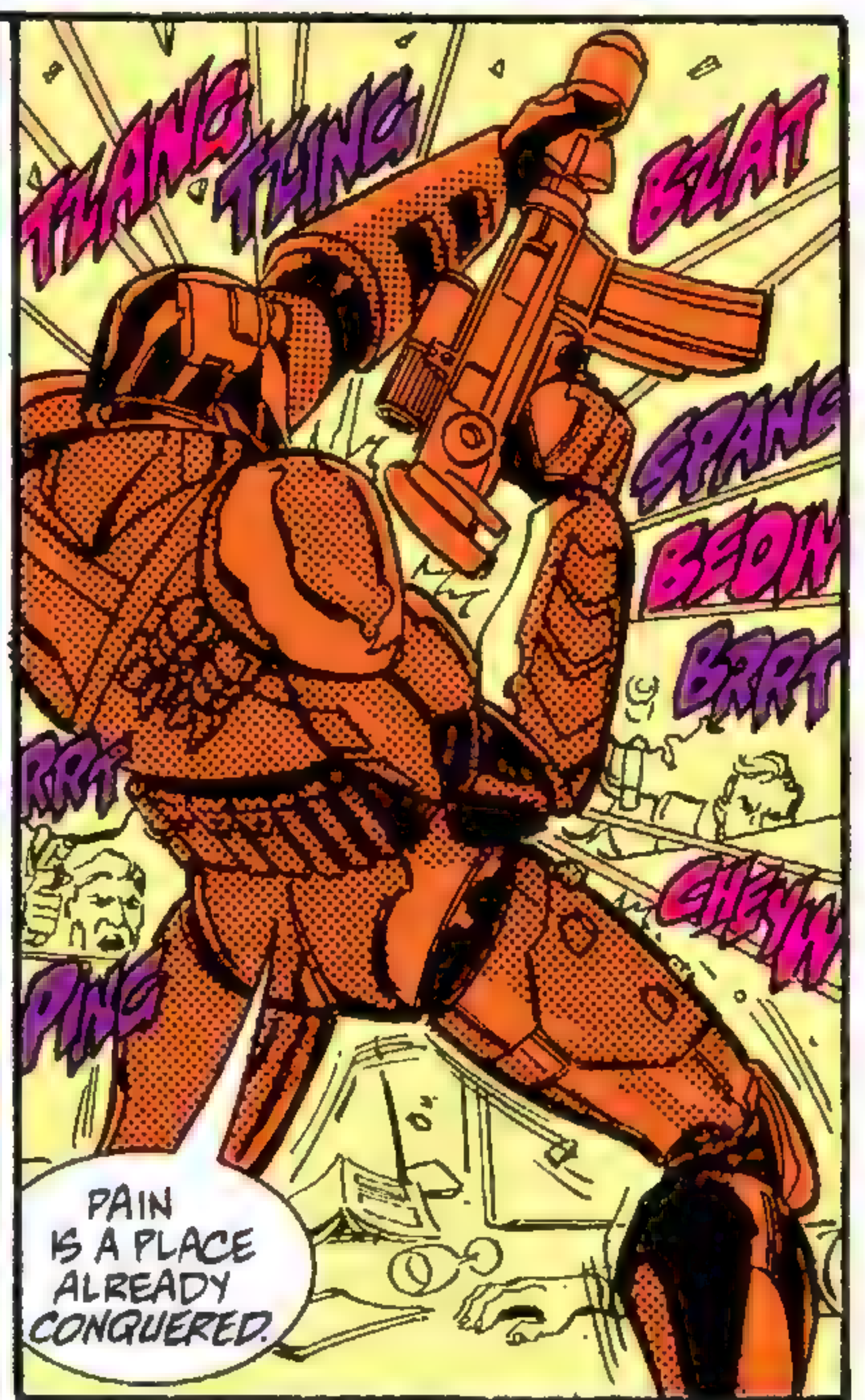
SO I CONTACTED HIM LAST NIGHT--AND HAD HIM FLY IN FOR THIS MEETING...

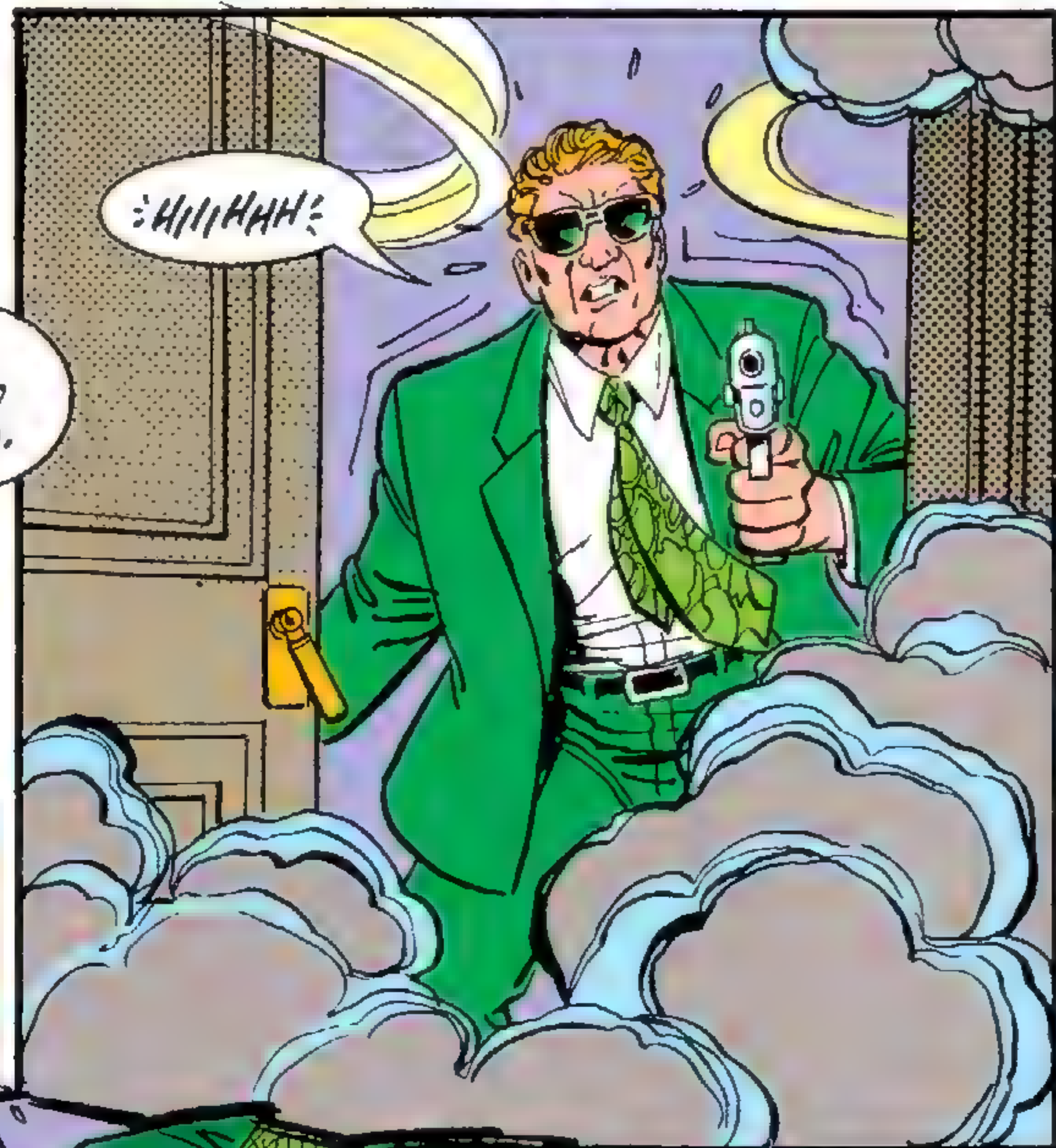
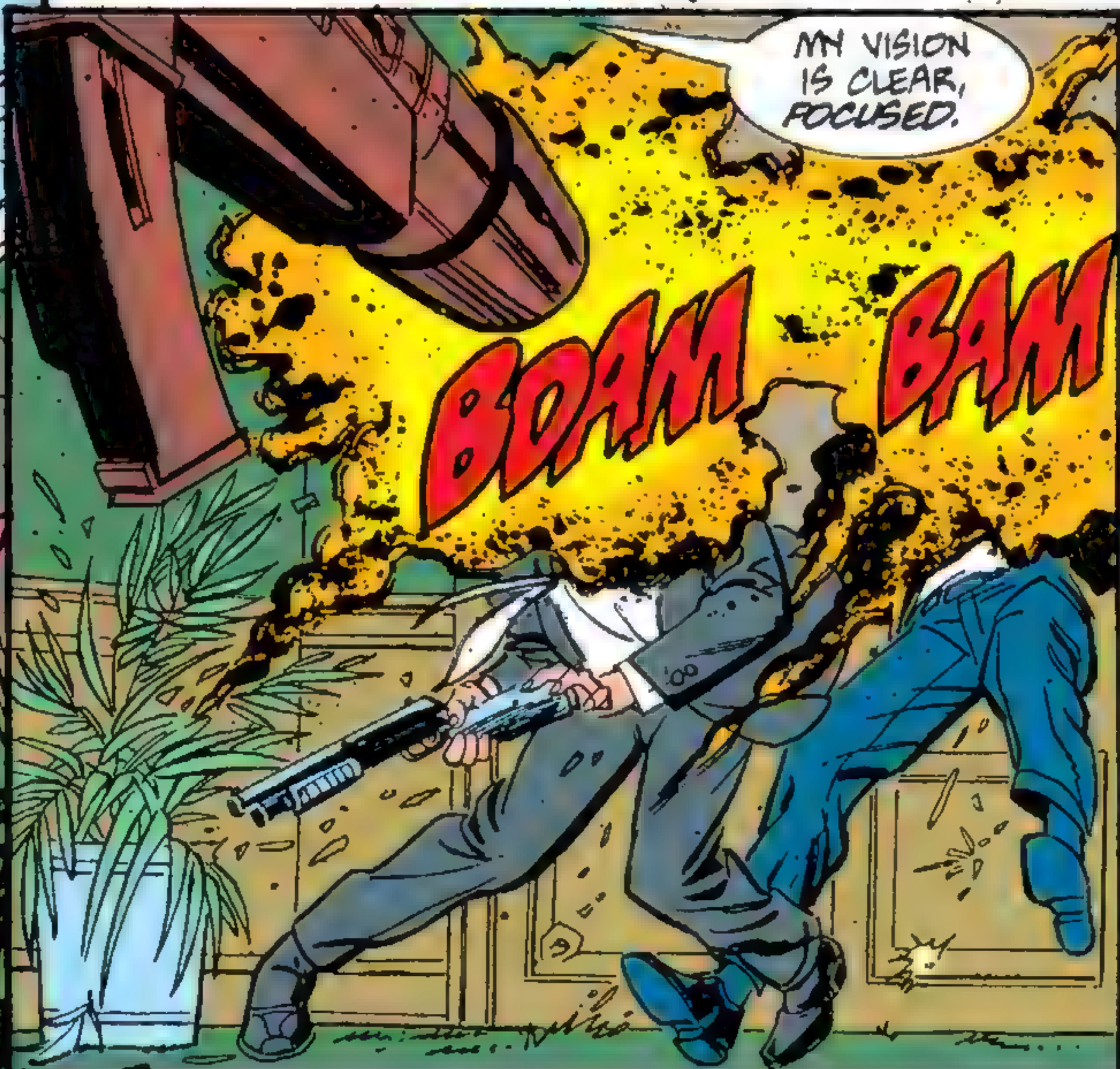
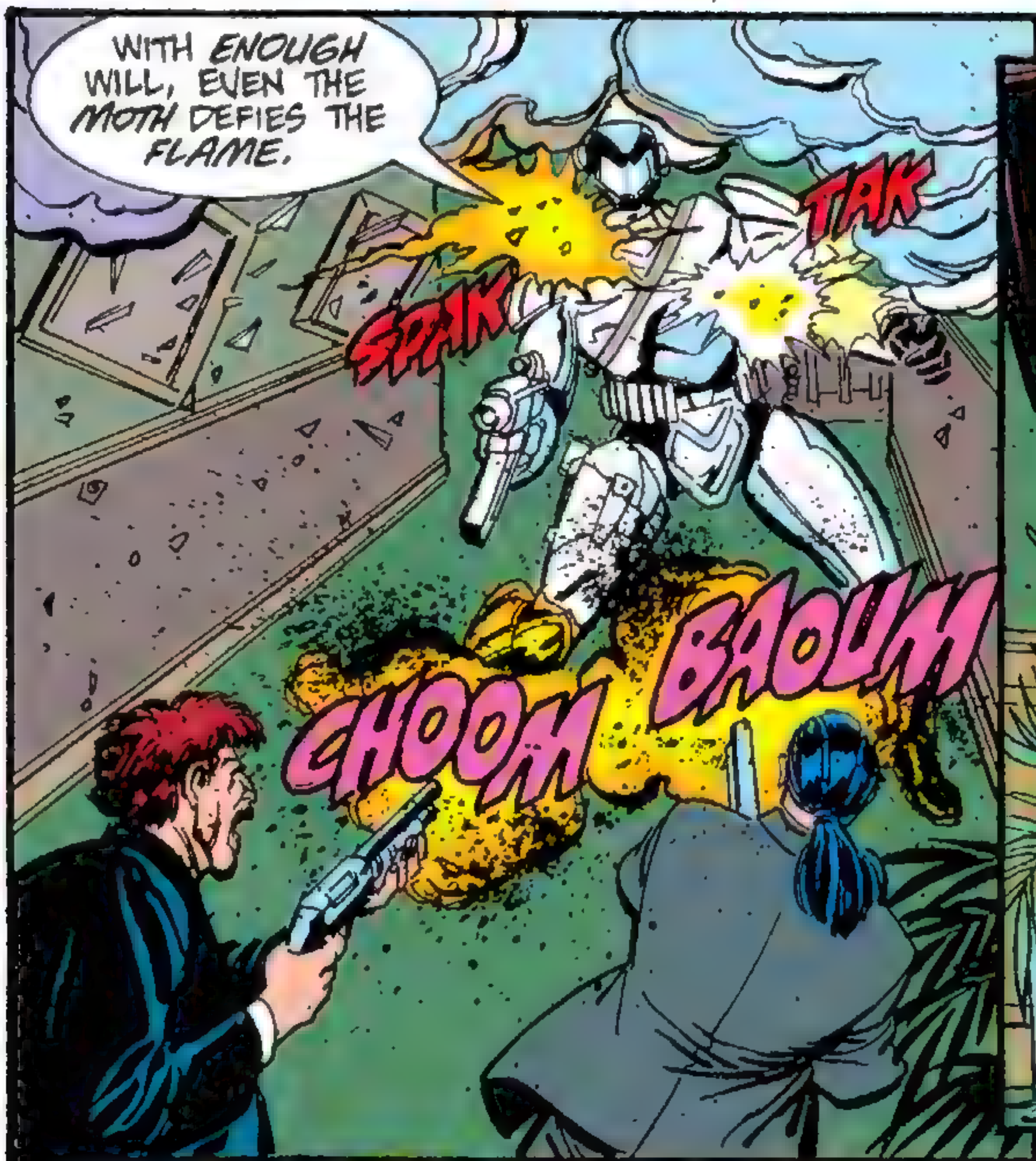
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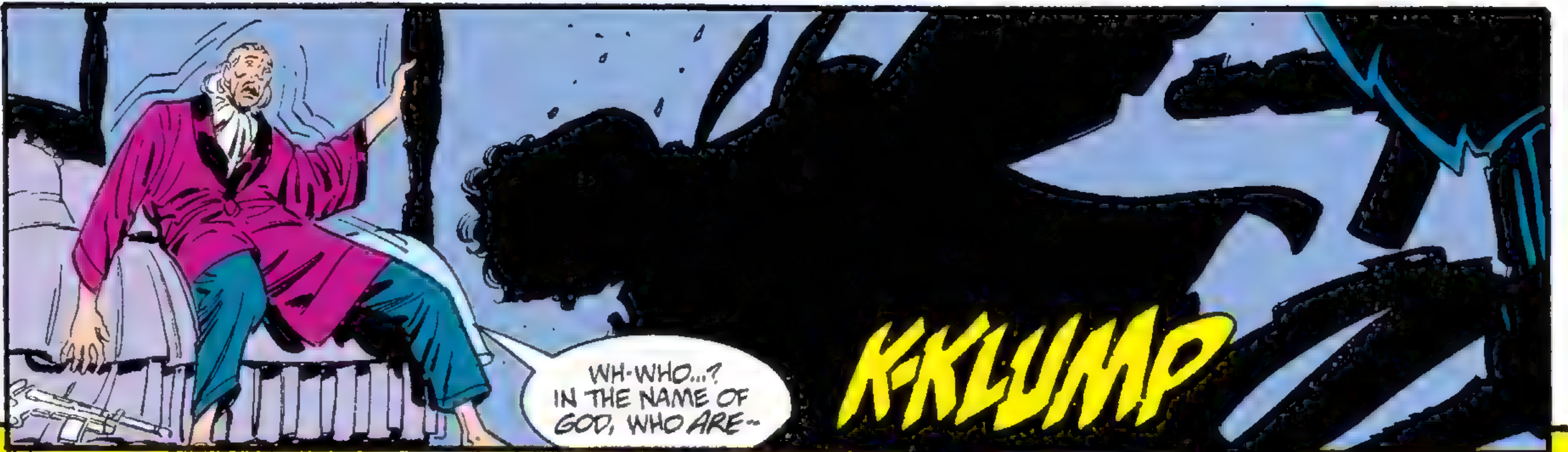






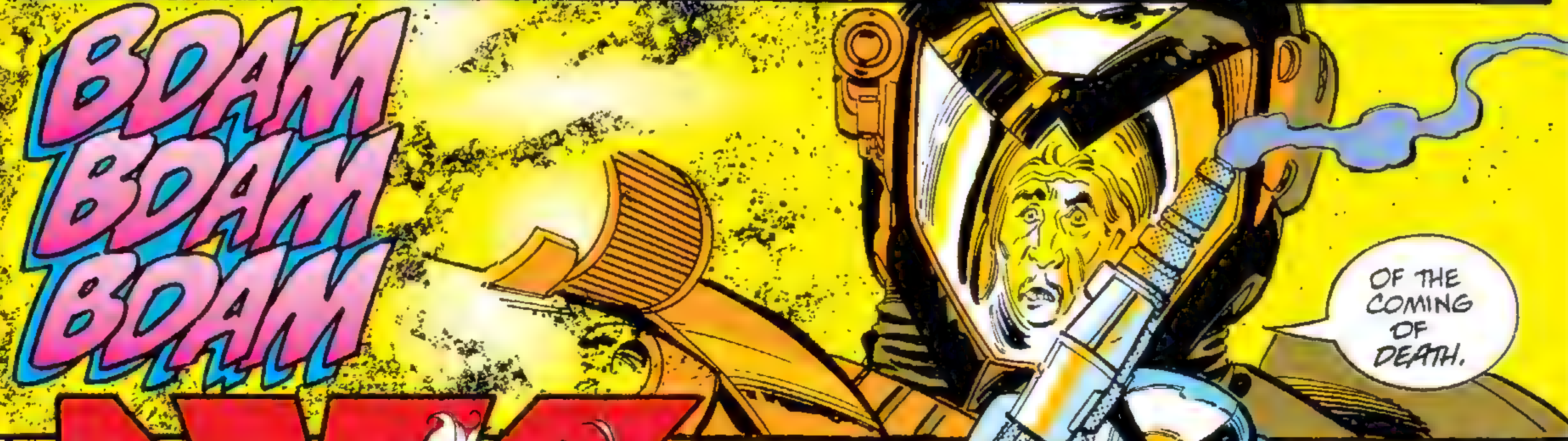




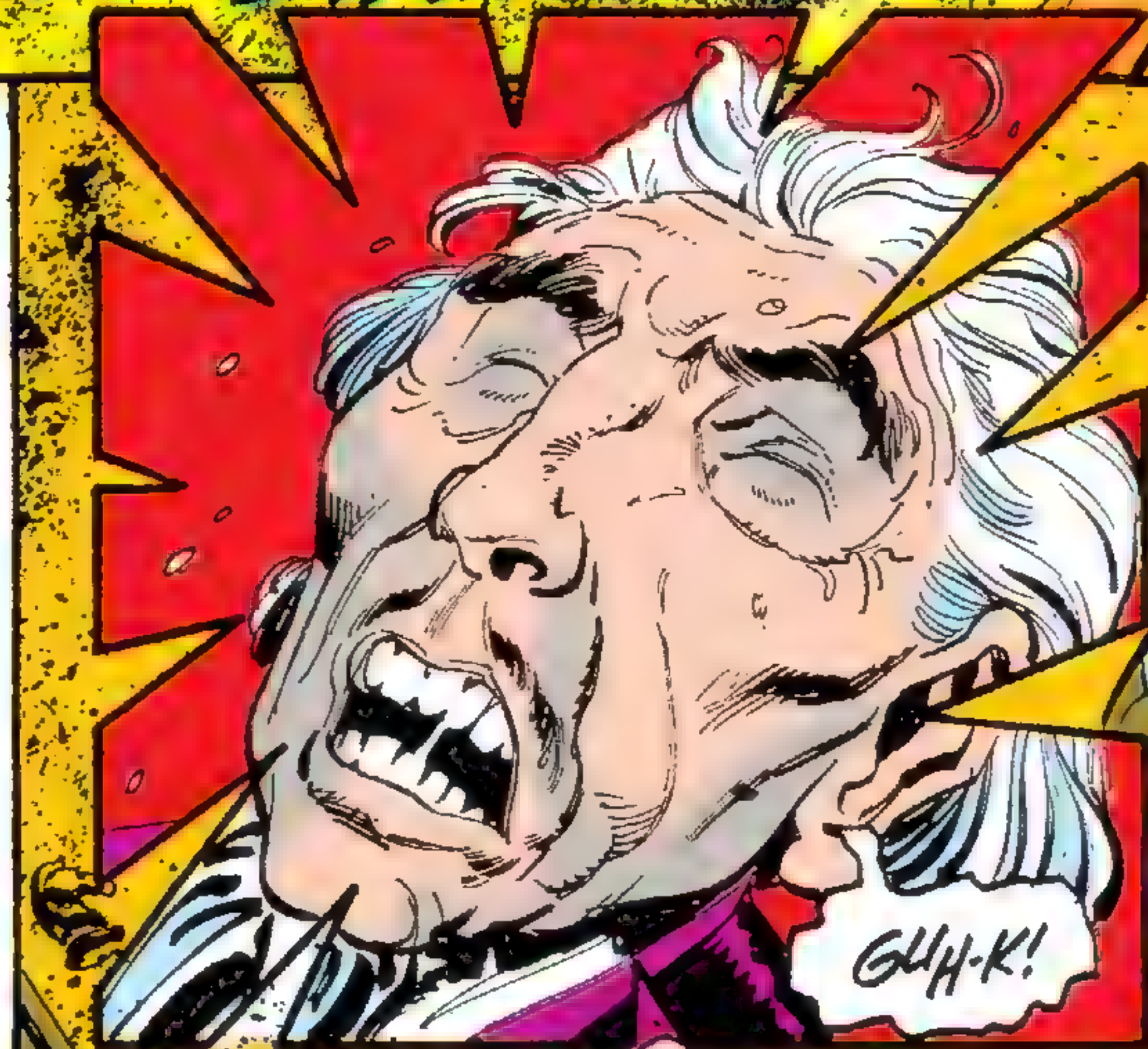


WH-WHO...?
IN THE NAME OF
GOD, WHO ARE...

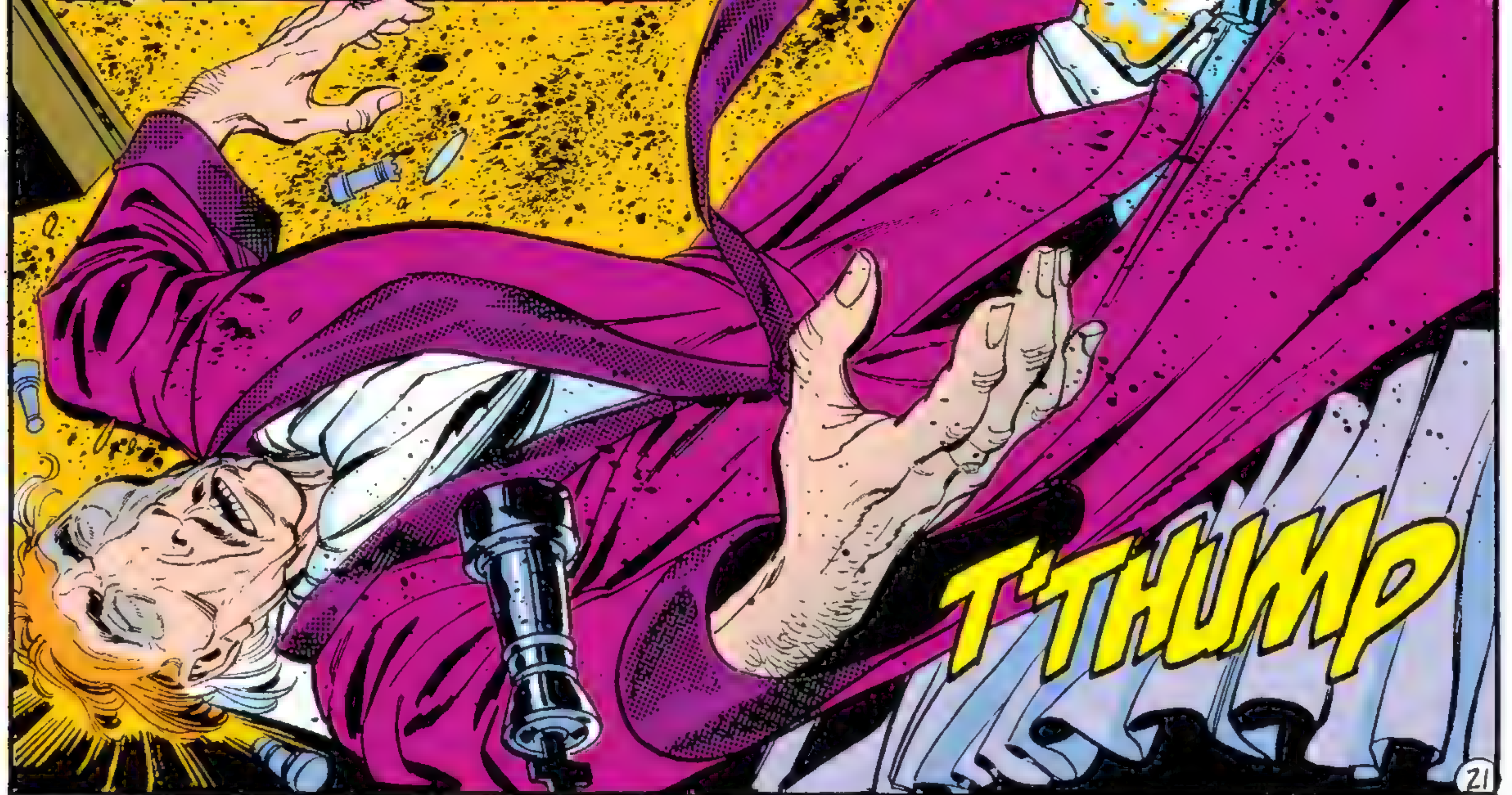
K-KLUMP



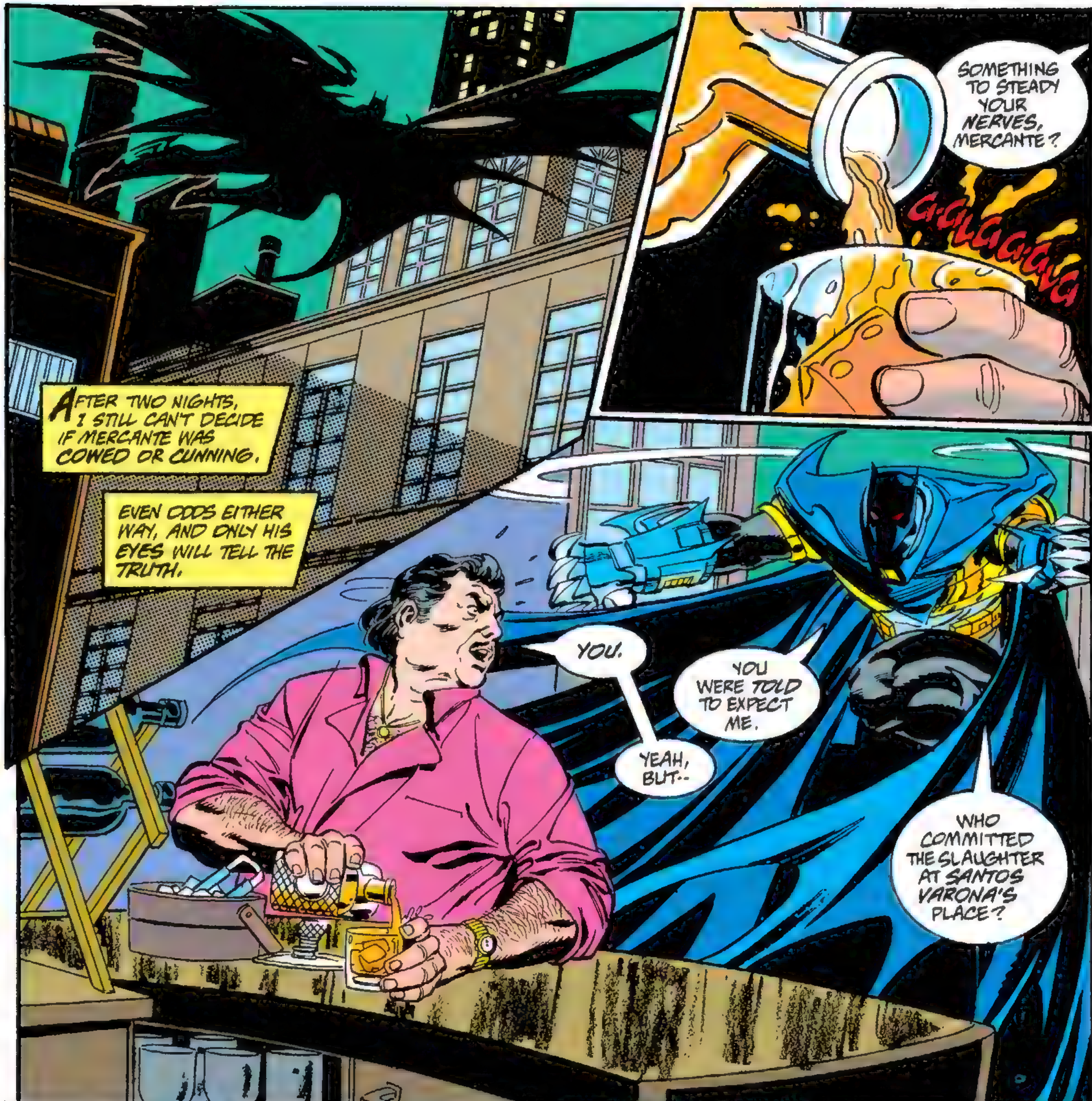
OF THE
COMING
OF
DEATH.



GUH-K!



T'THUMP



AFTER TWO NIGHTS,
I STILL CAN'T DECIDE
IF MERCANTE WAS
COWED OR CUNNING.

EVEN ODDS EITHER
WAY, AND ONLY HIS
EYES WILL TELL THE
TRUTH.

SOMETHING
TO STEADY
YOUR
NERVES,
MERCANTE?

G-G-G-G-G

YOU.

YOU
WERE TOLD
TO EXPECT
ME.

YEAH,
BUT--

WHO
COMMITTED
THE SLAUGHTER
AT SANTOS
VARONA'S
PLACE?

OTHER THAN
WHOEVER DID IT,
NOBODY KNOWS.

WHEN CAN
YOU GET
THEM ALL
TOGETHER?

I'M WORKIN'
ON IT, BUT THEY'RE
AT EACH OTHER'S
THROATS, ALL
JOCKEYING FOR
POSITION NOW
THAT BANE'S--

WHERE'S
YOUR WIFE,
MERCANTE?

OUT OF
TOWN...ON A
SHOPPING
SPREE.

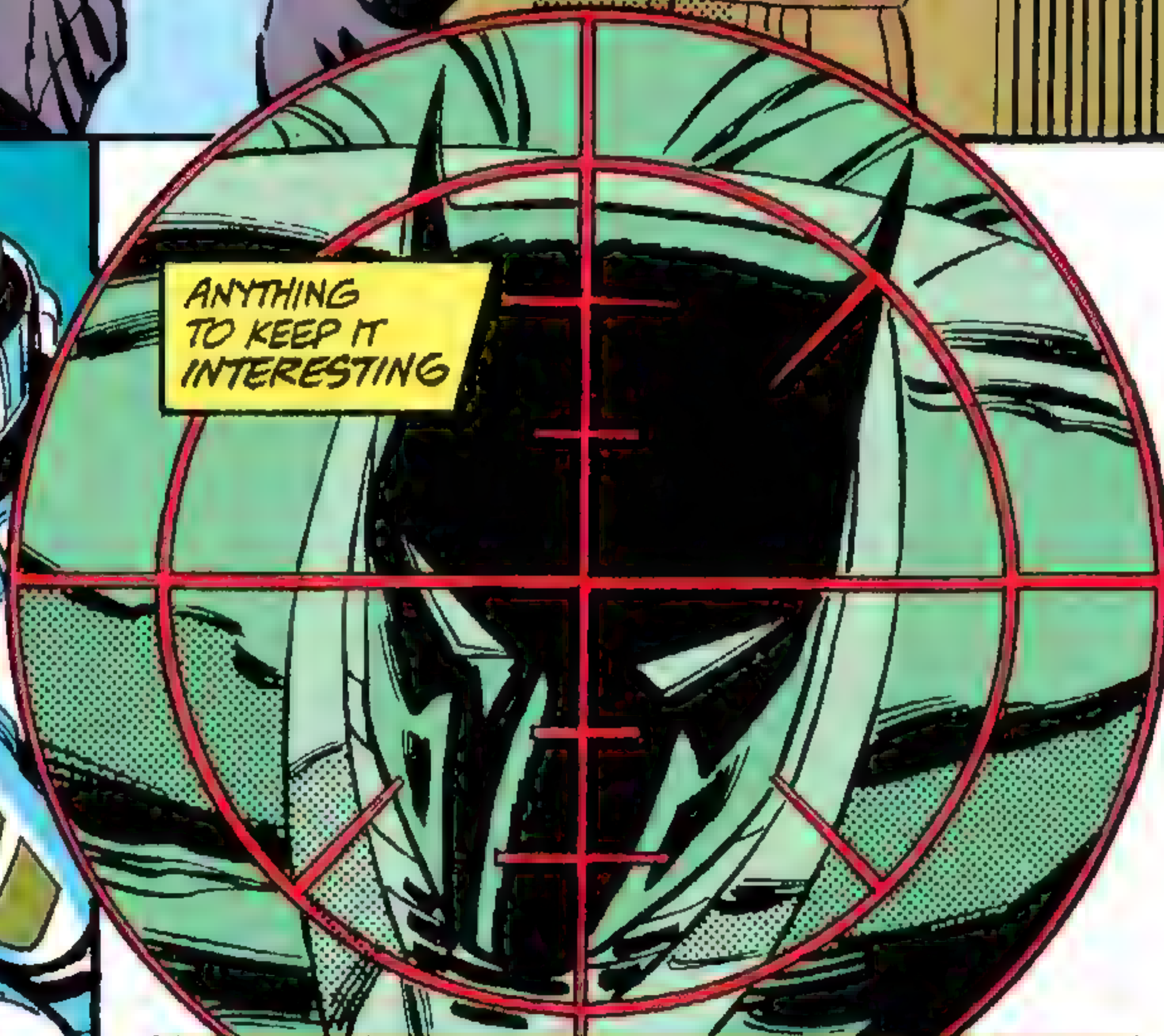
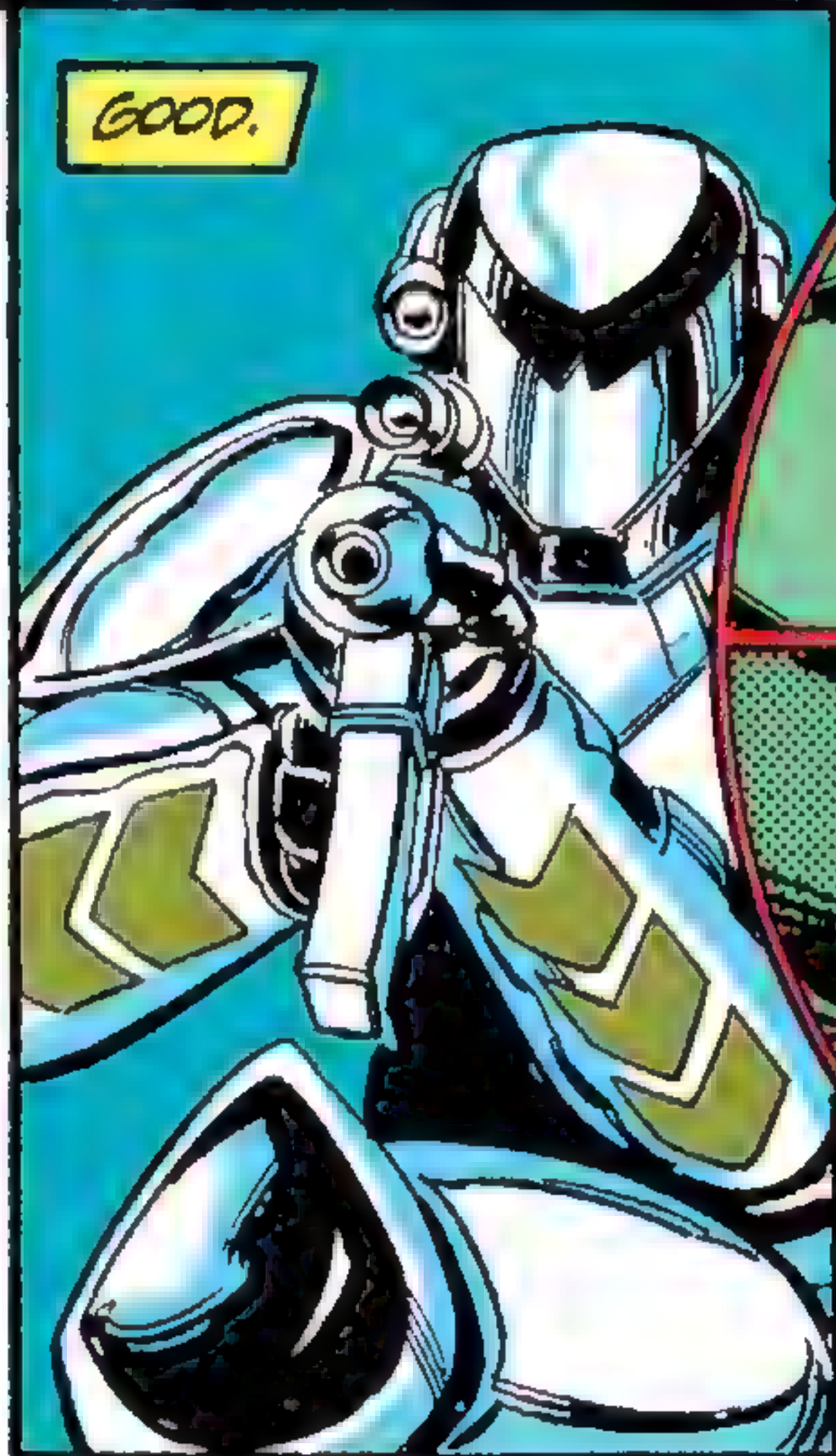
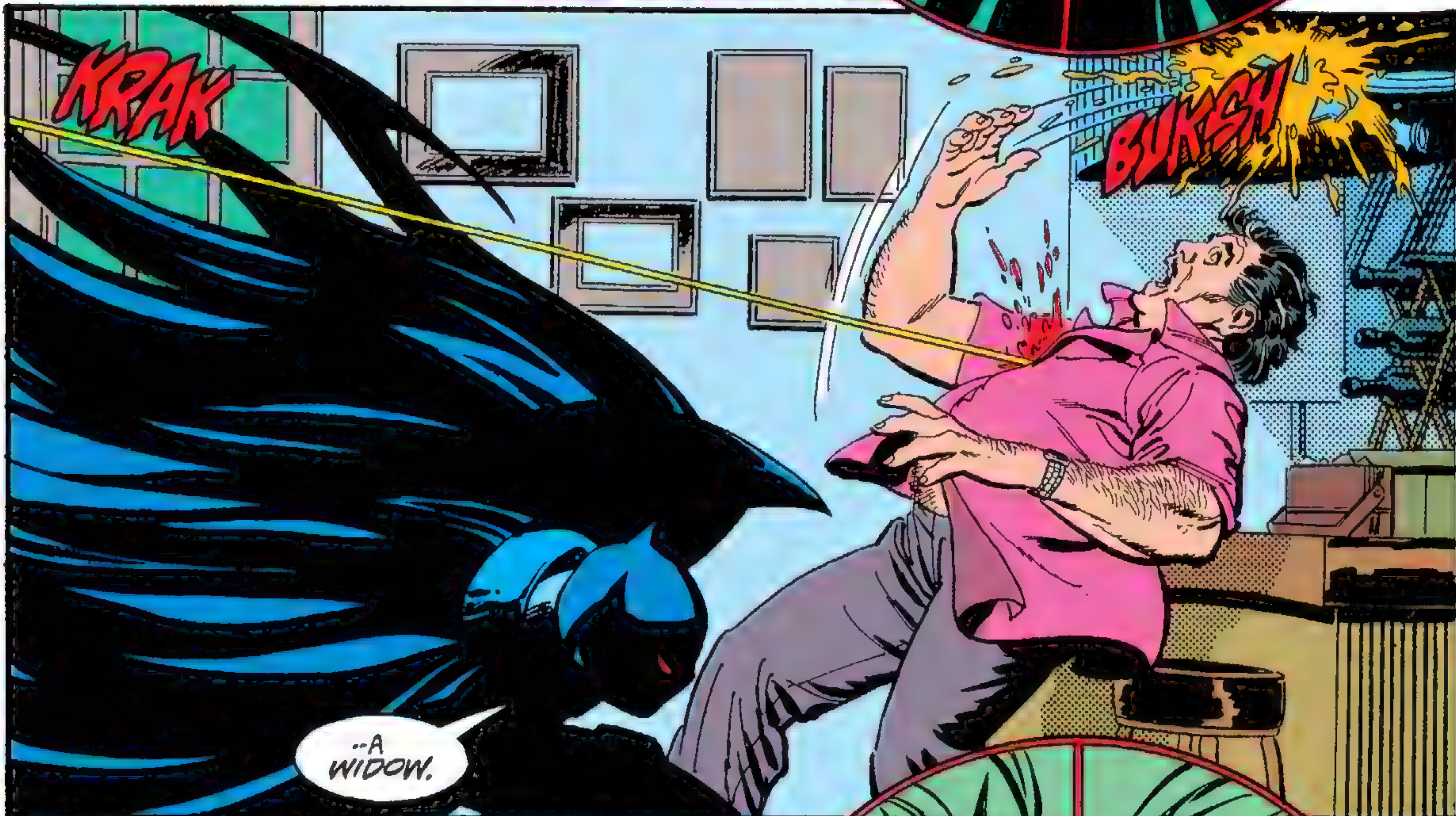
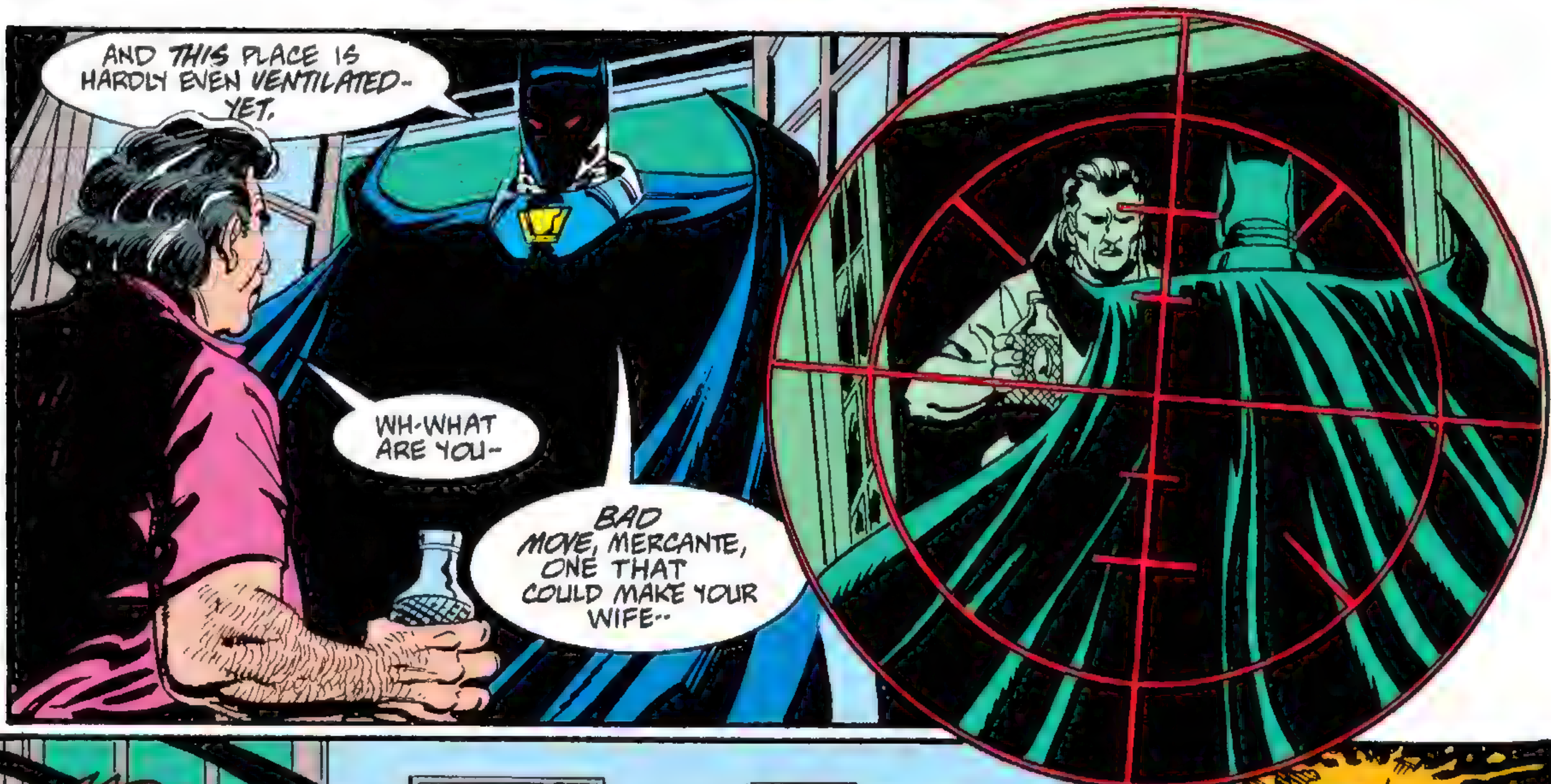
AND
SHE SPENDS
ENOUGH TO
MAKE YOU
SWEAT?

HEY,
YOU'RE A
SCARY
GUY.

YET YOU WERE
EXTREMELY COOL IN THE
CAPRI.

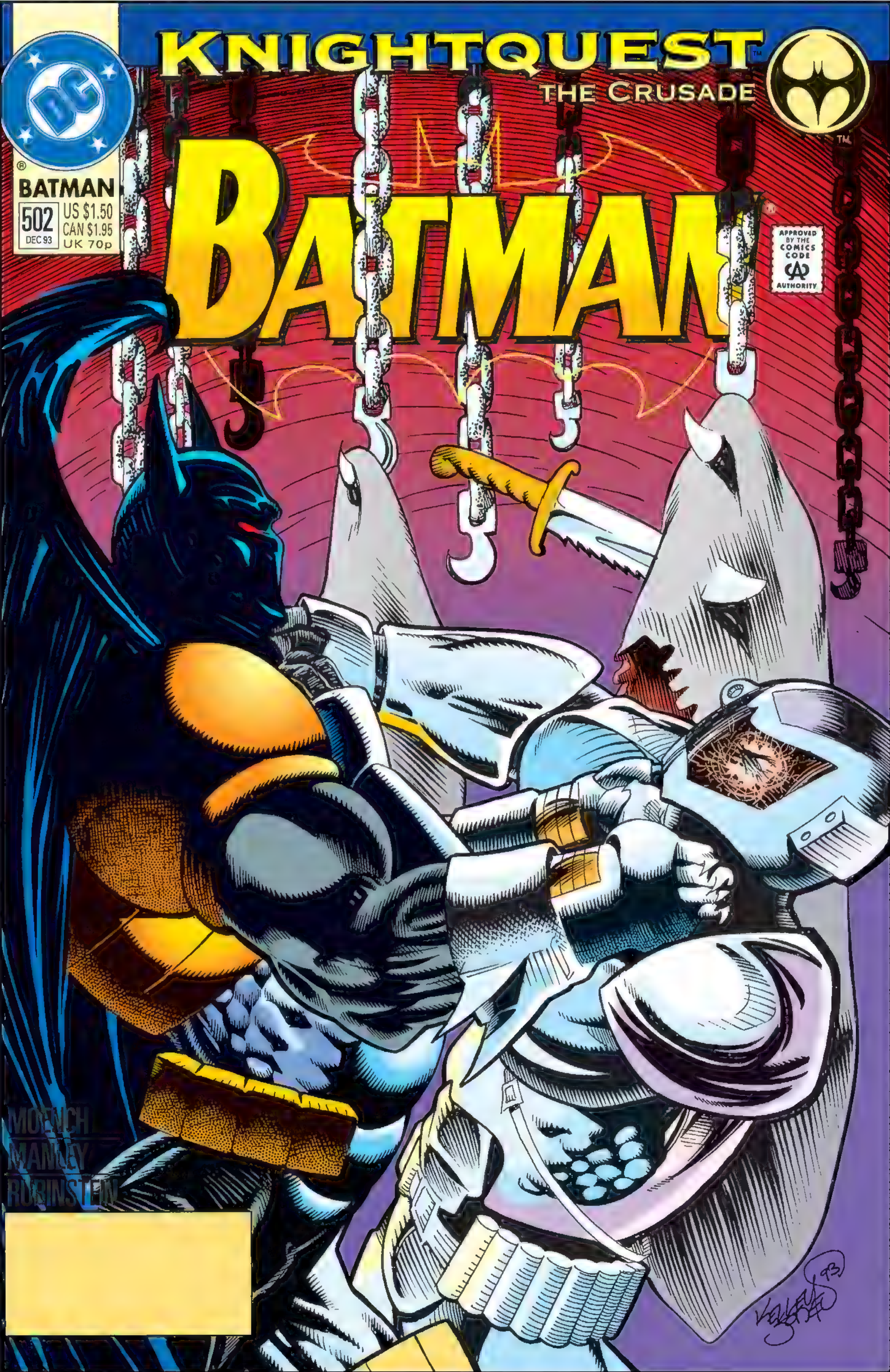
PLACE
IS AIR-
CONDITIONED.

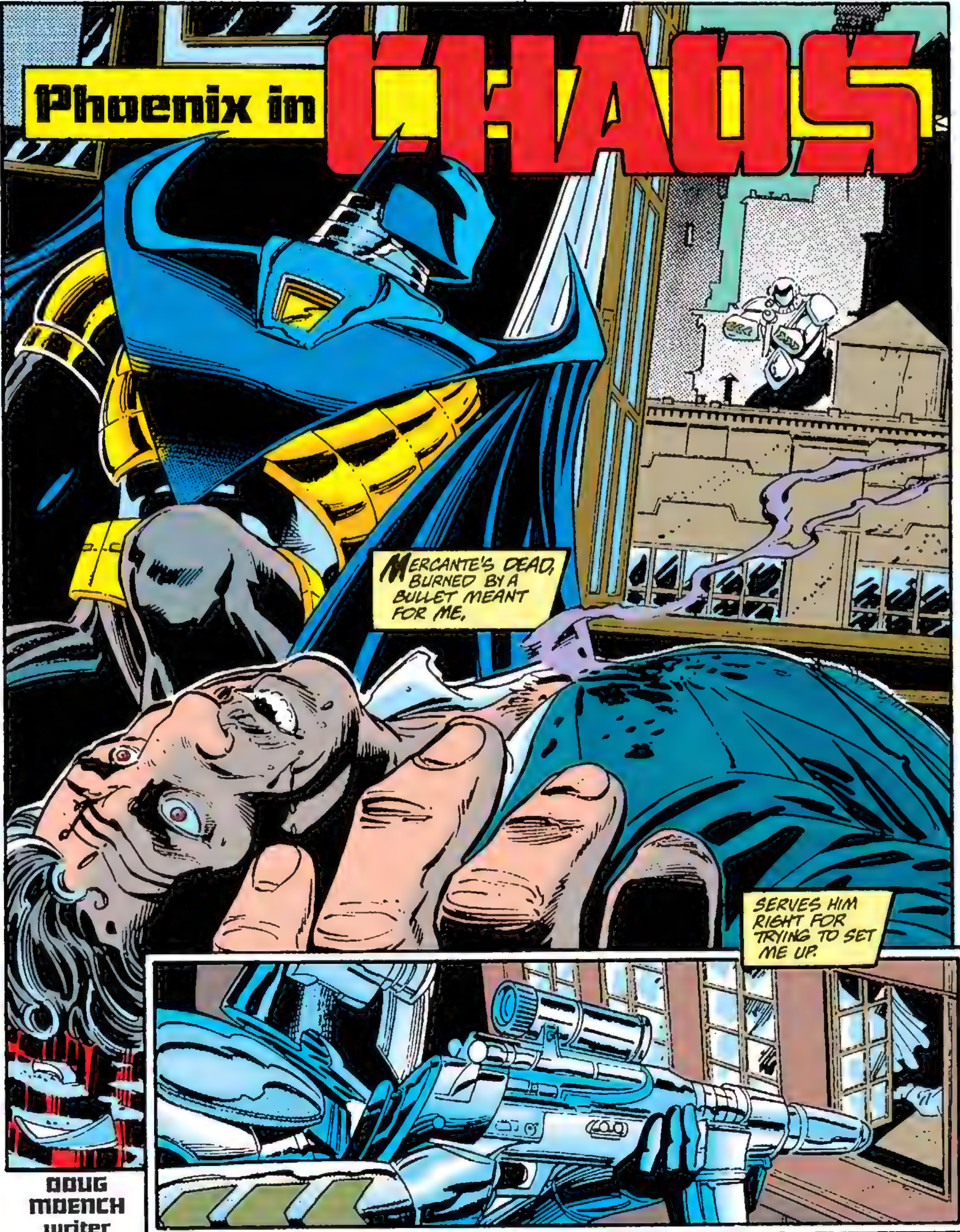
WINDOW BEHIND
ME--CLEAR VIEW
FROM ACROSS
THE STREET...



Next: **Phoenix in Chaos**

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



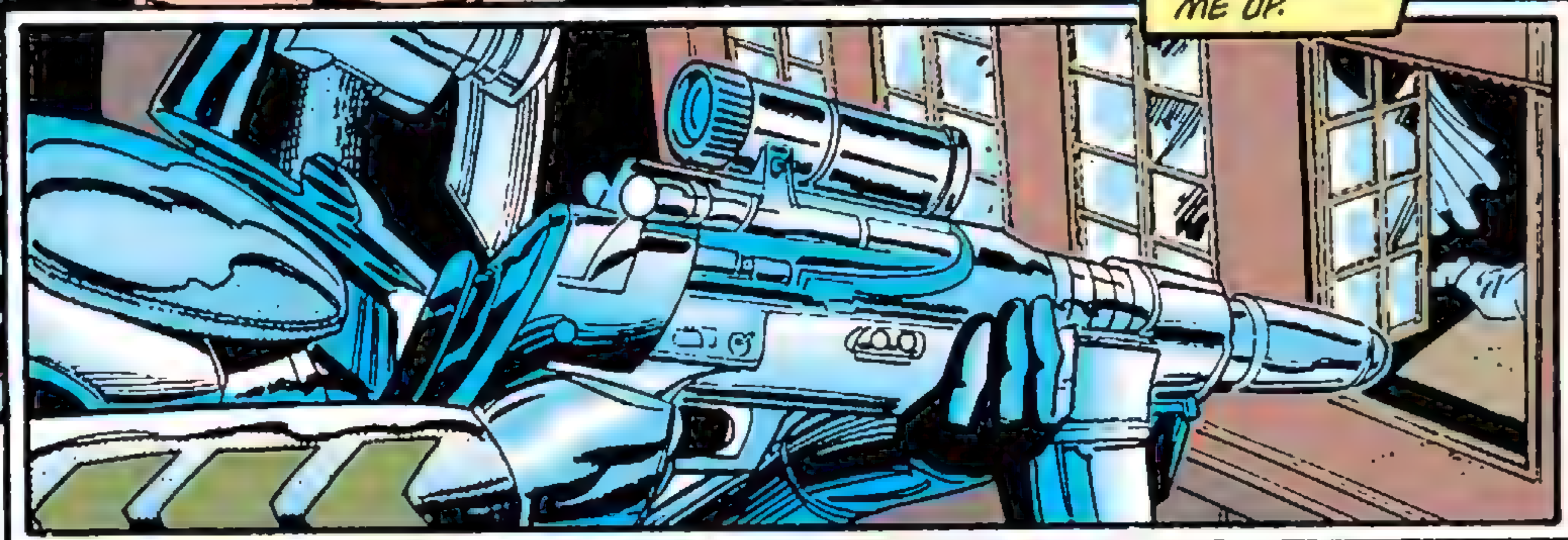


Phoenix in

CHAOS

MERCANTE'S DEAD,
BURNED BY A
BULLET MEANT
FOR ME.

SERVES HIM
RIGHT FOR
TRYING TO SET
ME UP.



**DOUG
MOENCH**
writer

**MIKE
MANLEY** -
artist

**JOE
RUBINSTEIN** -
inker ps 1-11

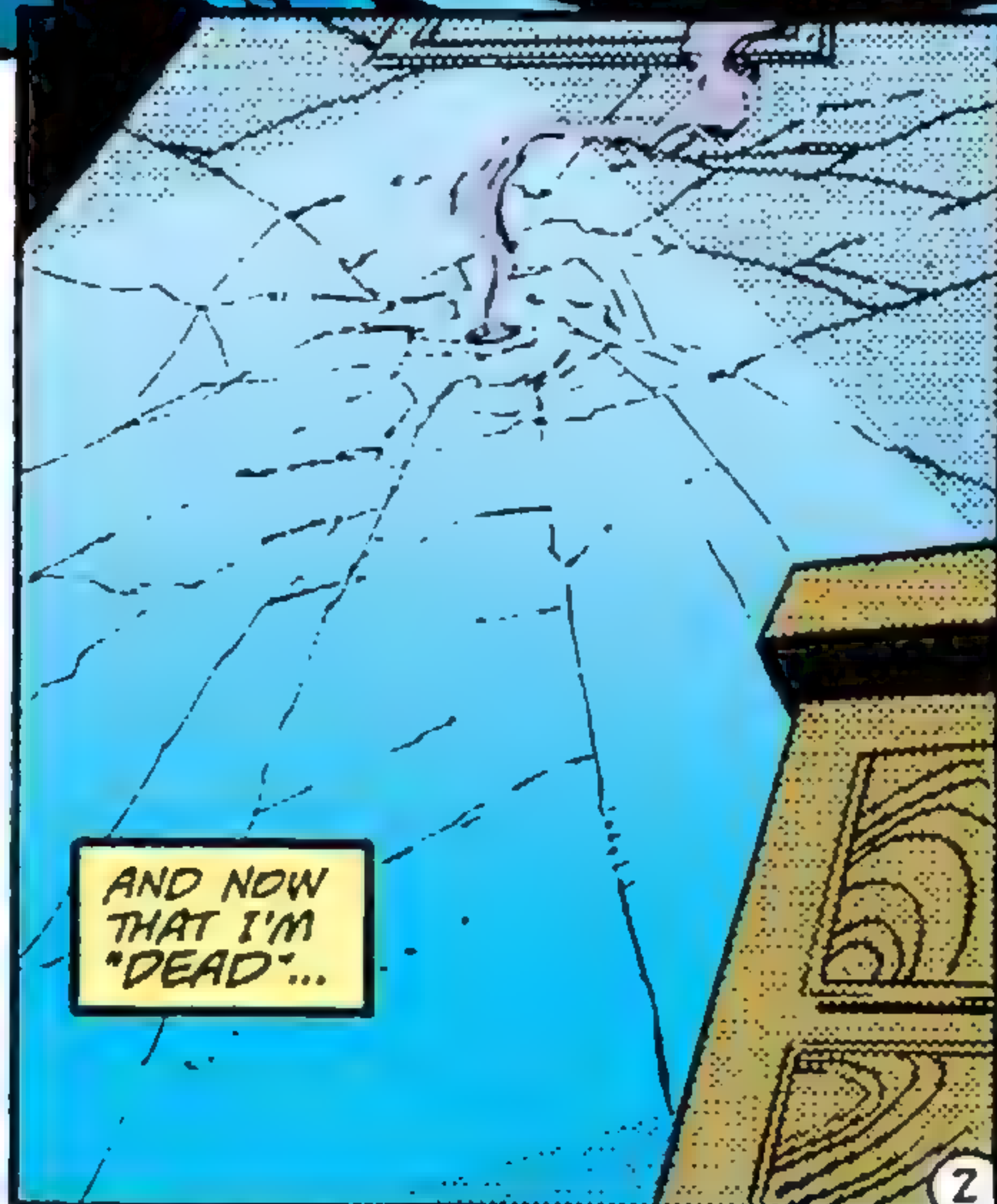
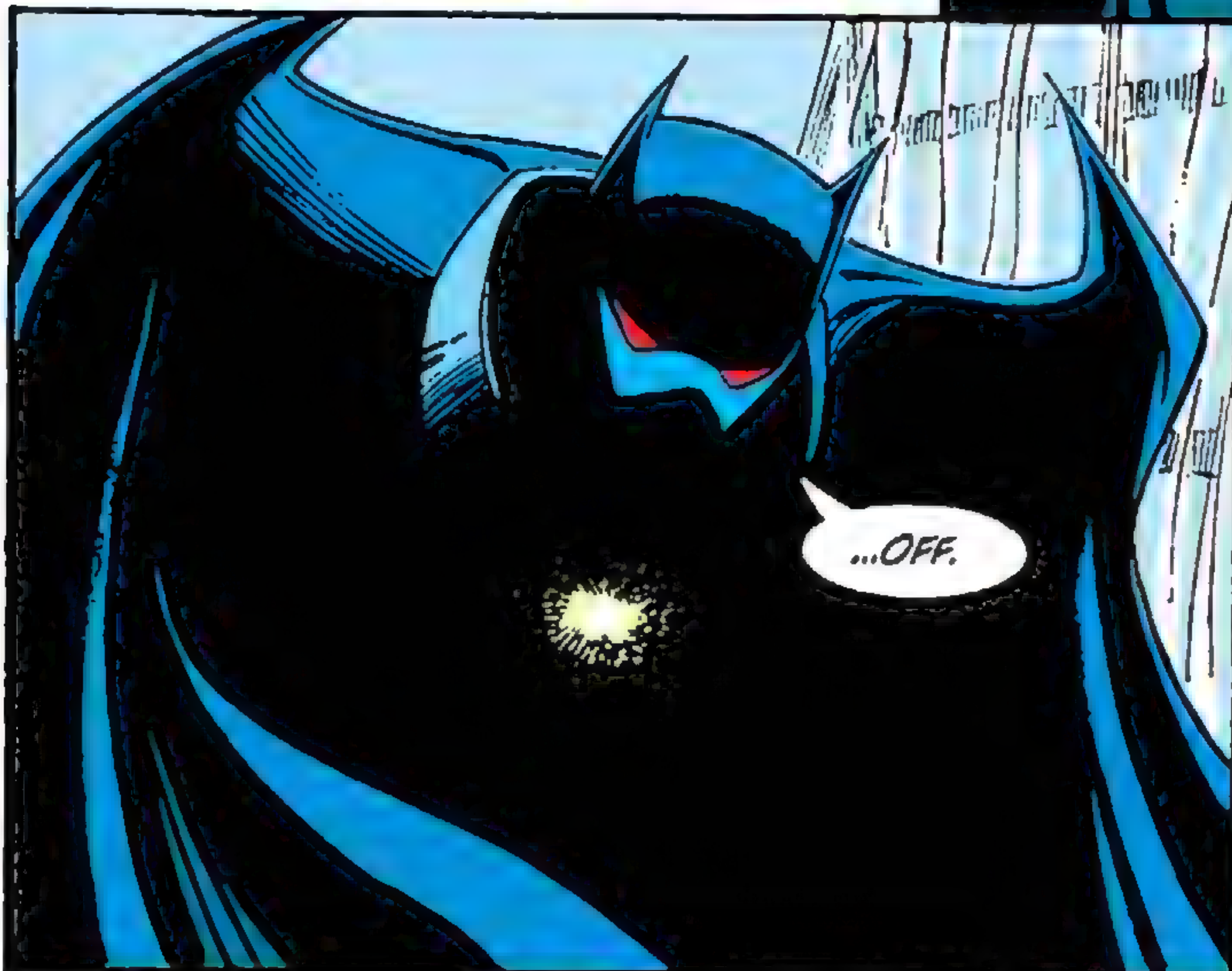
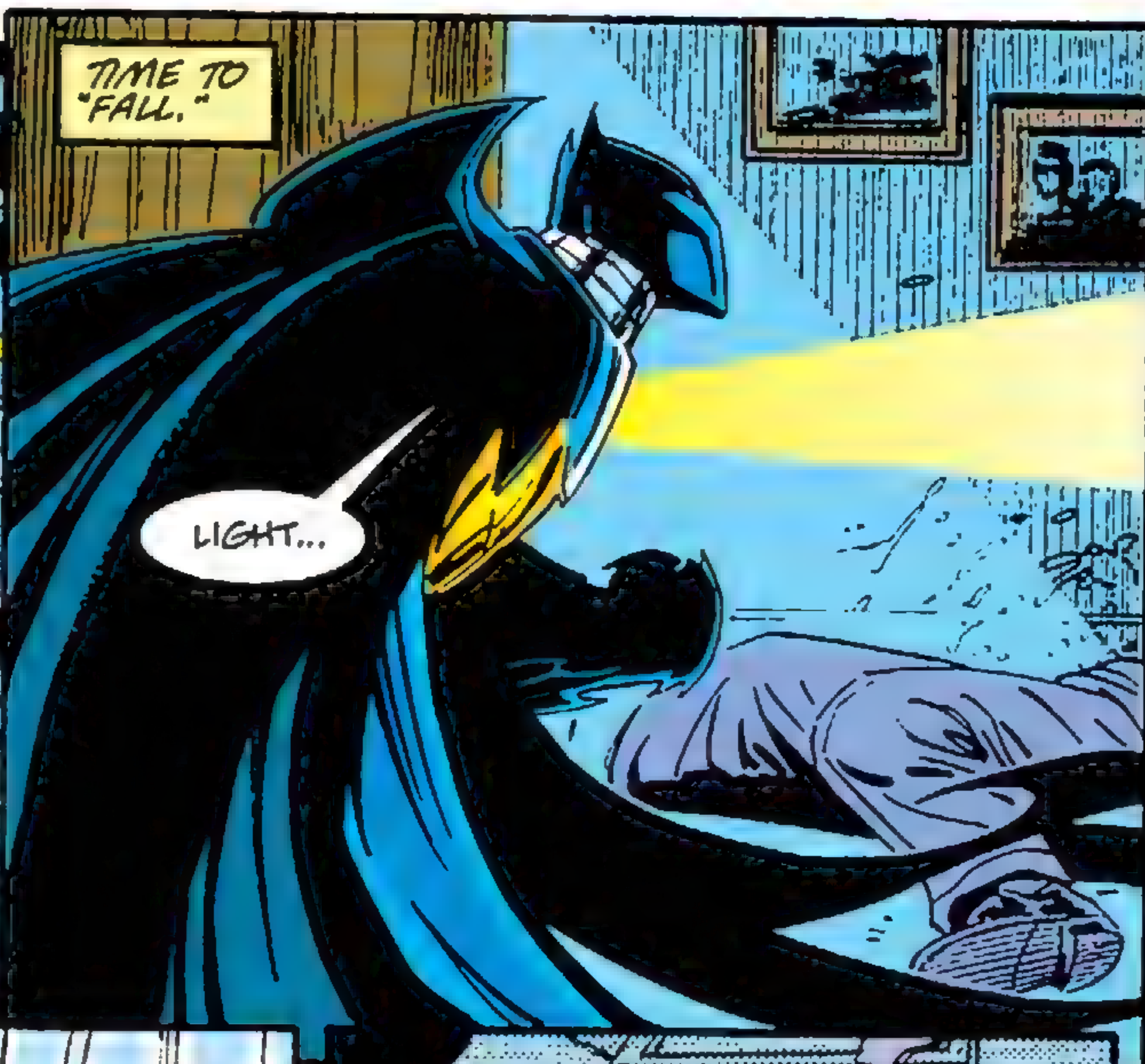
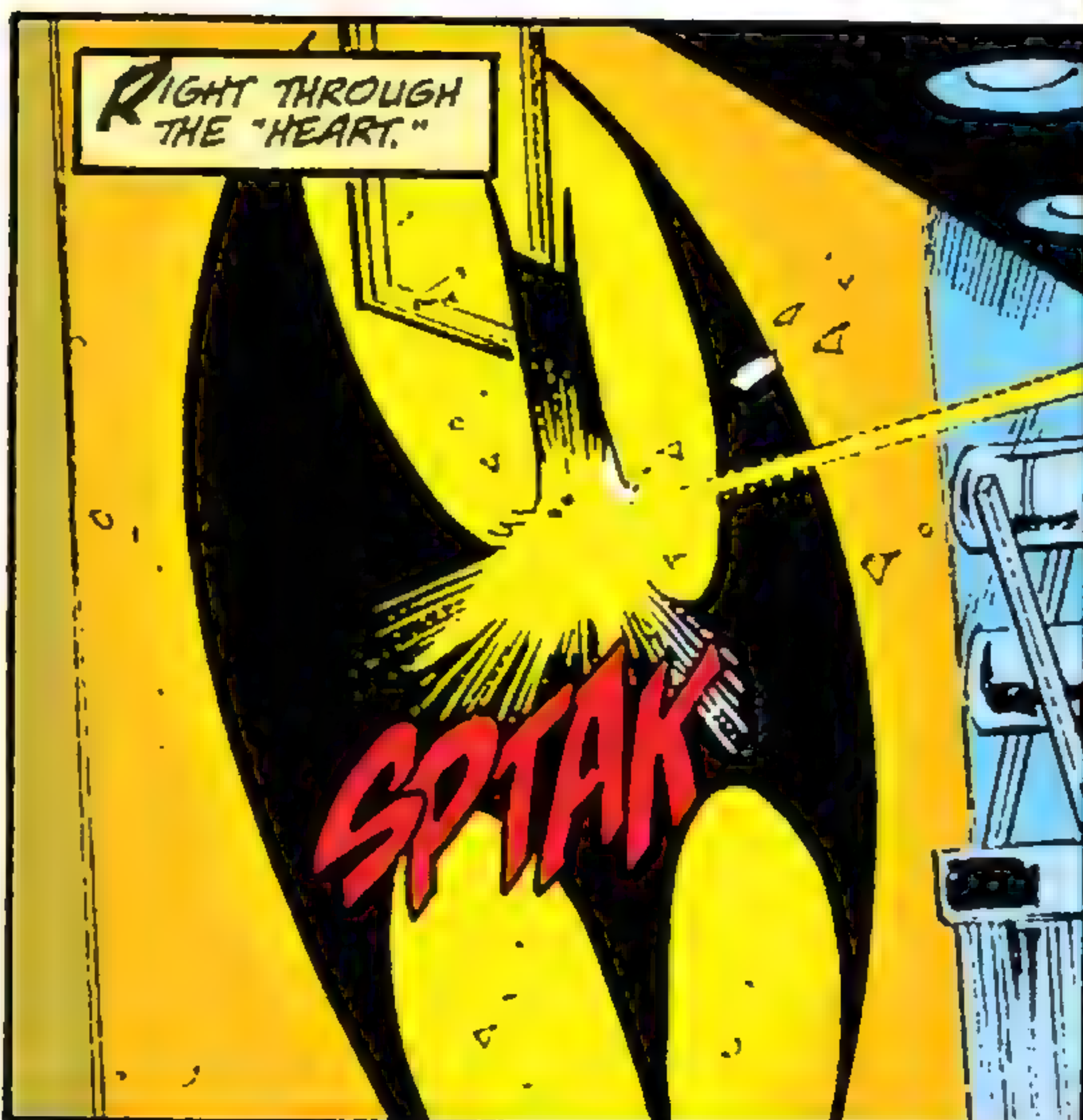
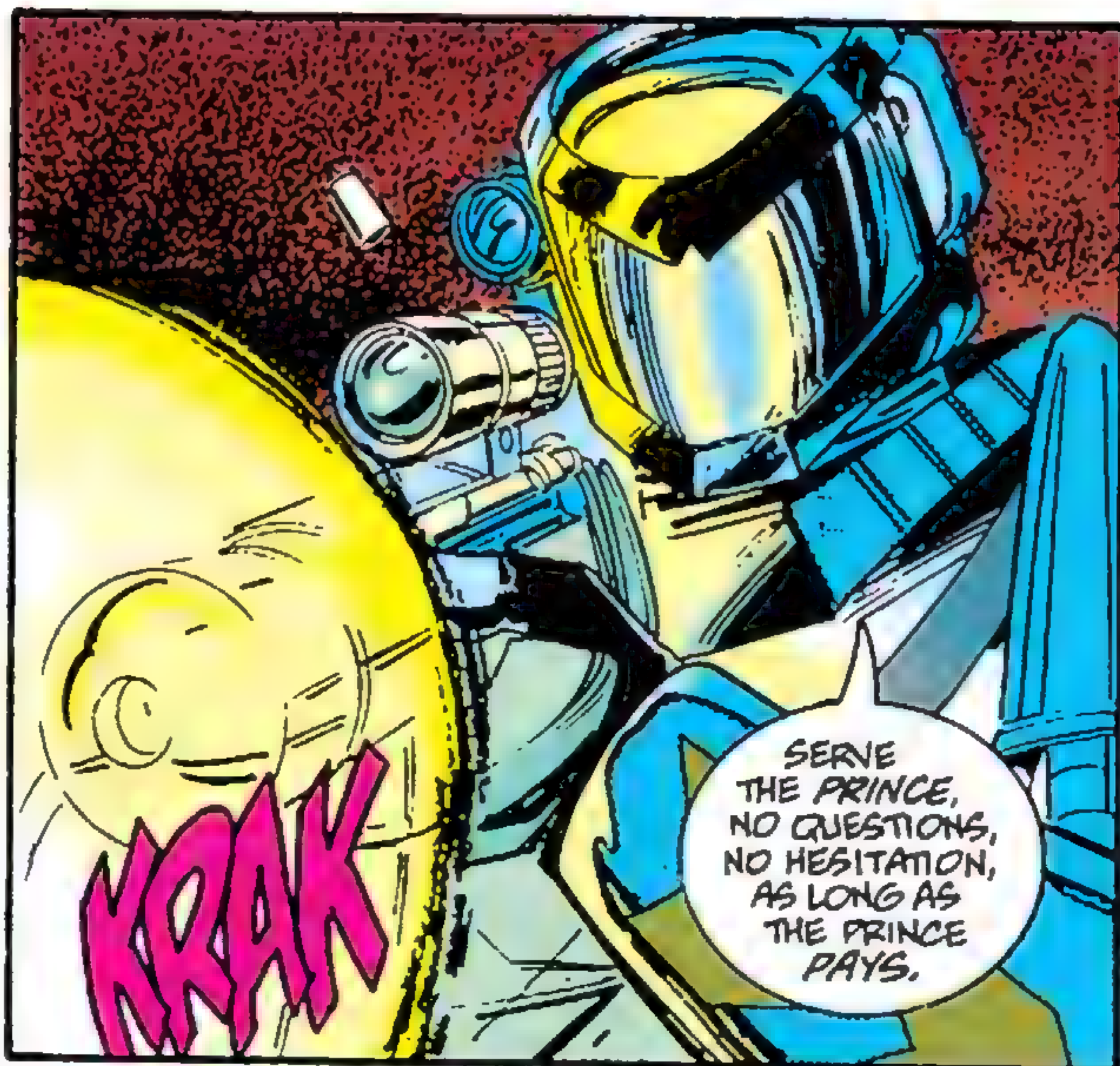
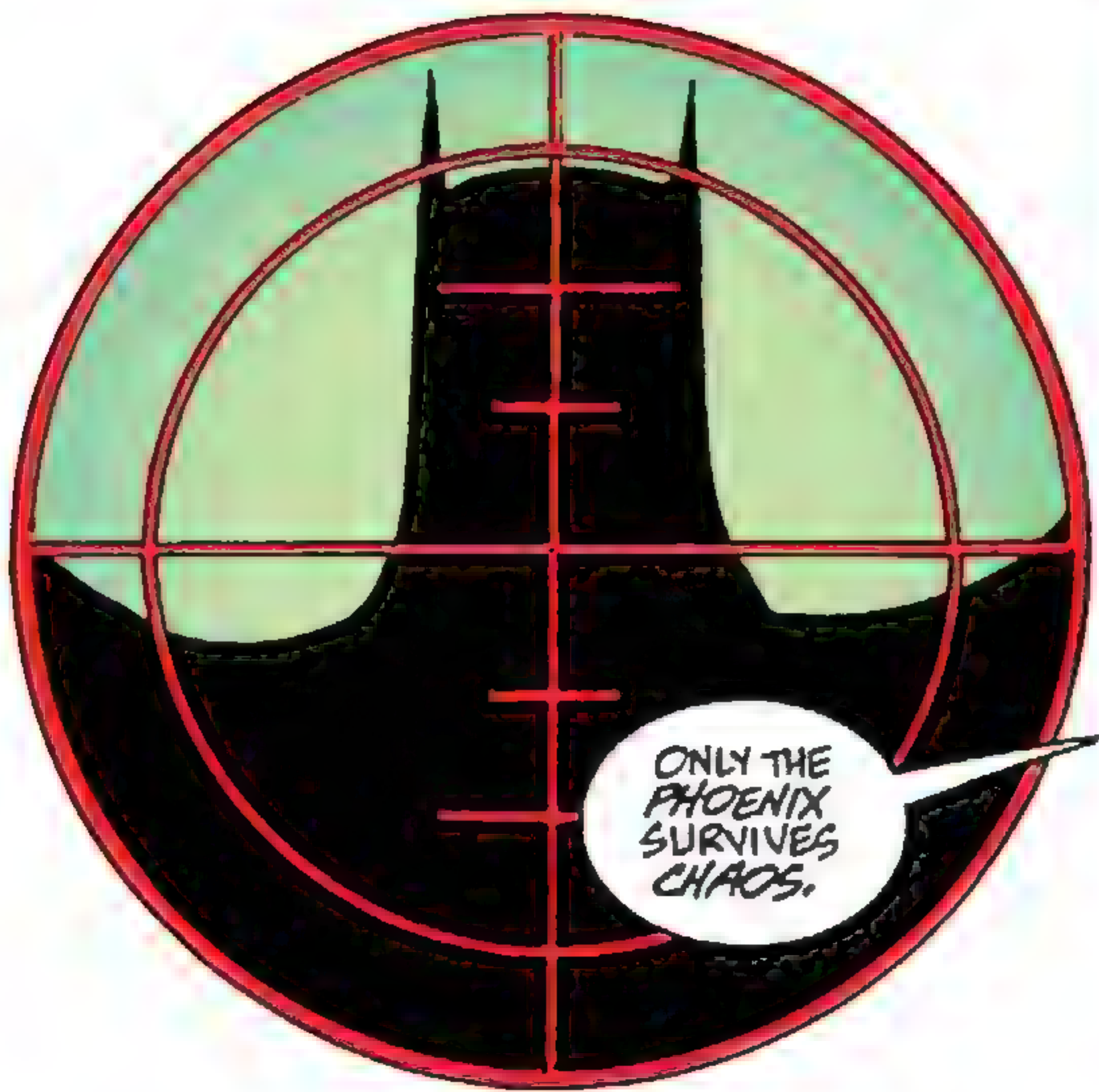
**KEN
BRUZENAK** -
letterer

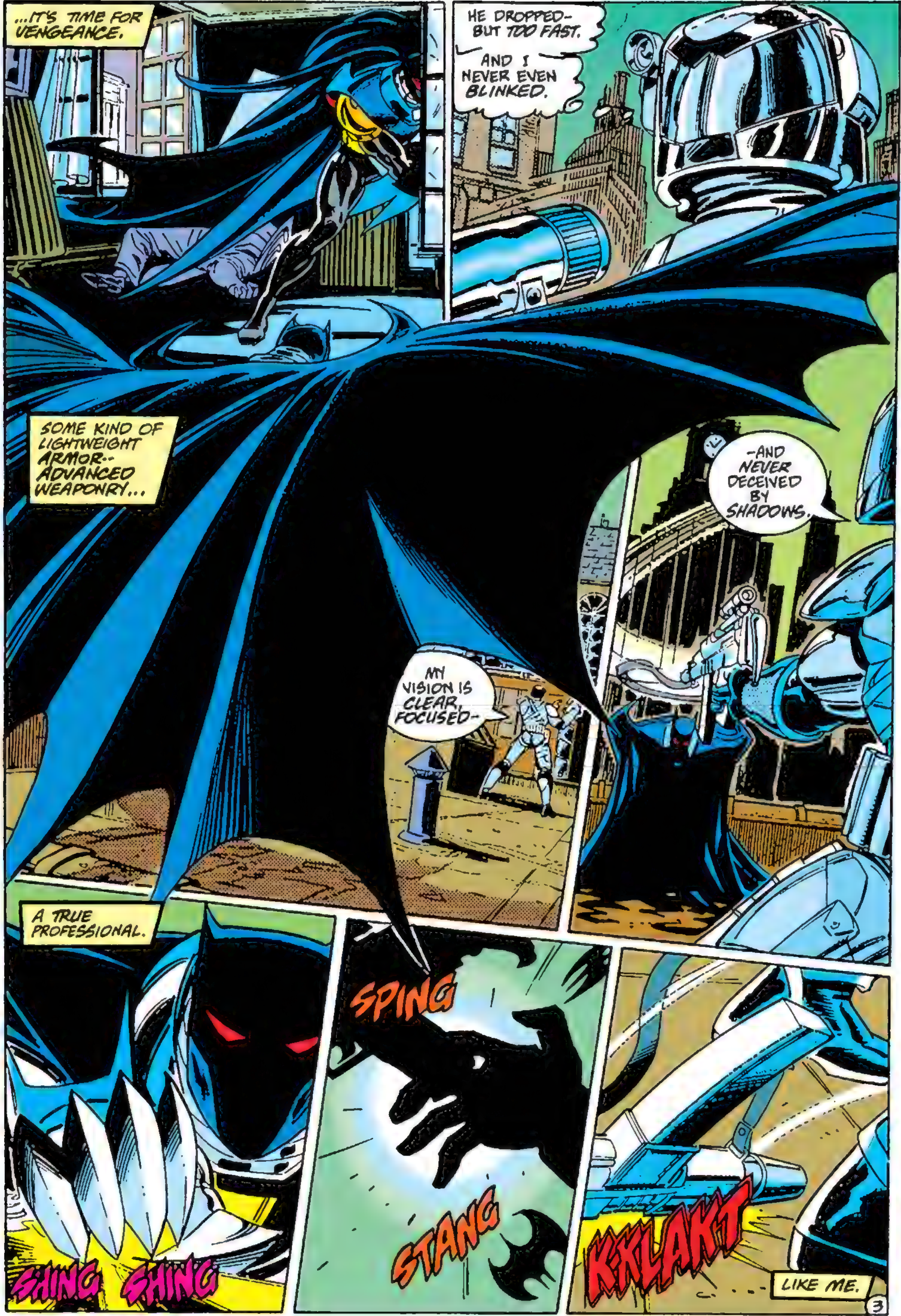
**ADRIENNE
ROY**
colorist

**JORDAN B.
GORFINKEL** -
assistant editor

**DENNIS
O'NEIL** -
editor

Batman
- created by
BOB KANE





...IT'S TIME FOR VENGEANCE.

HE DROPPED-
BUT TOO FAST.
AND I
NEVER EVEN
BLINKED.

SOME KIND OF
LIGHTWEIGHT
ARMOR--
ADVANCED
WEAPONRY...

-AND
NEVER
DECEIVED
BY
SHADOWS.

MY
VISION IS
CLEAR,
FOCUSED-

A TRUE
PROFESSIONAL.

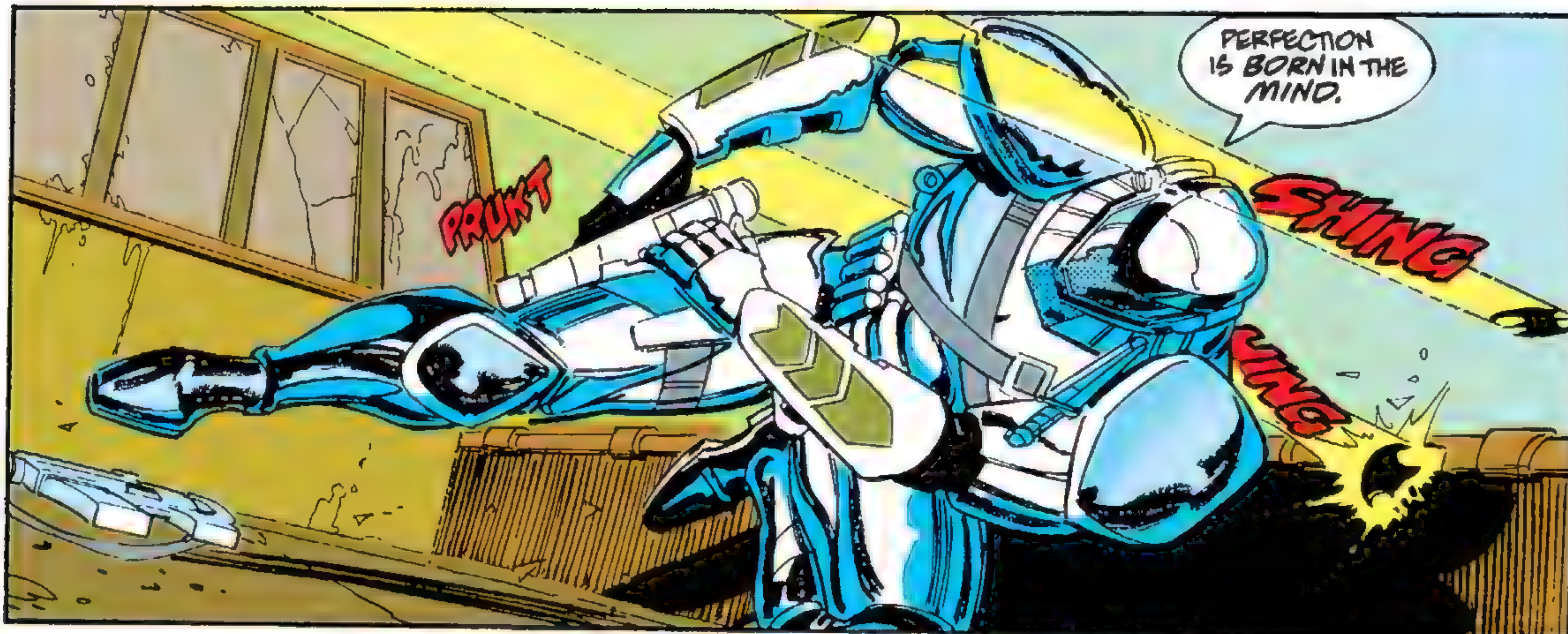
SPING

STANG

KKLAKT

SHING SHING

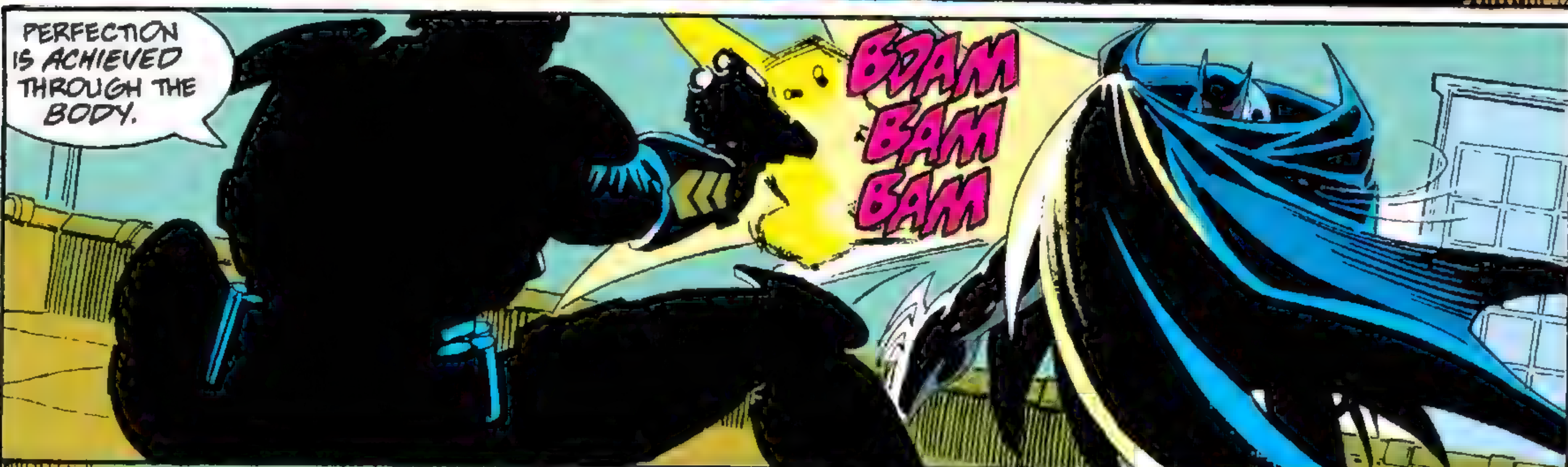
LIKE ME.



PERFECTION
IS BORN IN THE
MIND.

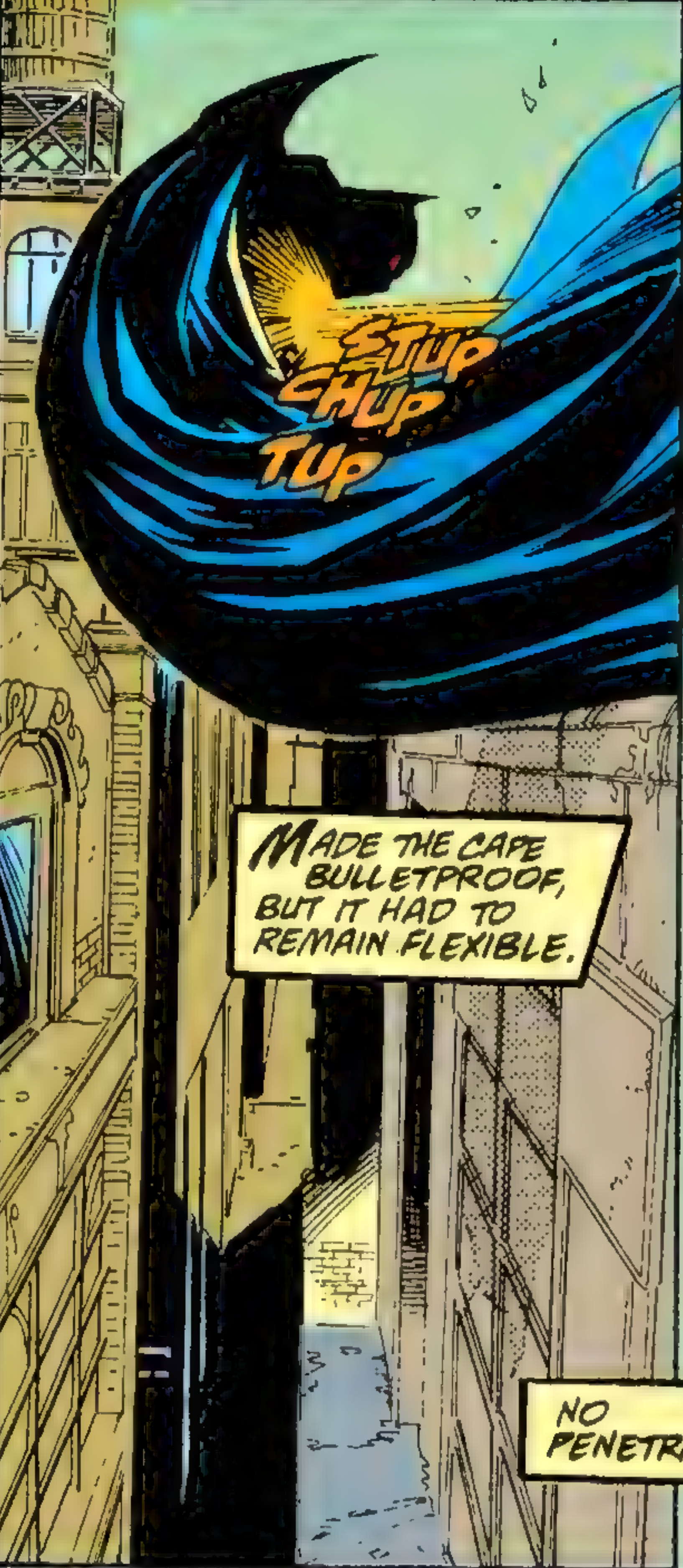
PRUKT

SHING



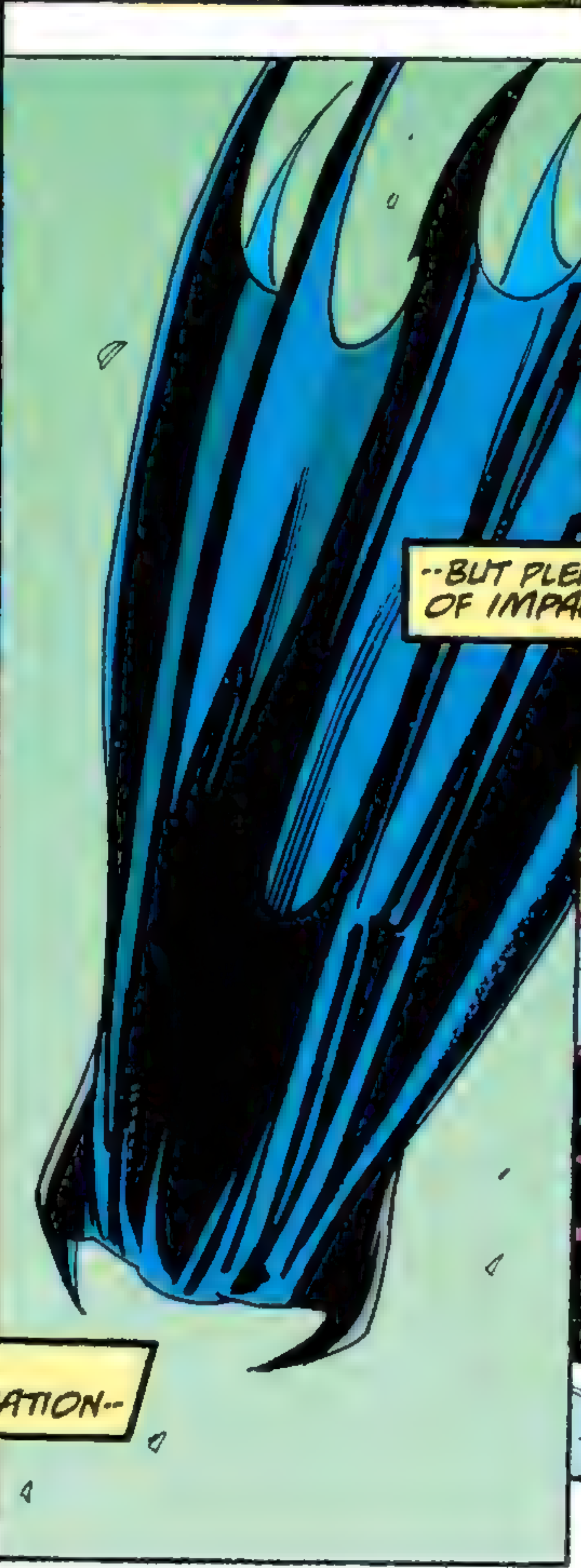
PERFECTION
IS ACHIEVED
THROUGH THE
BODY.

BAM
BAM
BAM



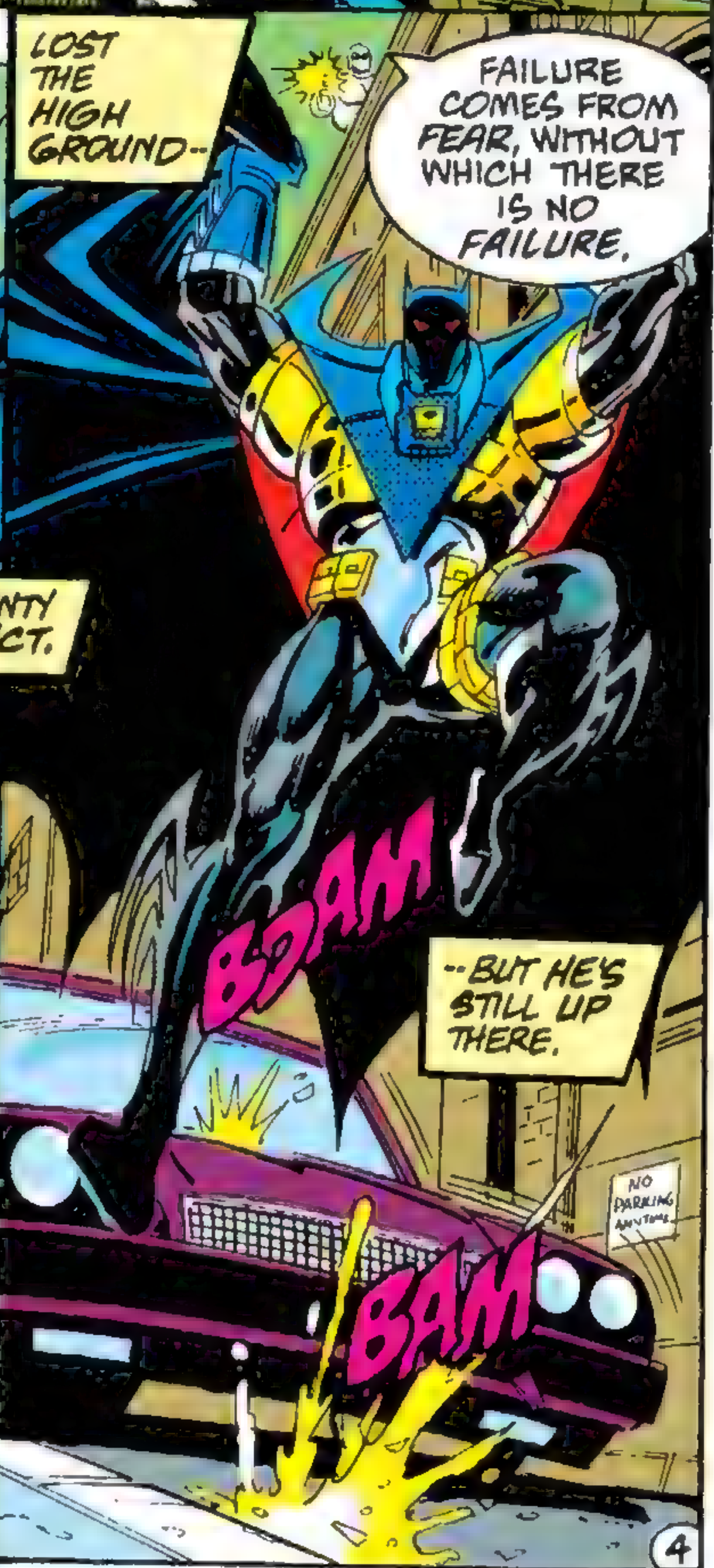
MADE THE CAPE
BULLETPROOF,
BUT IT HAD TO
REMAIN FLEXIBLE.

NO
PENETRATION--



LOST
THE
HIGH
GROUND--

--BUT PLENTY
OF IMPACT.

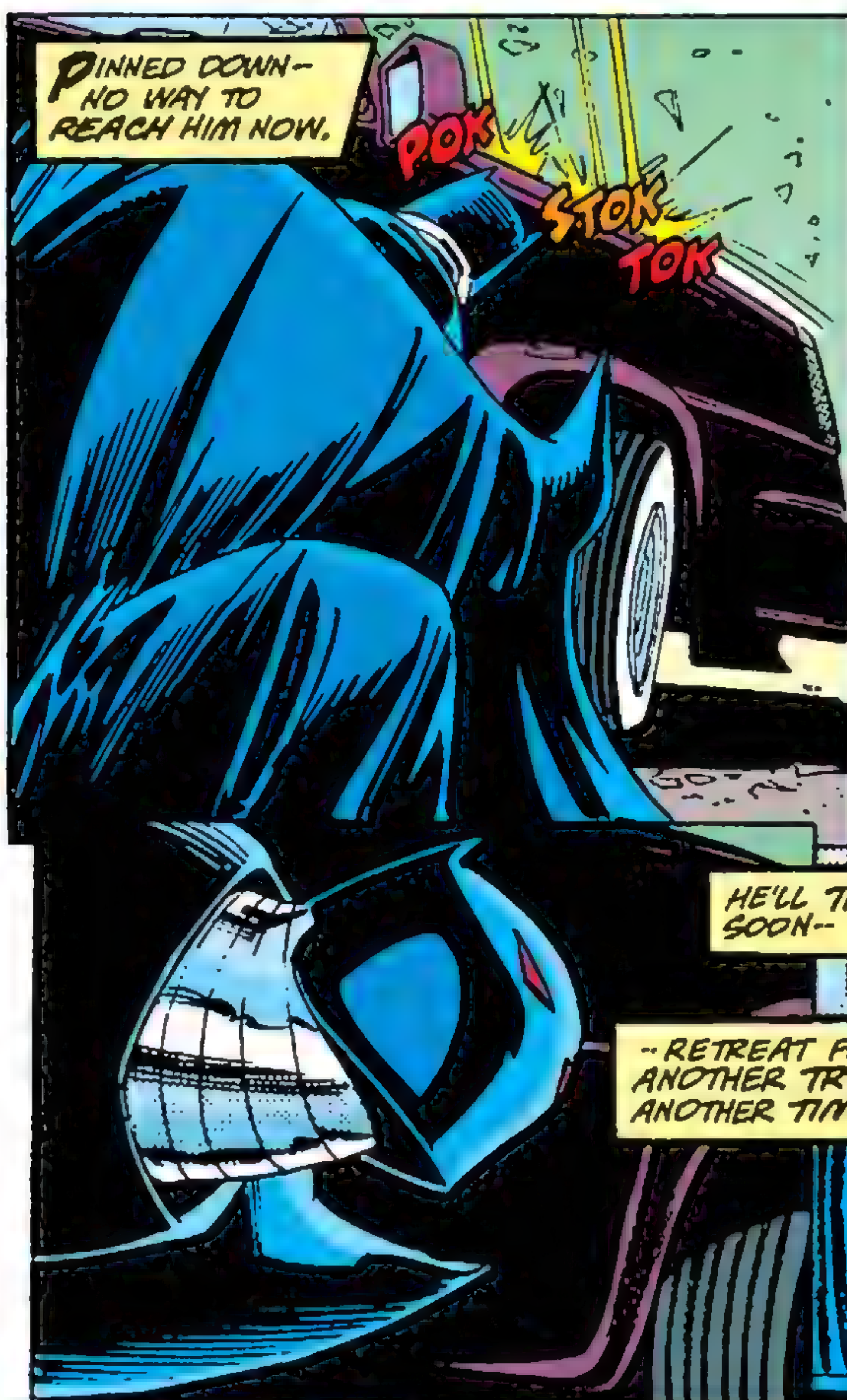


FAILURE
COMES FROM
FEAR, WITHOUT
WHICH THERE
IS NO
FAILURE.

--BUT HE'S
STILL UP
THERE.

BAM

BAM

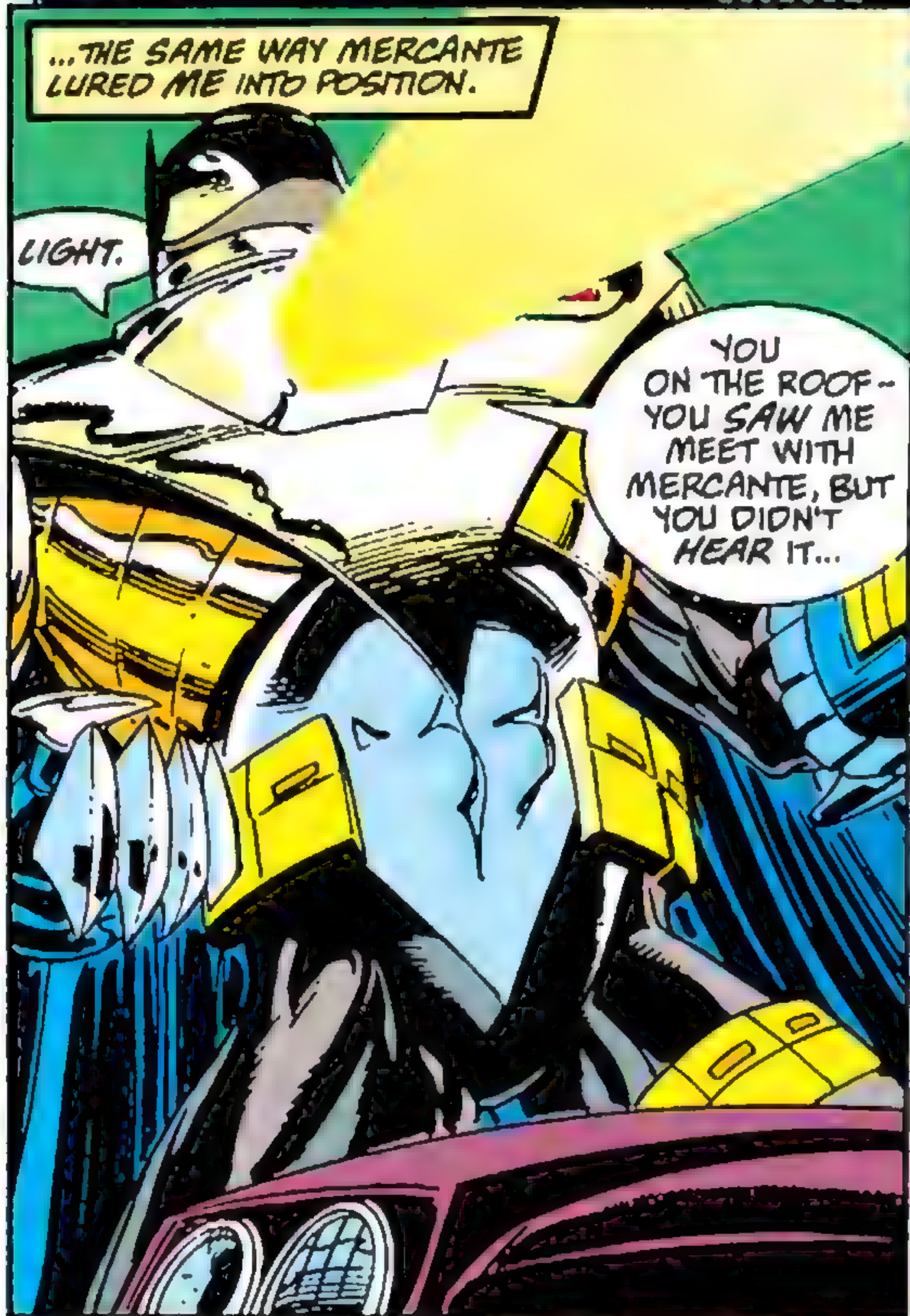


PINNED DOWN--
NO WAY TO
REACH HIM NOW.

POK
STOK
TOK

HE'LL TIRE
SOON--

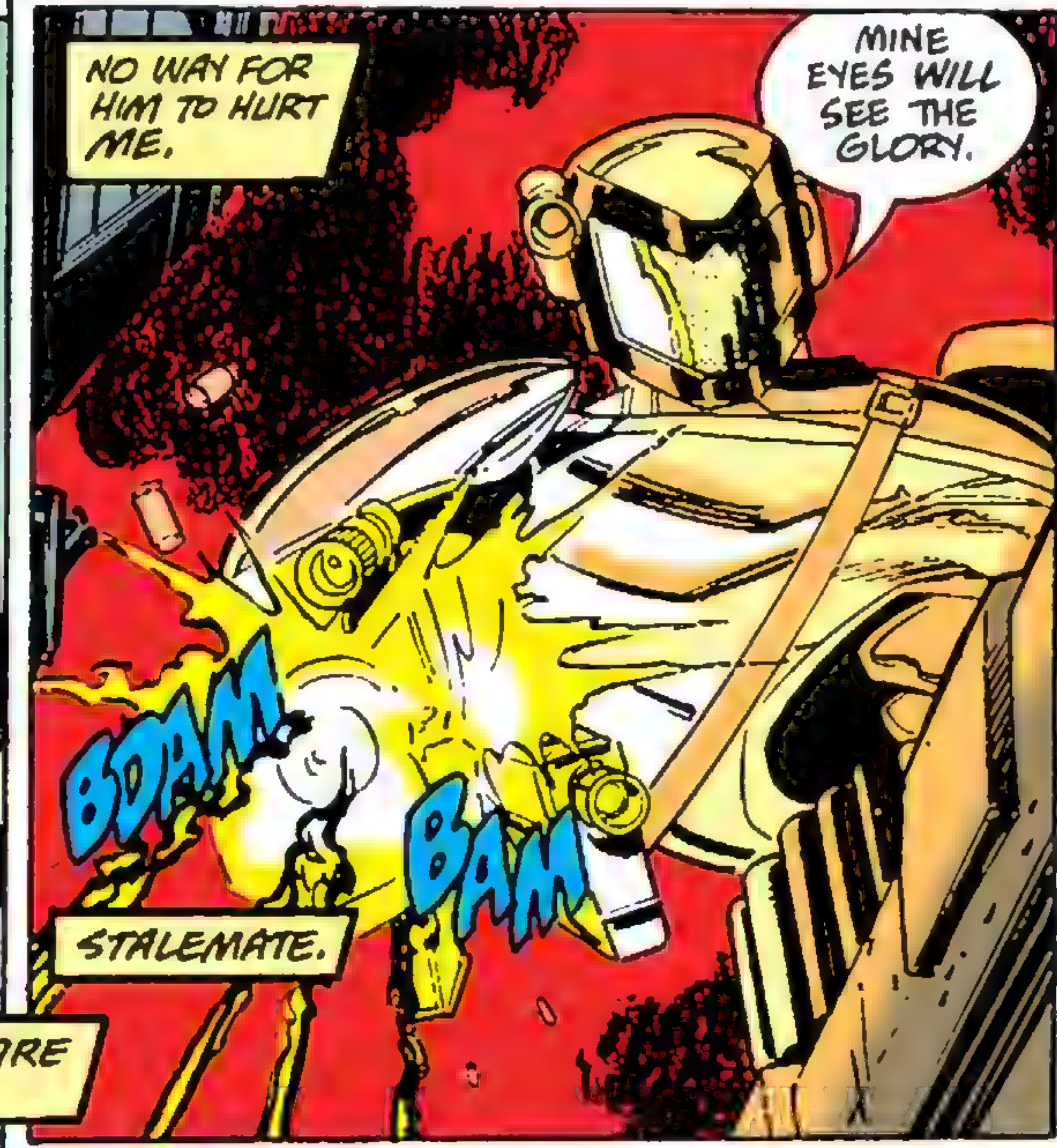
-- RETREAT FOR
ANOTHER TRY,
ANOTHER TIME...



...THE SAME WAY MERCANTE
LURED ME INTO POSITION.

LIGHT.

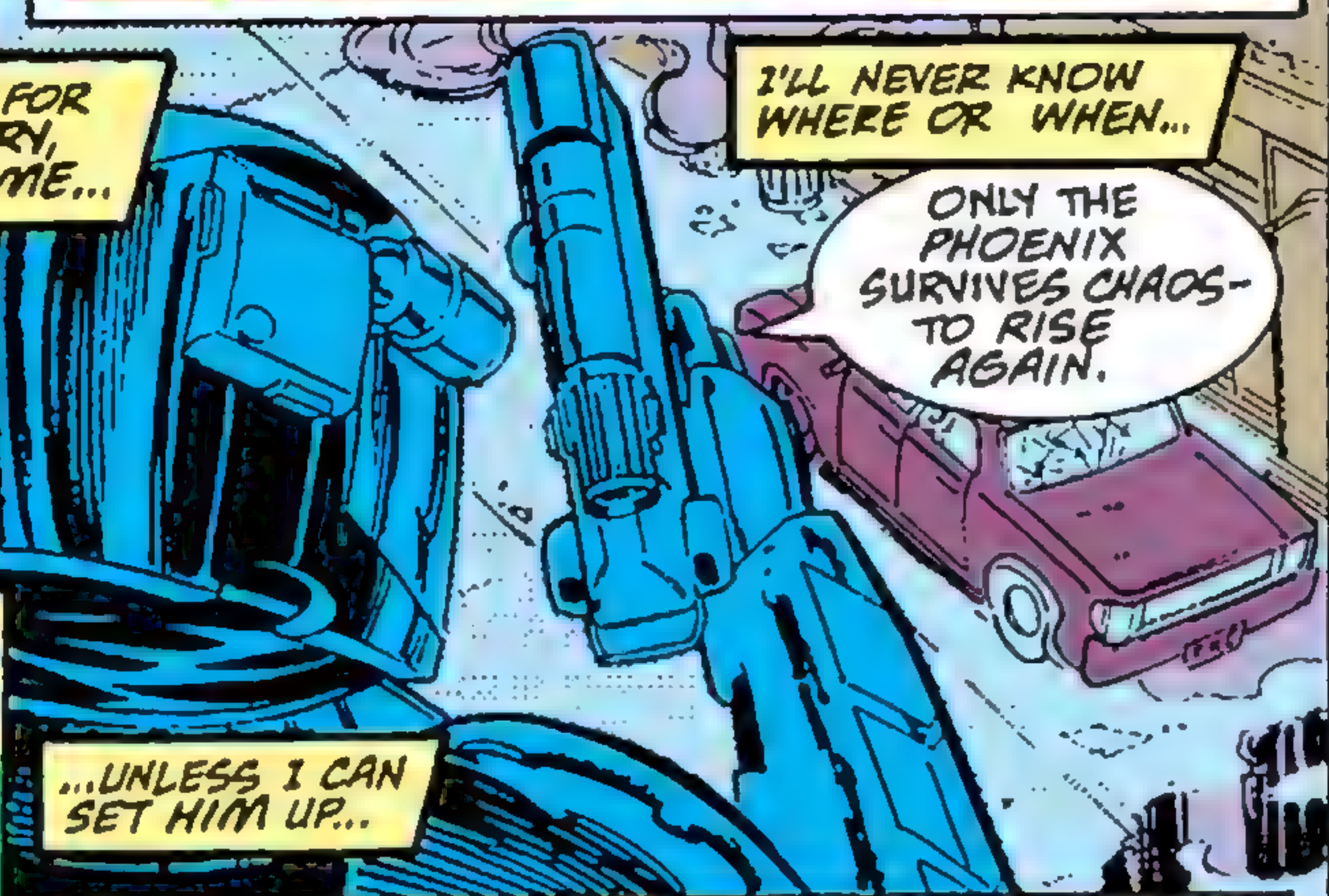
YOU
ON THE ROOF--
YOU SAW ME
MEET WITH
MERCANTE, BUT
YOU DIDN'T
HEAR IT...



NO WAY FOR
HIM TO HURT
ME.

MINE
EYES WILL
SEE THE
GLORY.

STALEMATE.



I'LL NEVER KNOW
WHERE OR WHEN...

ONLY THE
PHOENIX
SURVIVES CHAOS--
TO RISE
AGAIN.



...UNLESS I CAN
SET HIM UP...

...DIDN'T HEAR
HIM BOAST
ABOUT ME
BEING DEAD
MEAT--AND
BOAST ABOUT
HOW THEY WEREN'T
EVEN GOING TO
PAY THE
ASSASSIN!

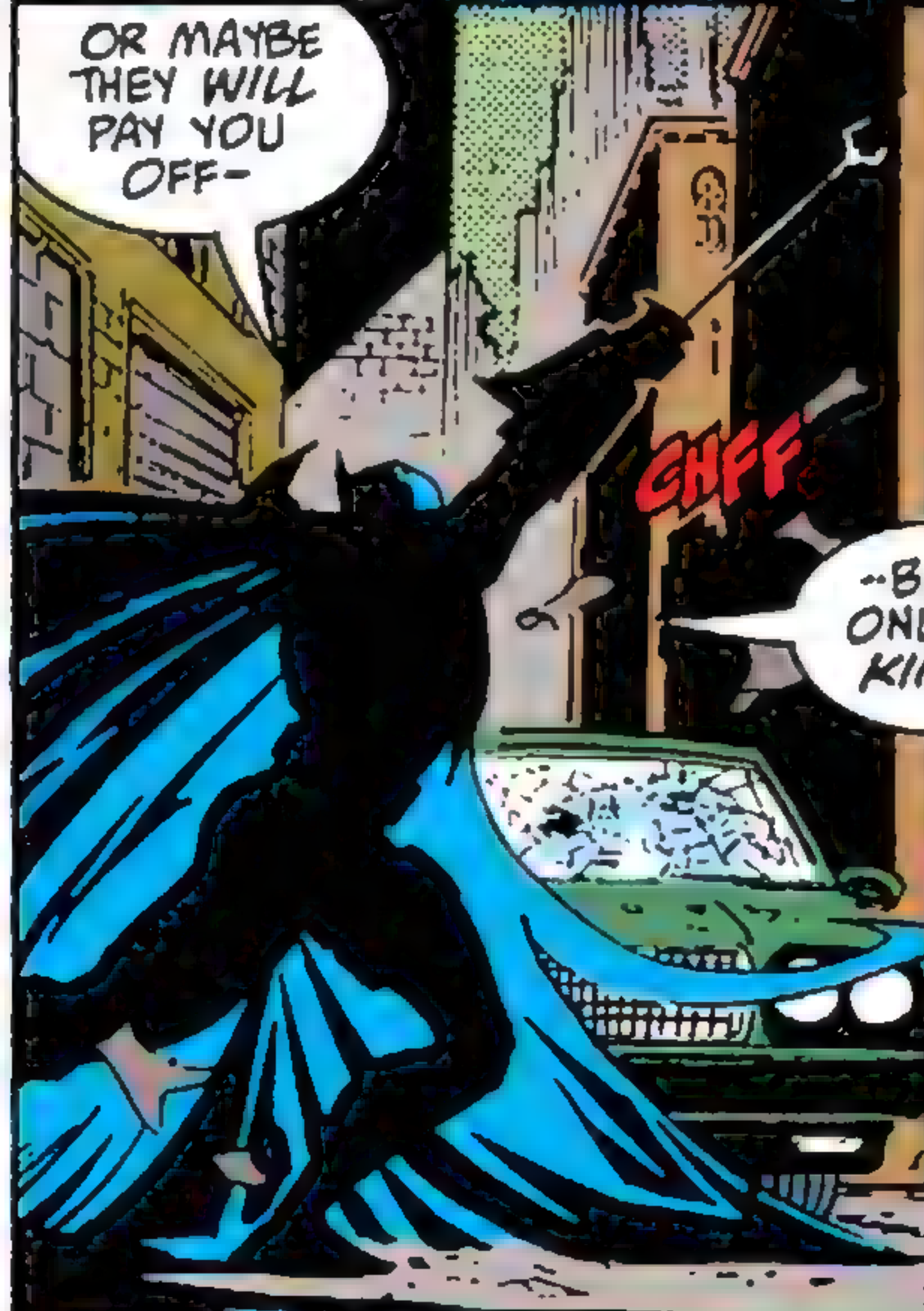


I WAS MEANT TO BE A "FREE KILL" FOR HIM AND ROSELLI AND MARCELLO!

YOU'VE BEEN TAKEN!



AND NOW THAT YOU'VE KILLED MERCANTE, THE OTHERS ARE EVEN LESS LIKELY TO PAY FOR THE BULLET!

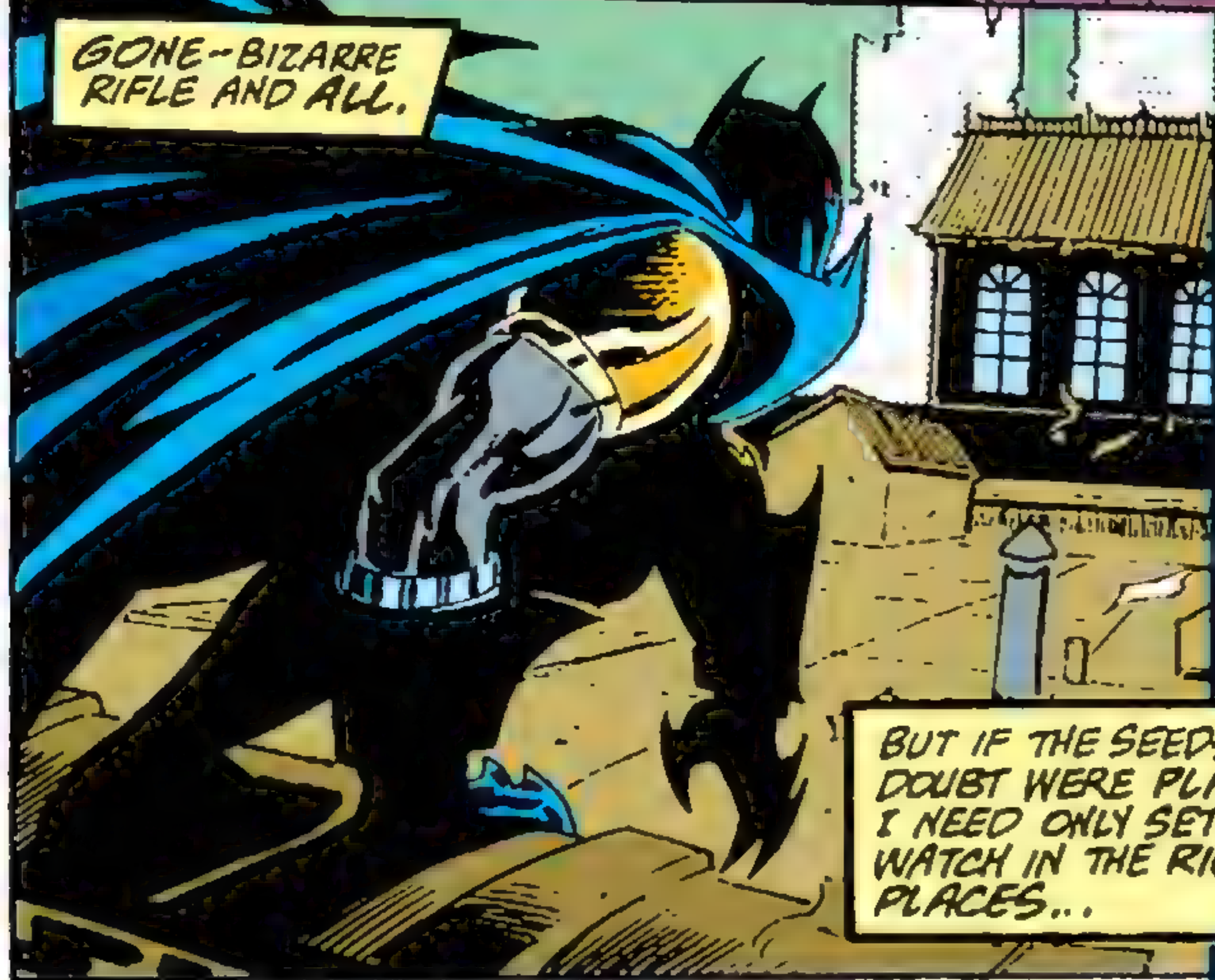


OR MAYBE THEY WILL PAY YOU OFF--

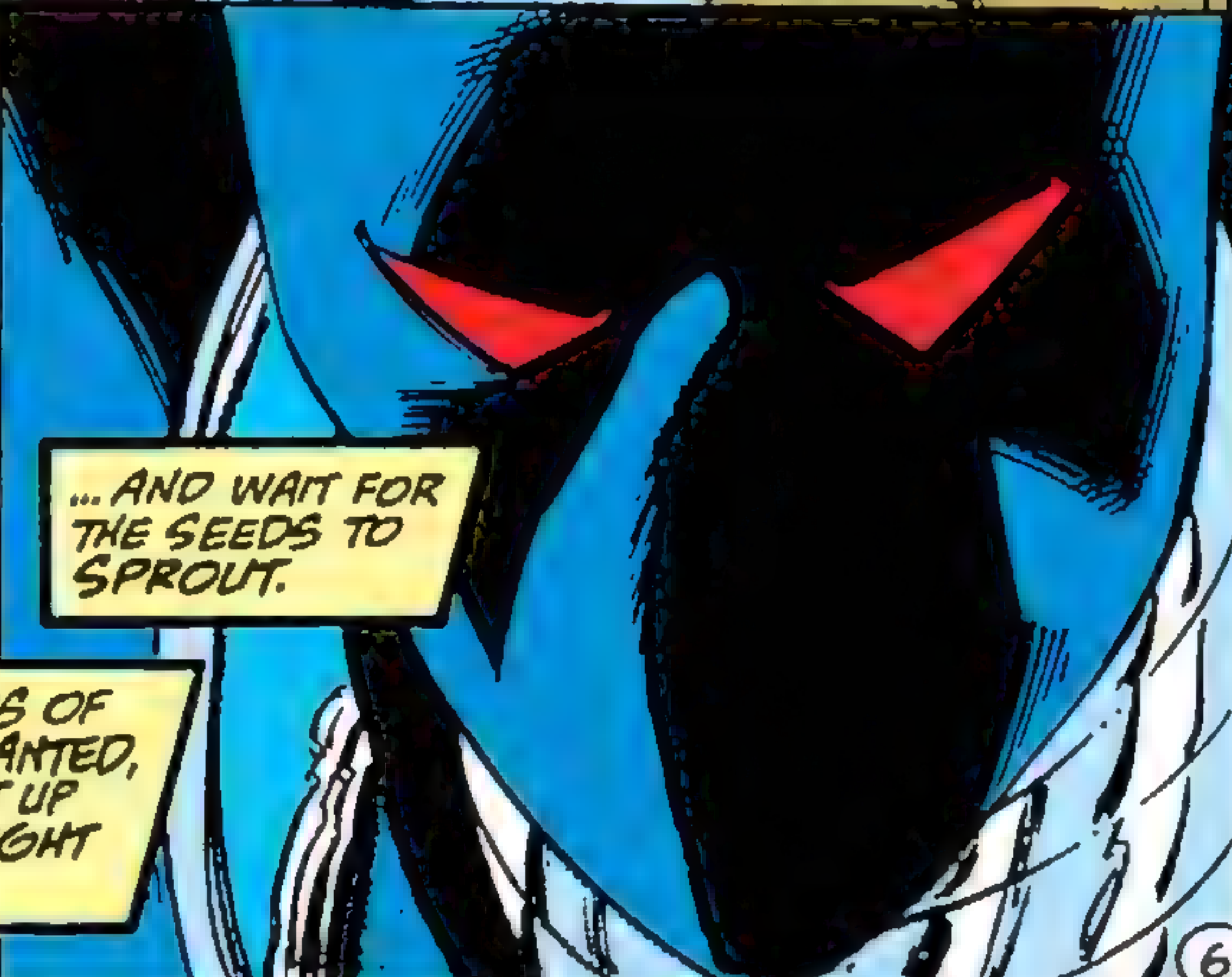
--BUT ONLY IN KIND--



--WITH THEIR BULLETS!



GONE--BIZARRE RIFLE AND ALL.



... AND WAIT FOR THE SEEDS TO SPROUT.

BUT IF THE SEEDS OF DOUBT WERE PLANTED, I NEED ONLY SET UP WATCH IN THE RIGHT PLACES...



YOUR OFFICE IS CLEAN? YOU SWEEP FOR BUGS BEFORE CALLING ME IN?

SPIT IT OUT, JACKASS-- WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT SOME "FORMER MERCENARY"?



DOES CODE-NAME: MEKROS RING A BELL?

HE SURFACED AGAIN? WHERE?



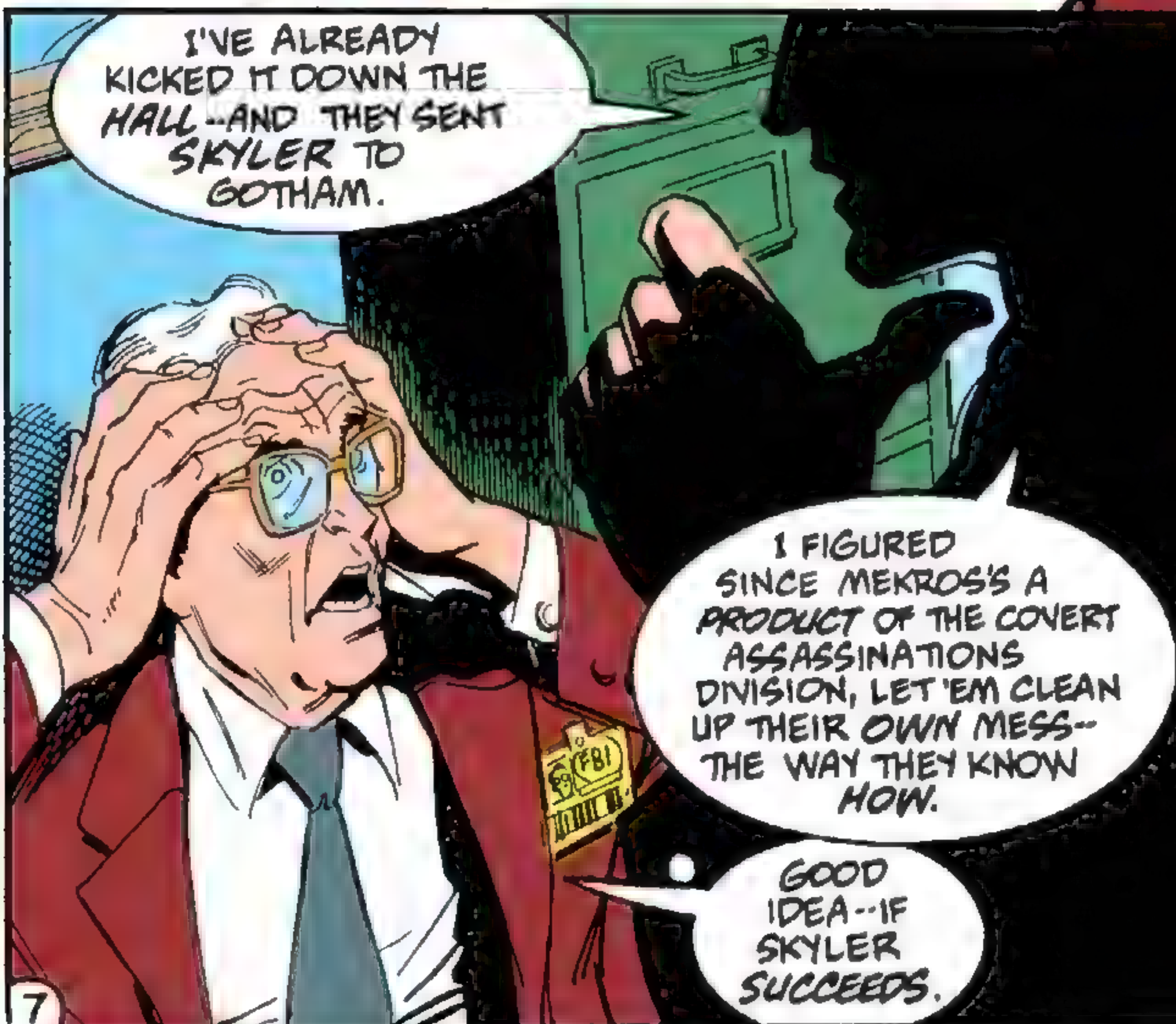
TRY GOTHAM FOR SIZE--UP TO HIS WEIRD ARMOR IN SOME KIND OF CONTRACT ISSUED BY OUR OLD "FAMILY" FRIENDS.

WHAT?



THEN THAT CONTRACT'S GOT TO BE CANCELED-- MEKROS SILENCED-- AND I MEAN WITH PREJUDICE.

RELAX...



I'VE ALREADY KICKED IT DOWN THE HALL--AND THEY SENT SKYLER TO GOTHAM.

I FIGURED SINCE MEKROS'S A PRODUCT OF THE COVERT ASSASSINATIONS DIVISION, LET 'EM CLEAN UP THEIR OWN MESS--THE WAY THEY KNOW HOW.

GOOD IDEA--IF SKYLER SUCCEEDS.

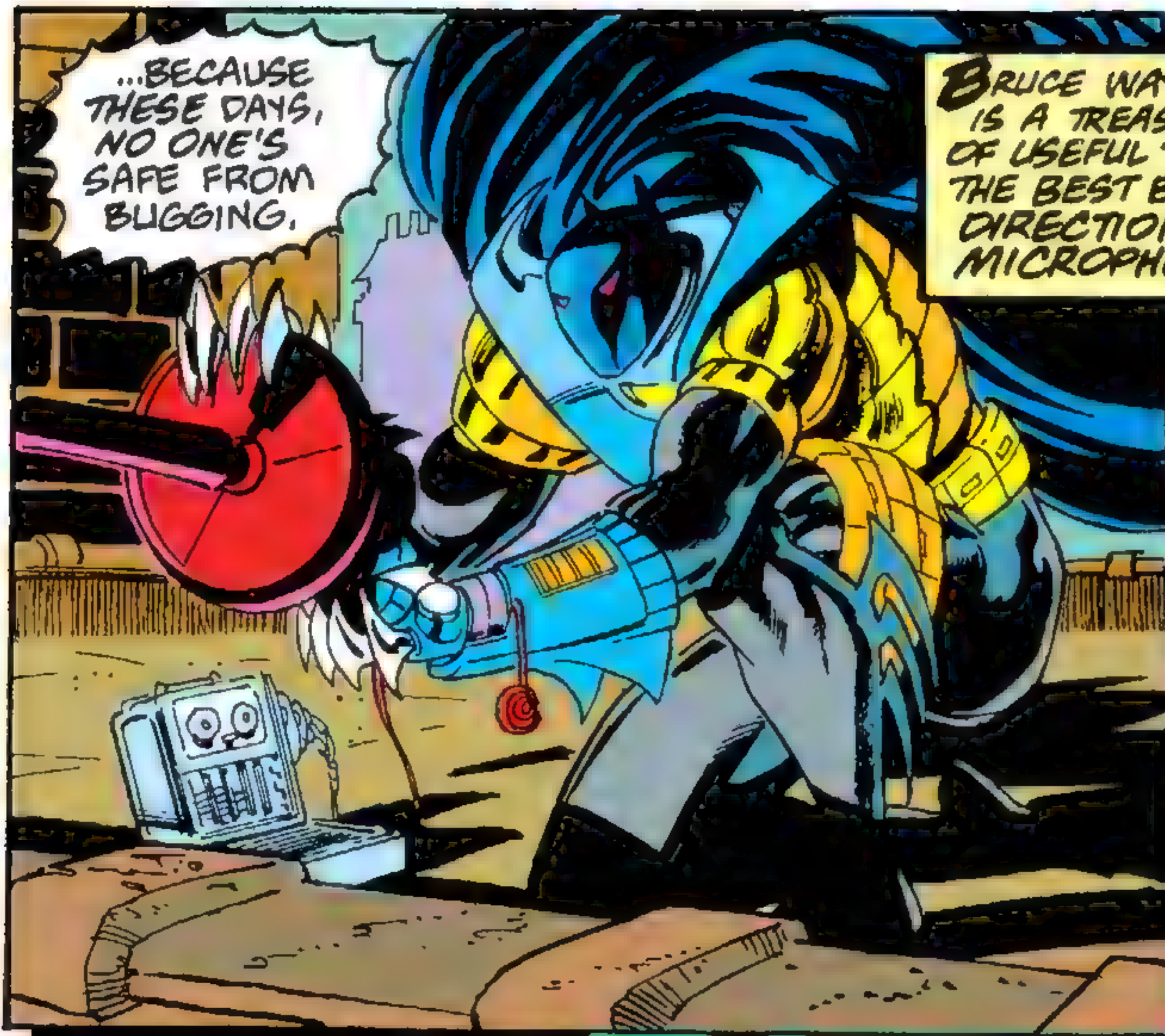


HEY, HE'S THE BEST WE'VE GOT.

AND MEKROS WAS THE BEST--WHEN WE STILL HAD HIM.

SO EITHER IT WORKS--OR COVERT OPS CATCHES THE STORM.

YEAH... BUT I SURE WISH I'D SWEEP THIS OFFICE...



...BECAUSE THESE DAYS, NO ONE'S SAFE FROM BUGGING.

BRUCE WAYNE'S CAVE IS A TREASURE TROVE OF USEFUL TOYS, ONE OF THE BEST BEING THIS DIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE...



IT FEEDS INTO A COMPUTER, WHICH TRANSLATES WINDOW VIBRATIONS INTO THE WORDS CREATING THEM.



EVEN BETTER, THE DEVICE RECORDS THE REPLICATED VOICES CREATING THE WORDS.

I DON'T LIKE MEETIN' HERE, DON MARCELLO-- SAME PLACE WHERE VARONA'S PEOPLE TRIED TO WHACK MERCANTE--



--AND WHERE THE BATMAN TRIED TO MAKE HIS DEAL WITH MERCANTE.

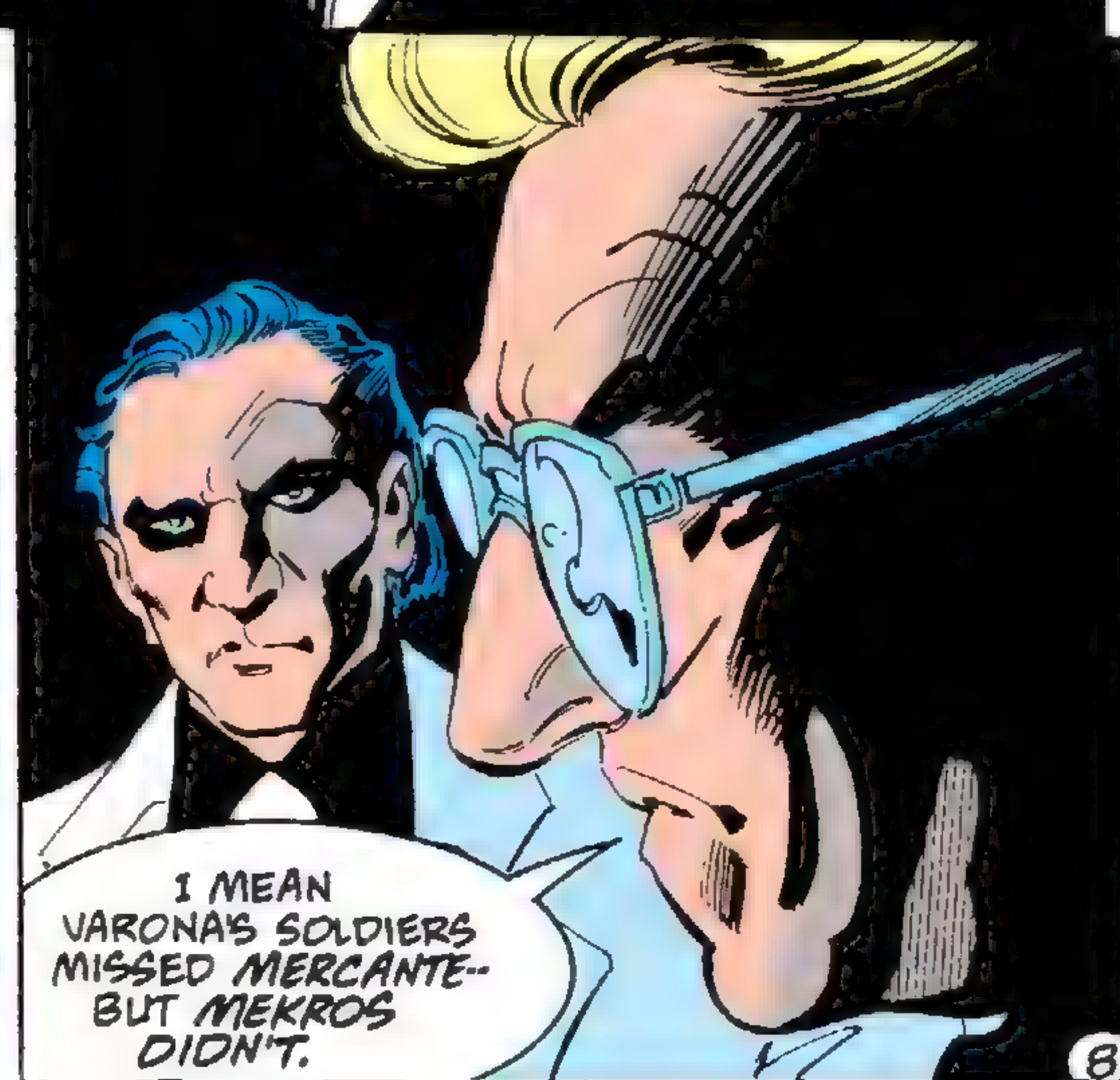
EVEN IF THE BATMAN RETURNS, DON ROSELLI, HE'S GOT NOTHIN' ON US.

NOW, WHATT'A YOU GOT TO REPORT?

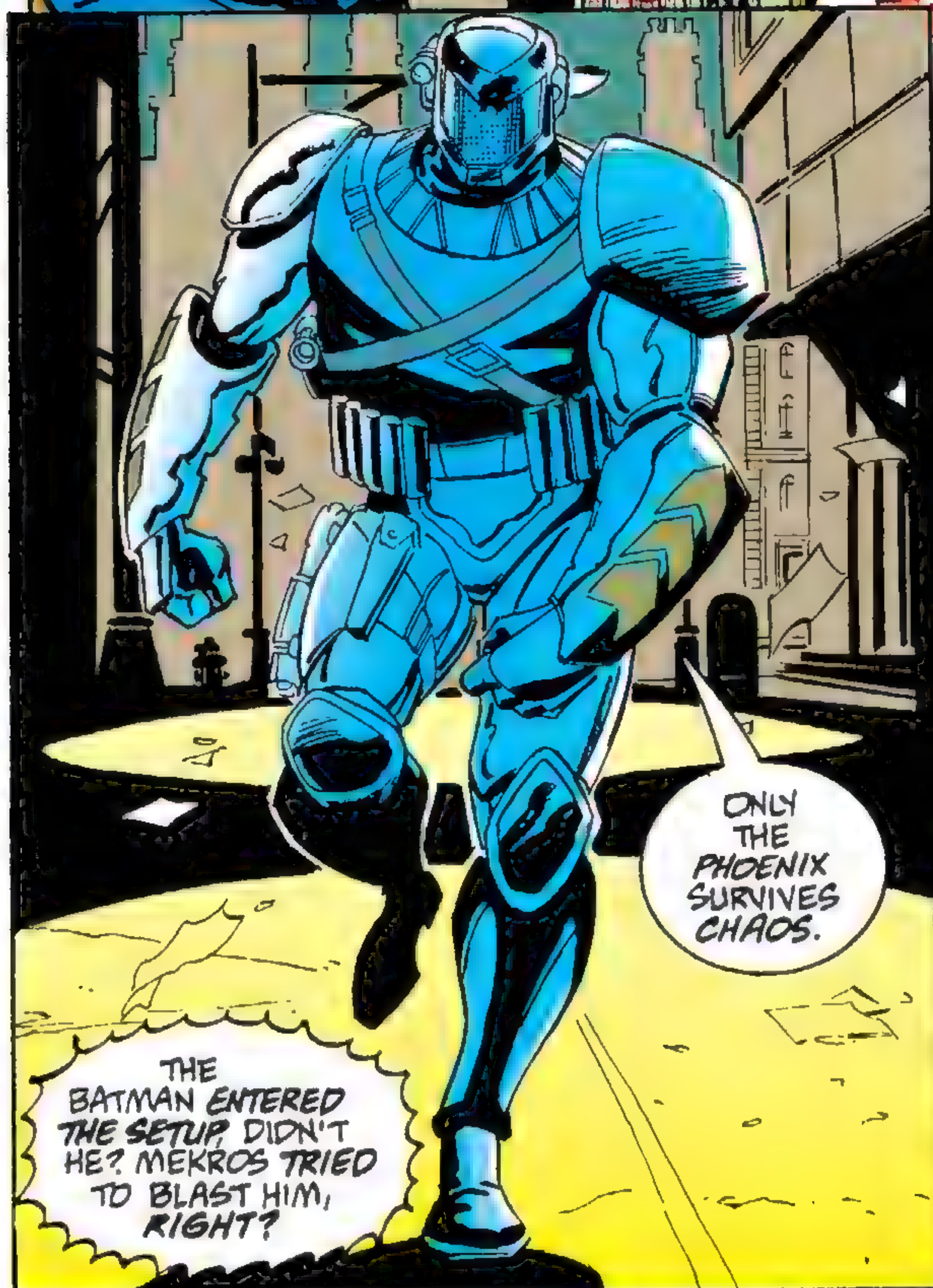
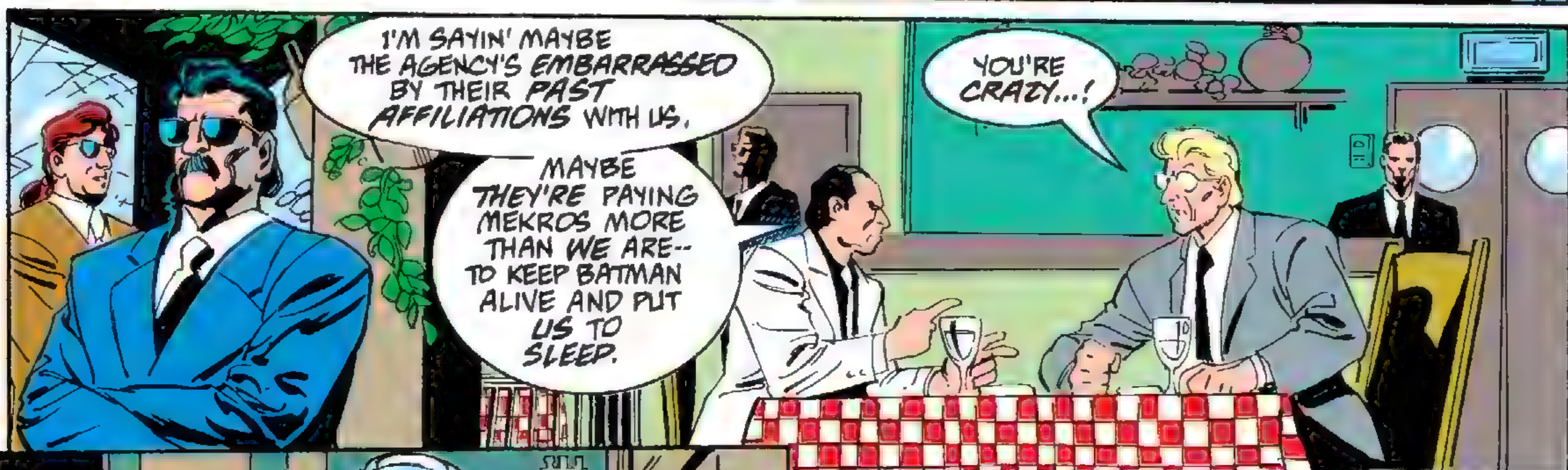


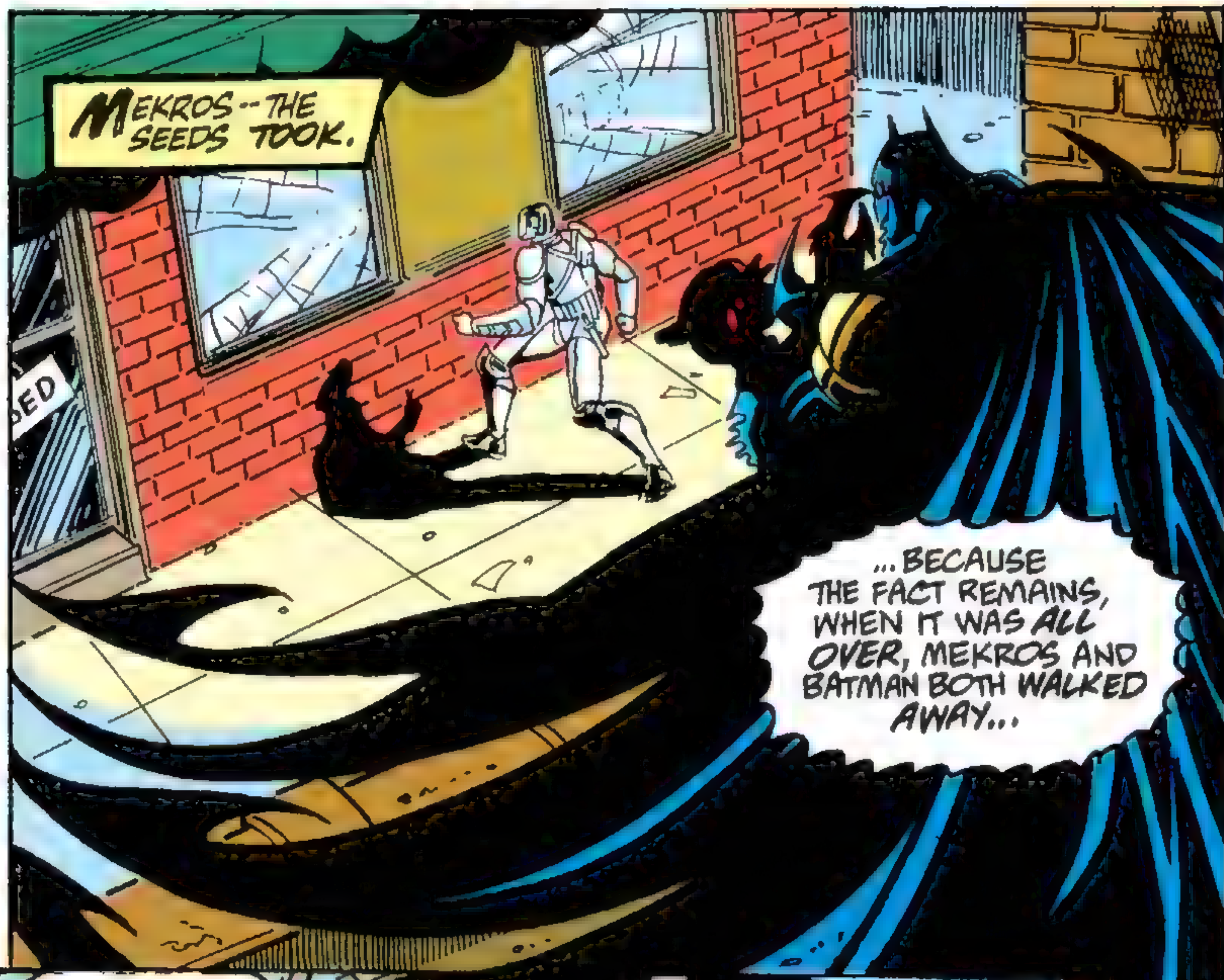
VARONA'S MEN MISSED, BUT MEKROS DIDN'T.

THE BATMAN'S DEAD? BUT WHATT'A YOU MEAN VARONA'S PEOPLE MISSED? THEY NEVER EVEN TRIED FOR THE BATMAN...



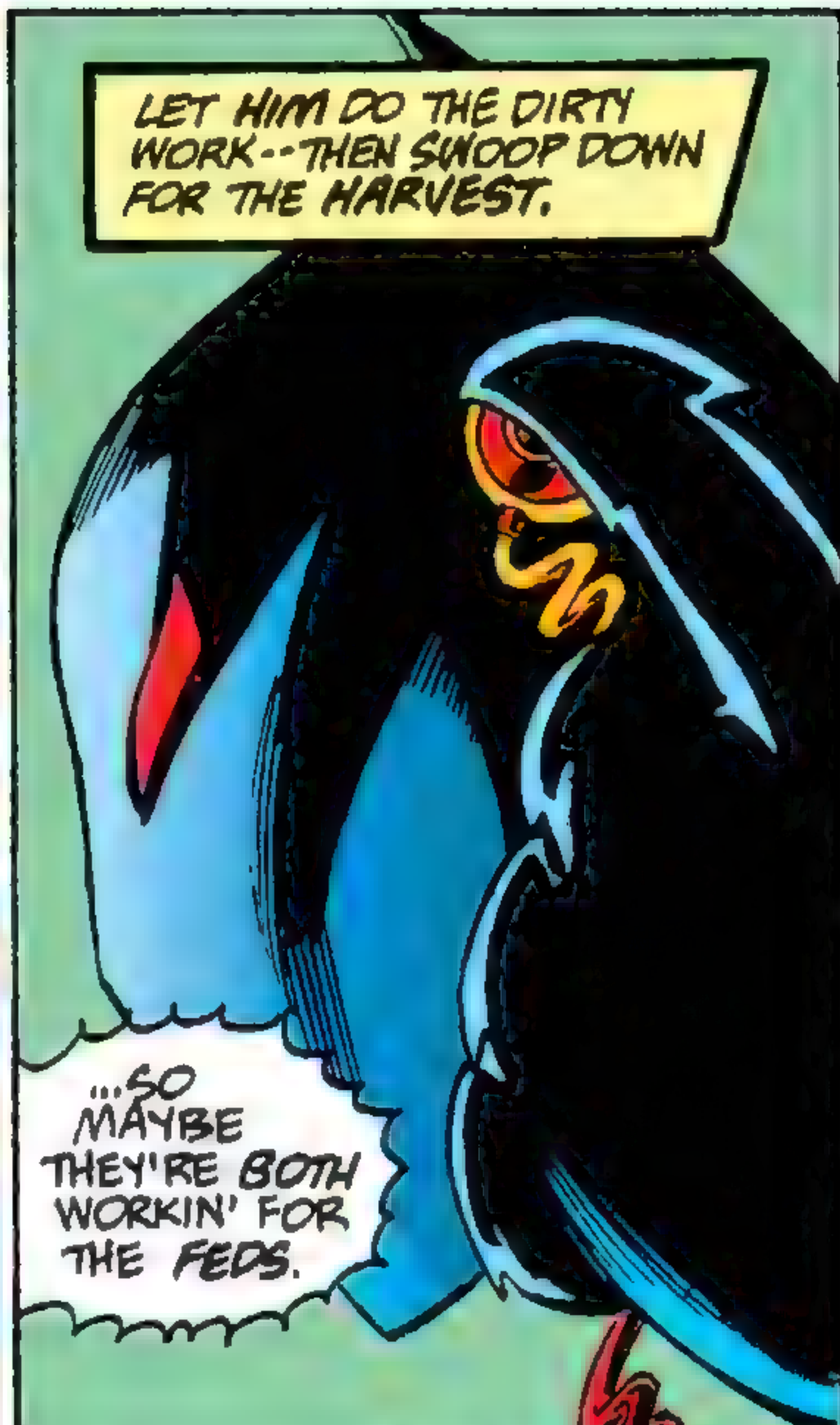
I MEAN VARONA'S SOLDIERS MISSED MERCANTE-- BUT MEKROS DIDN'T.





MEKROS--THE SEEDS TOOK.

...BECAUSE THE FACT REMAINS, WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER, MEKROS AND BATMAN BOTH WALKED AWAY...



LET HIM DO THE DIRTY WORK--THEN SWOOP DOWN FOR THE HARVEST.

...SO MAYBE THEY'RE BOTH WORKIN' FOR THE FEDS.

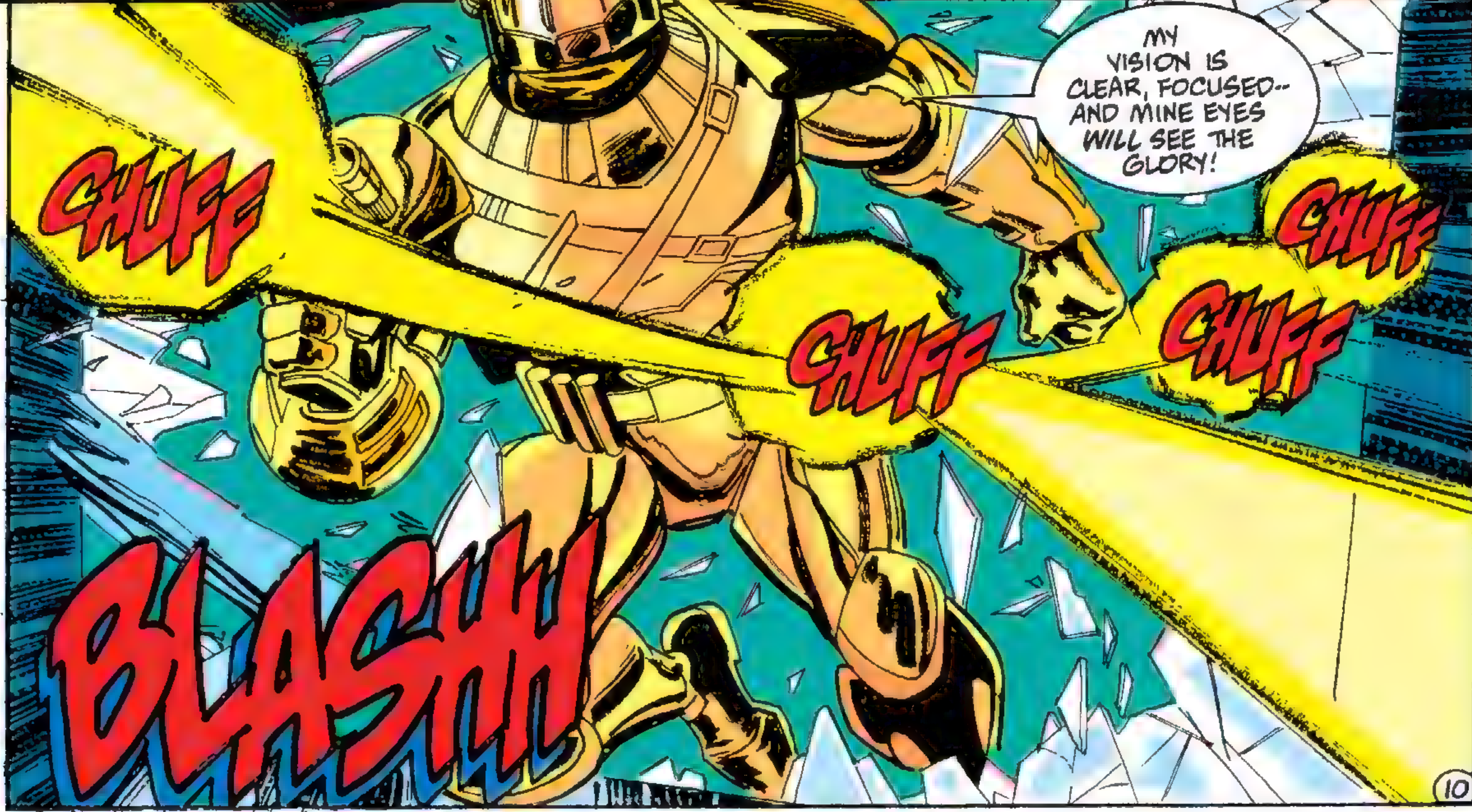


SERVE THE PRINCE, NO QUESTIONS, NO HESITATION, SO LONG AS THE PRINCE PAYS.



I DON'T BUY IT--IT WAS AN ACCIDENT--HADDA BE.

I SAY WE DOUBLE THE CONTRACT ON BATMAN AND LET MEKROS TAKE ANOTHER SHOT BEFORE--



MY VISION IS CLEAR, FOCUSED--AND MINE EYES WILL SEE THE GLORY!

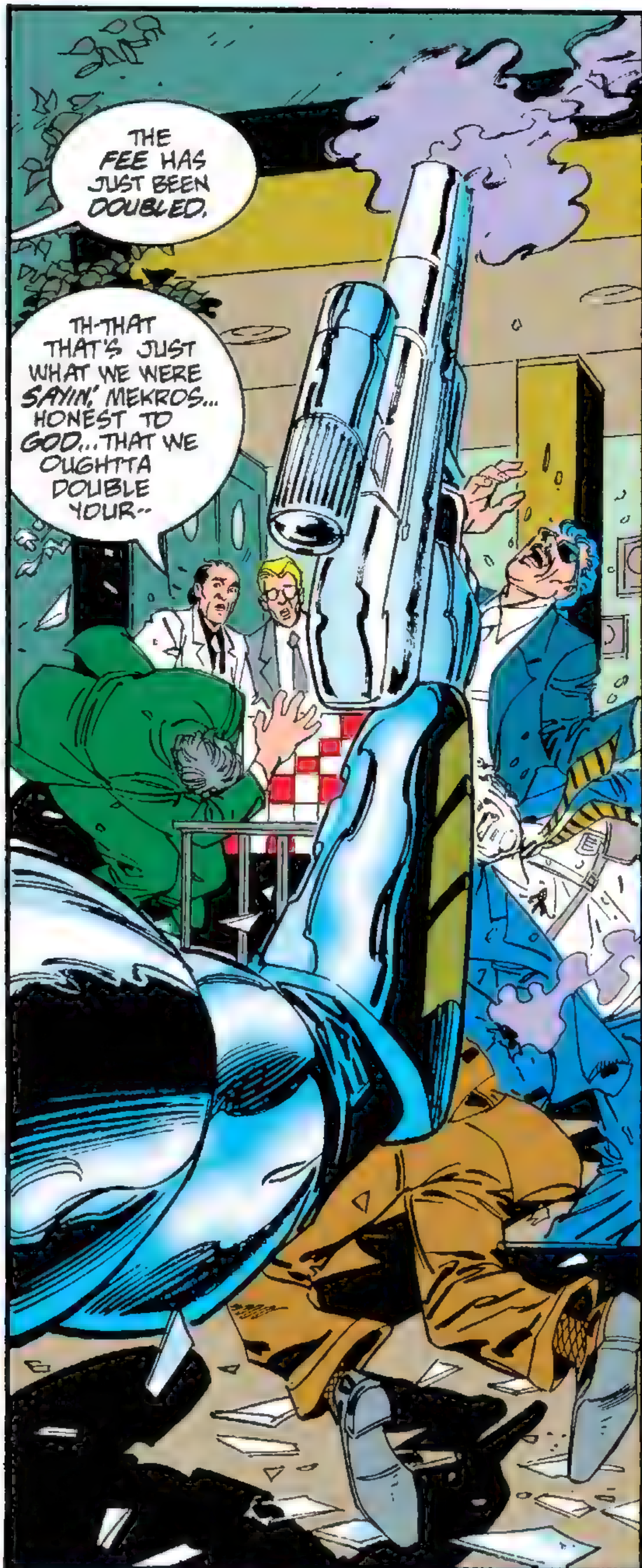
CHUFF

CHUFF

CHUFF

CHUFF

BLASH



THE
FEE HAS
JUST BEEN
DOUBLED.

TH-THAT
THAT'S JUST
WHAT WE WERE
SAYIN' MEKROS...
HONEST TO
GOD... THAT WE
OUGHTTA
DOUBLE
YOUR--



AND YOU
WILL PAY!

PRUKT

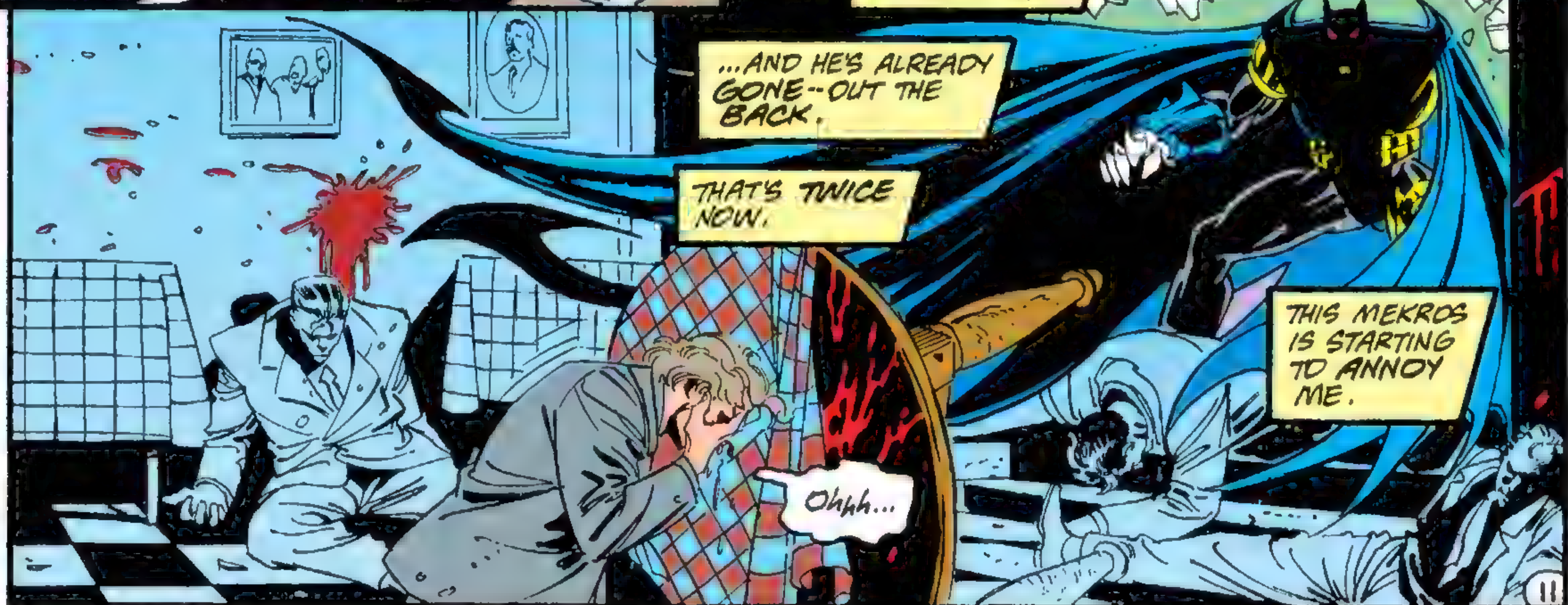
BOKK

SKUP



HE WASTED
NO TIME.

EXPLODED
FAR SOONER
THAN I
ANTICIPATED...



...AND HE'S ALREADY
GONE--OUT THE
BACK.

THAT'S TWICE
NOW.

THIS MEKROS
IS STARTING
TO ANNOY
ME.

Ohhh...



HE REPEATED THOSE SAME PHRASES USED ON THE ROOF... RECITED IN MONO-TONE BOTH TIMES, LIKE MANTRAS.

AUTO-HYPNOSIS... PROGRAMMING HIMSELF.

M-MY...MY H-HEAD...



THAT MEANS HE'S LIKE ME--EXCEPT I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER MY PRO-GRAMMING... NO AWARENESS OF THE SYSTEM IMPLANTED IN MY MIND.



HE'S ALREADY DANGEROUS, WHILE I'M STILL GETTING THAT WAY.

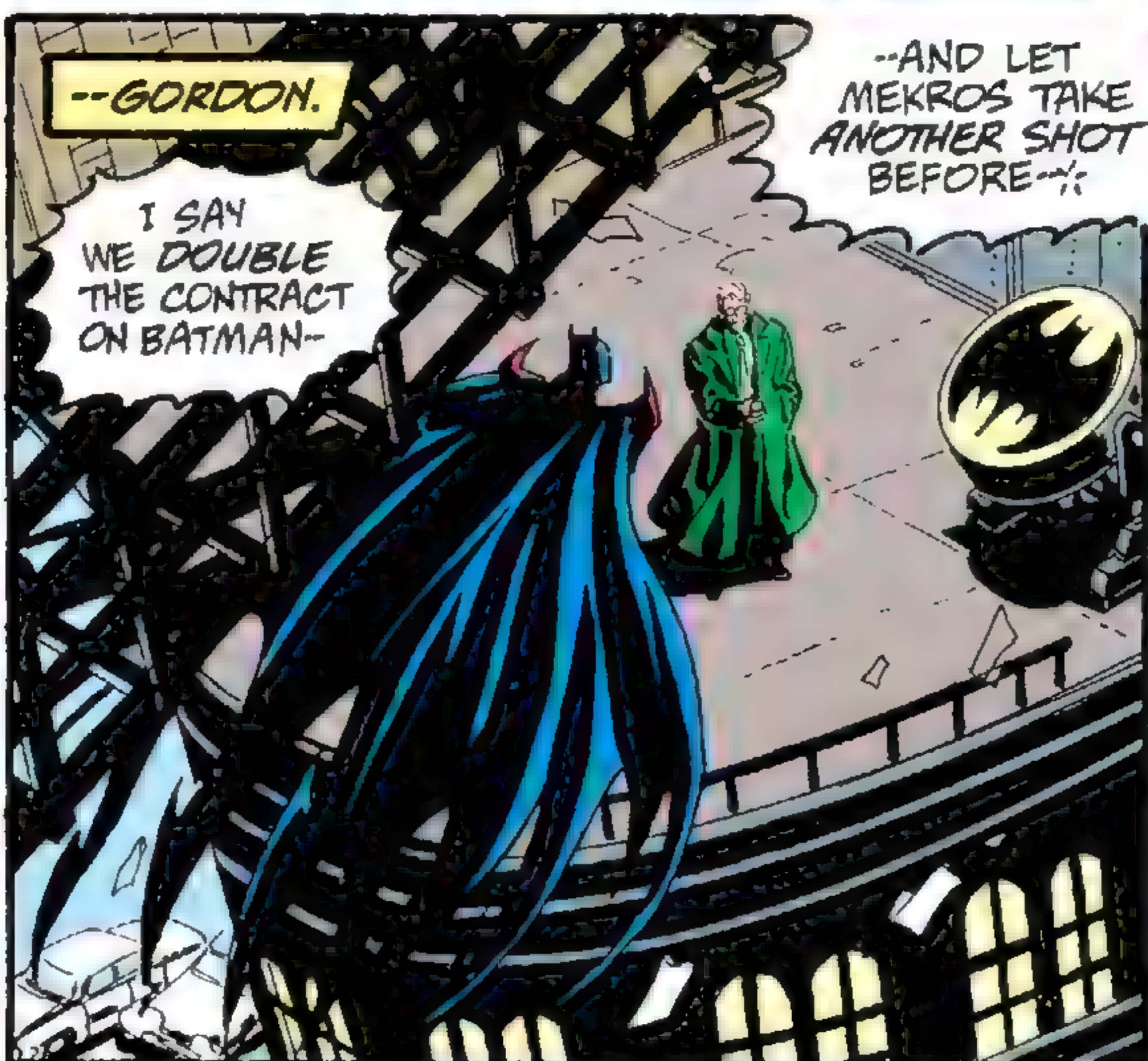
ROUND THREE COULD BE ROUGH, BUT IN THE MEANTIME--

C-CAN'T S-SEE...H-HELP ME...



--AT LEAST I'VE BAGGED SOMETHING FOR--

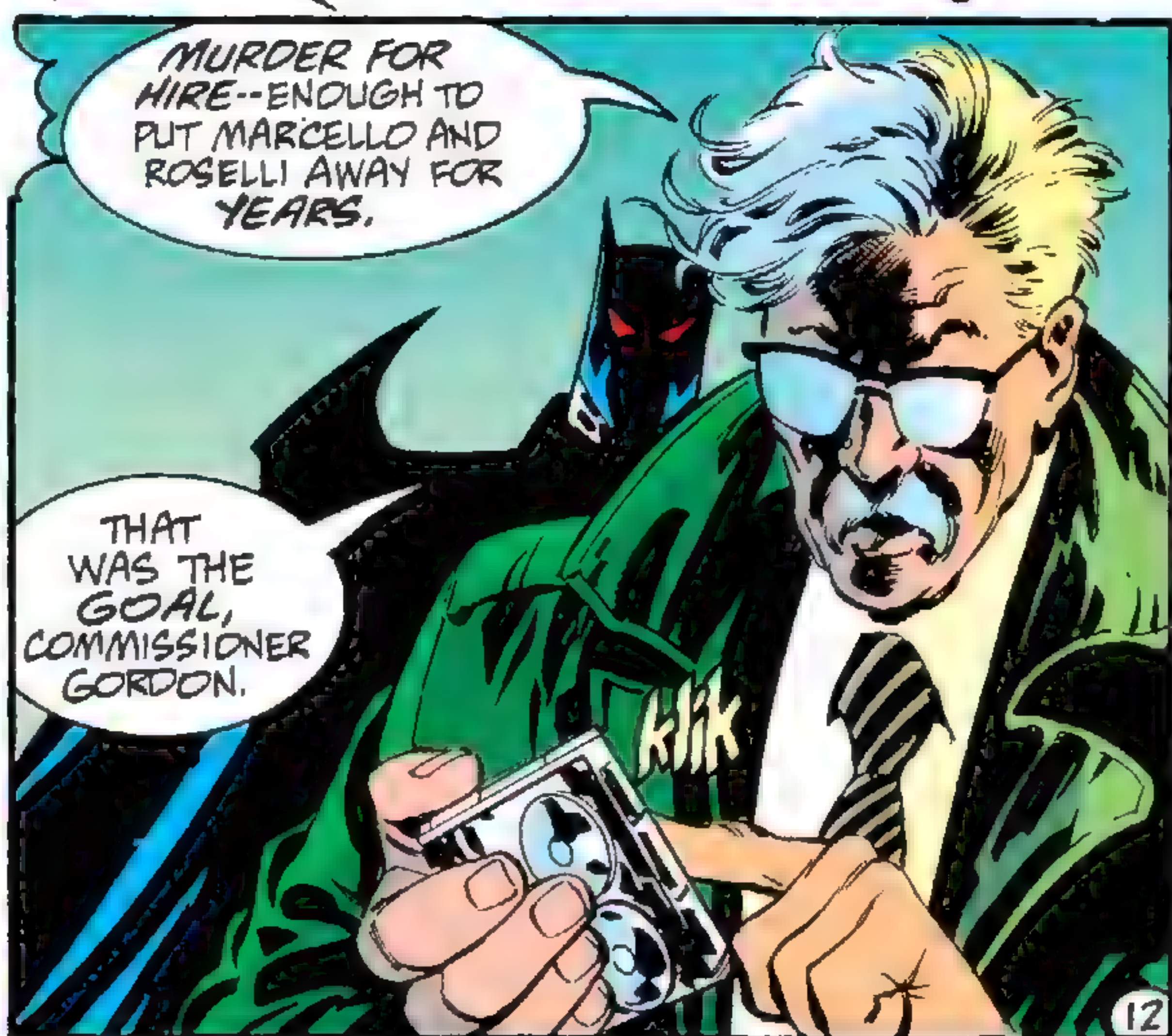
SCHWOK



--GORDON.

I SAY WE DOUBLE THE CONTRACT ON BATMAN--

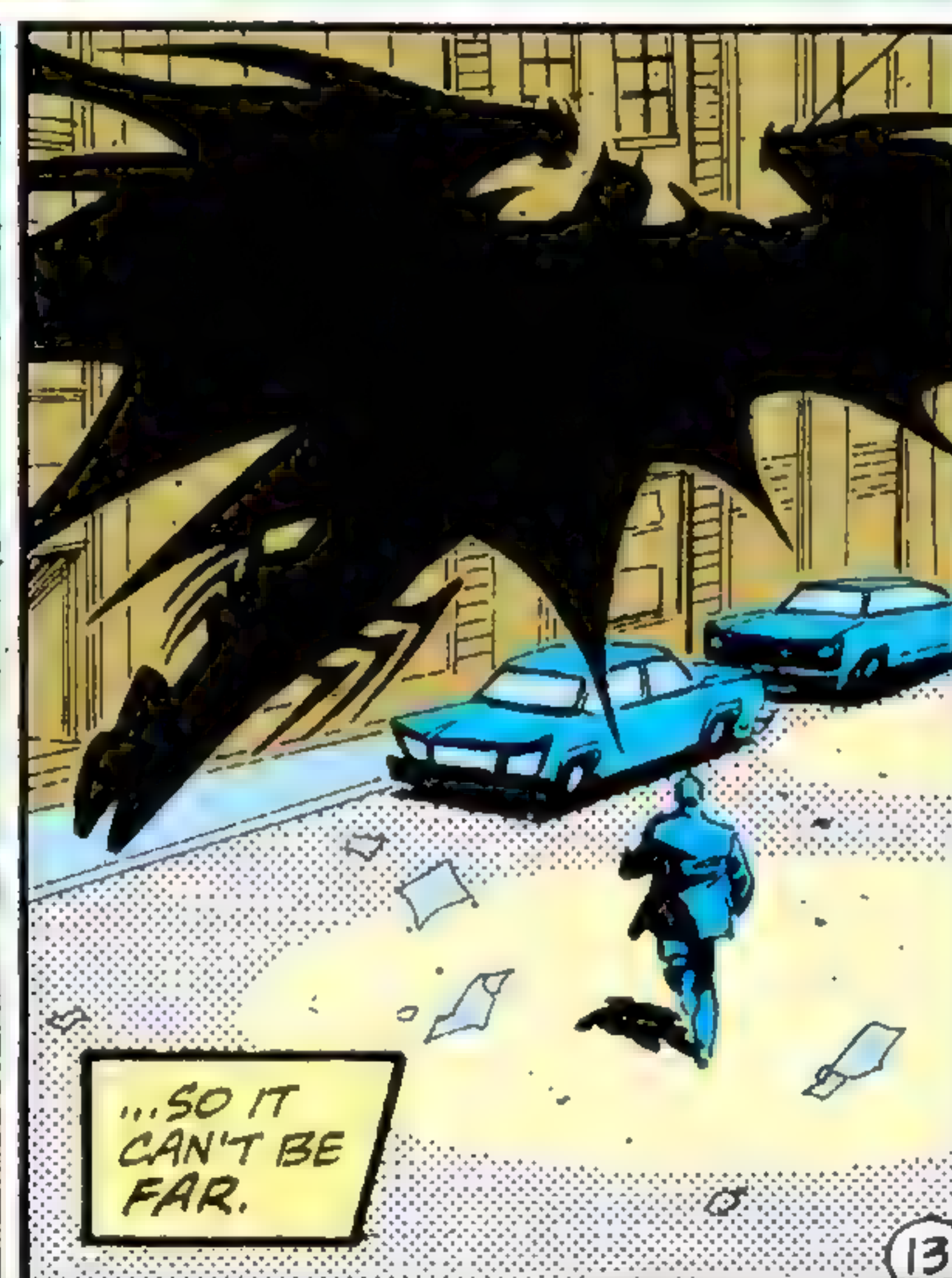
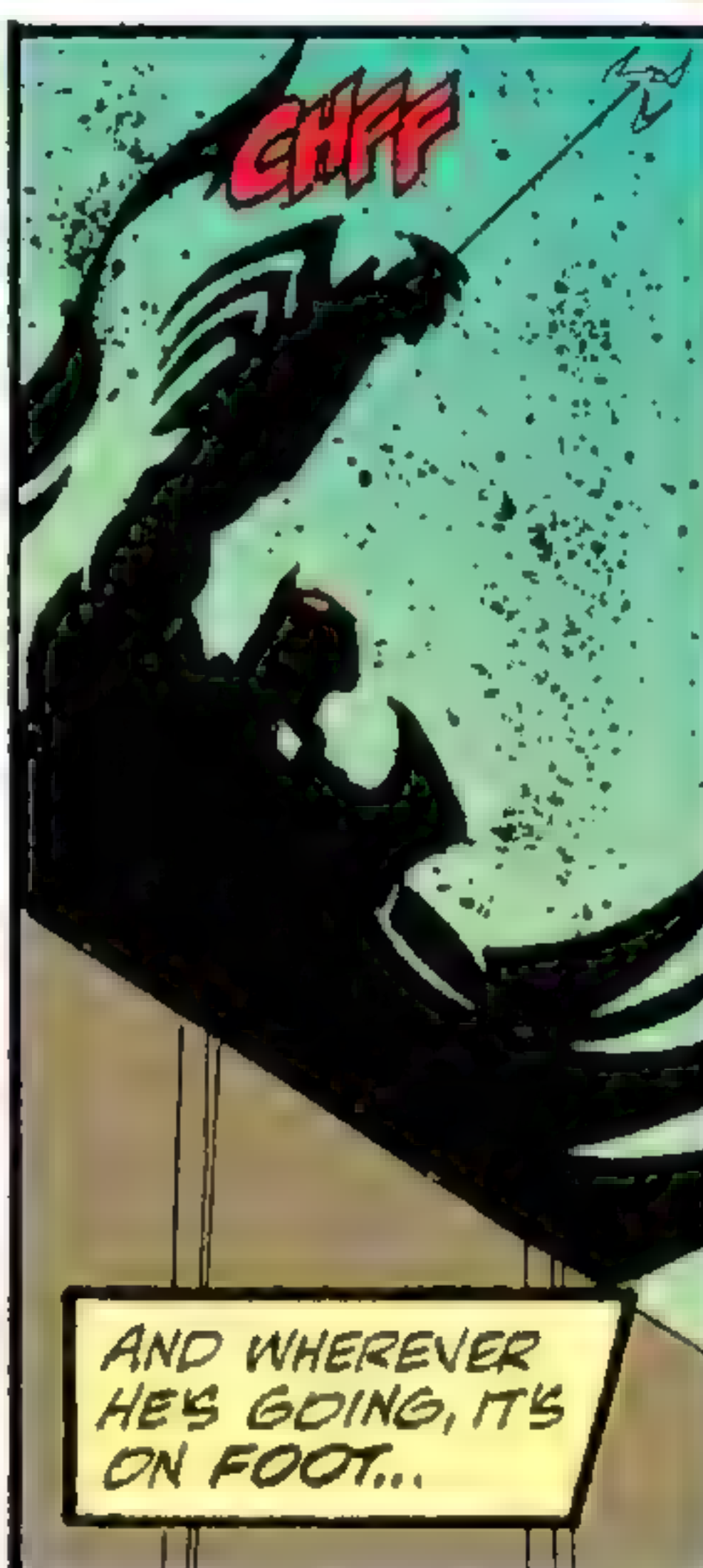
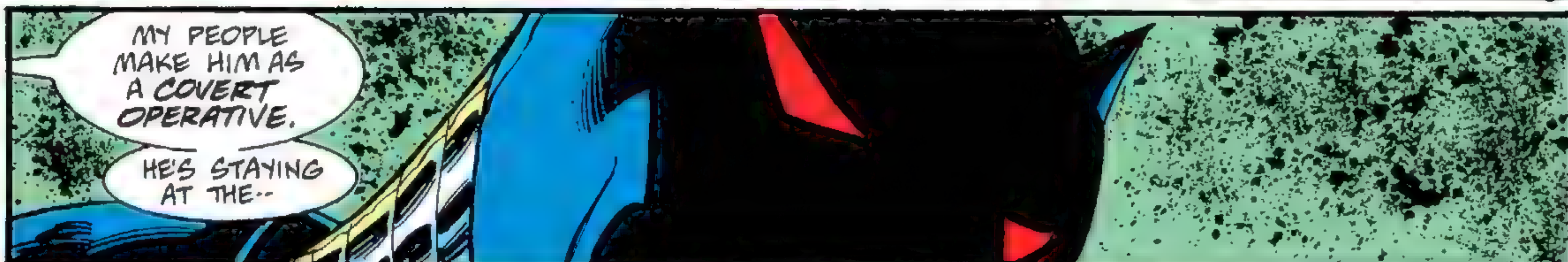
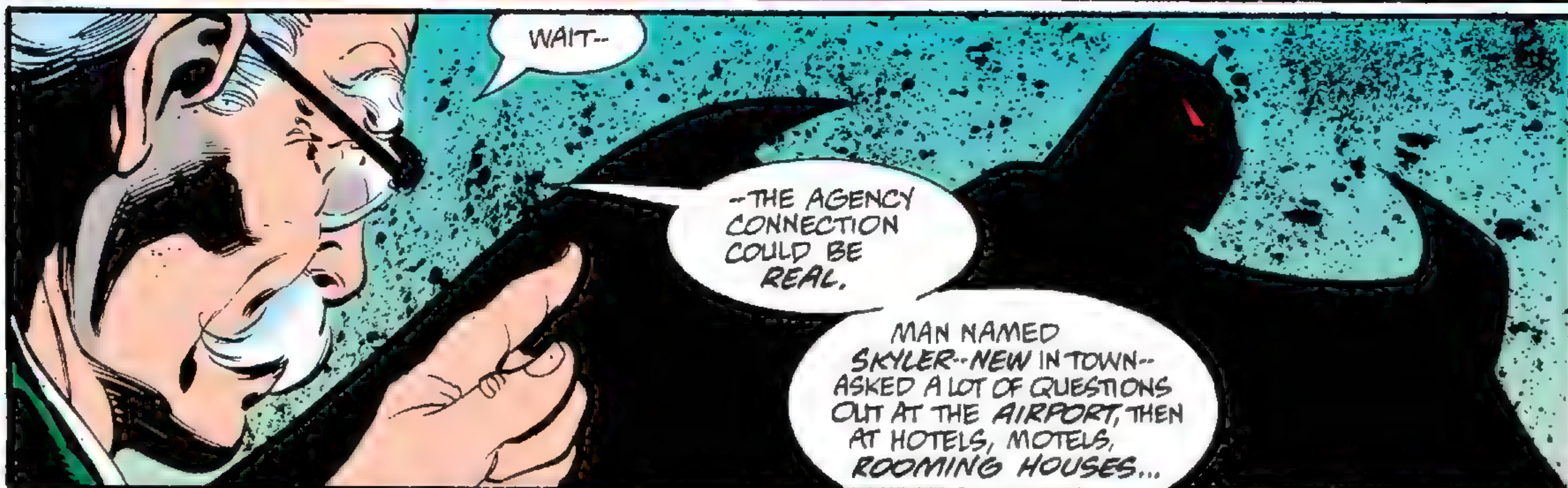
--AND LET MEKROS TAKE ANOTHER SHOT BEFORE--

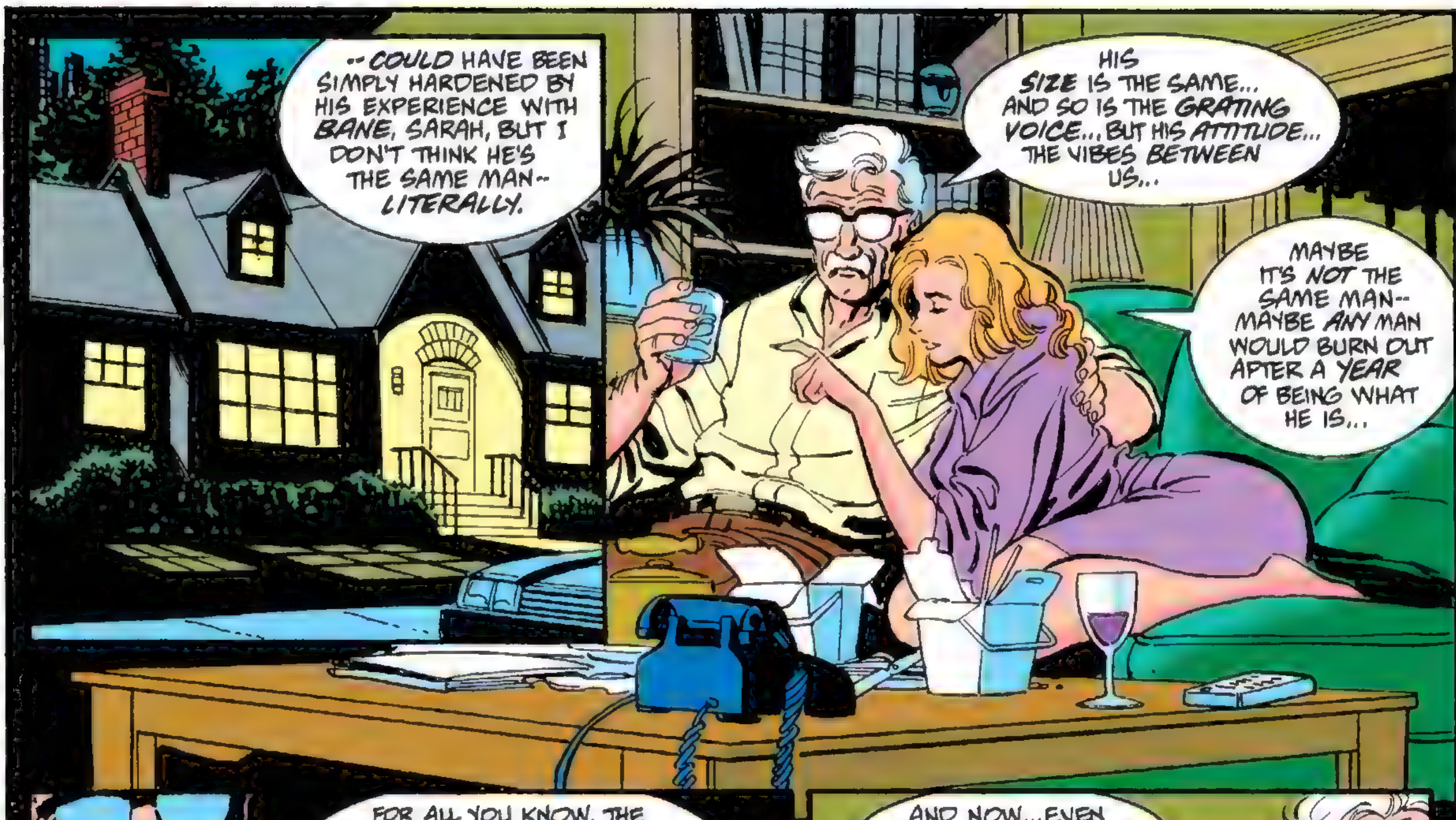


MURDER FOR HIRE--ENOUGH TO PUT MARCELLO AND ROSELLI AWAY FOR YEARS.

THAT WAS THE GOAL, COMMISSIONER GORDON.

klik

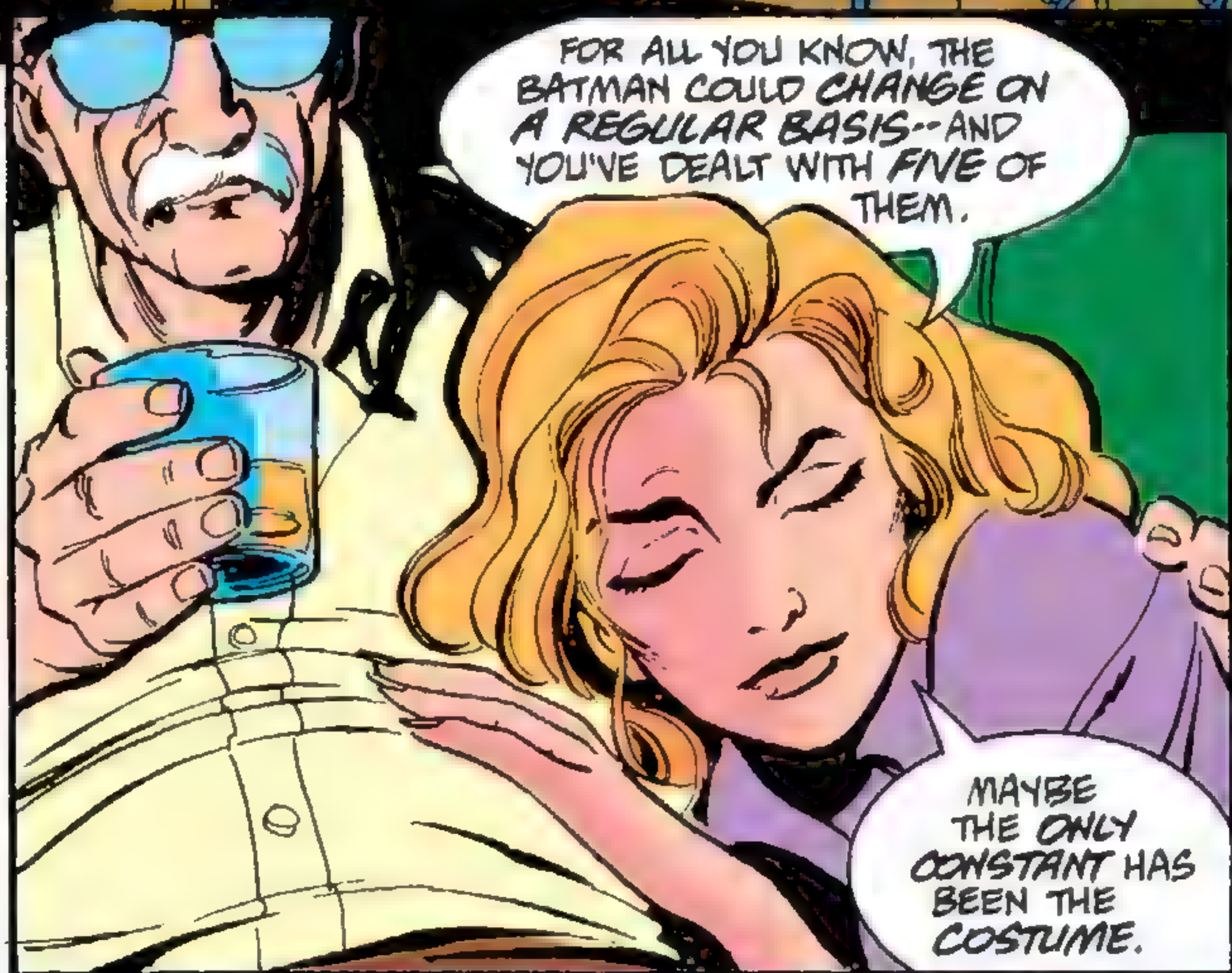




-- COULD HAVE BEEN
SIMPLY HARDENED BY
HIS EXPERIENCE WITH
BANE, SARAH, BUT I
DON'T THINK HE'S
THE SAME MAN--
LITERALLY.

HIS
SIZE IS THE SAME...
AND SO IS THE GRATING
VOICE... BUT HIS ATTITUDE...
THE VIBES BETWEEN
US...

MAYBE
IT'S NOT THE
SAME MAN--
MAYBE ANY MAN
WOULD BURN OUT
AFTER A YEAR
OF BEING WHAT
HE IS...



FOR ALL YOU KNOW, THE
BATMAN COULD CHANGE ON
A REGULAR BASIS--AND
YOU'VE DEALT WITH FIVE OF
THEM.

MAYBE
THE ONLY
CONSTANT HAS
BEEN THE
COSTUME.



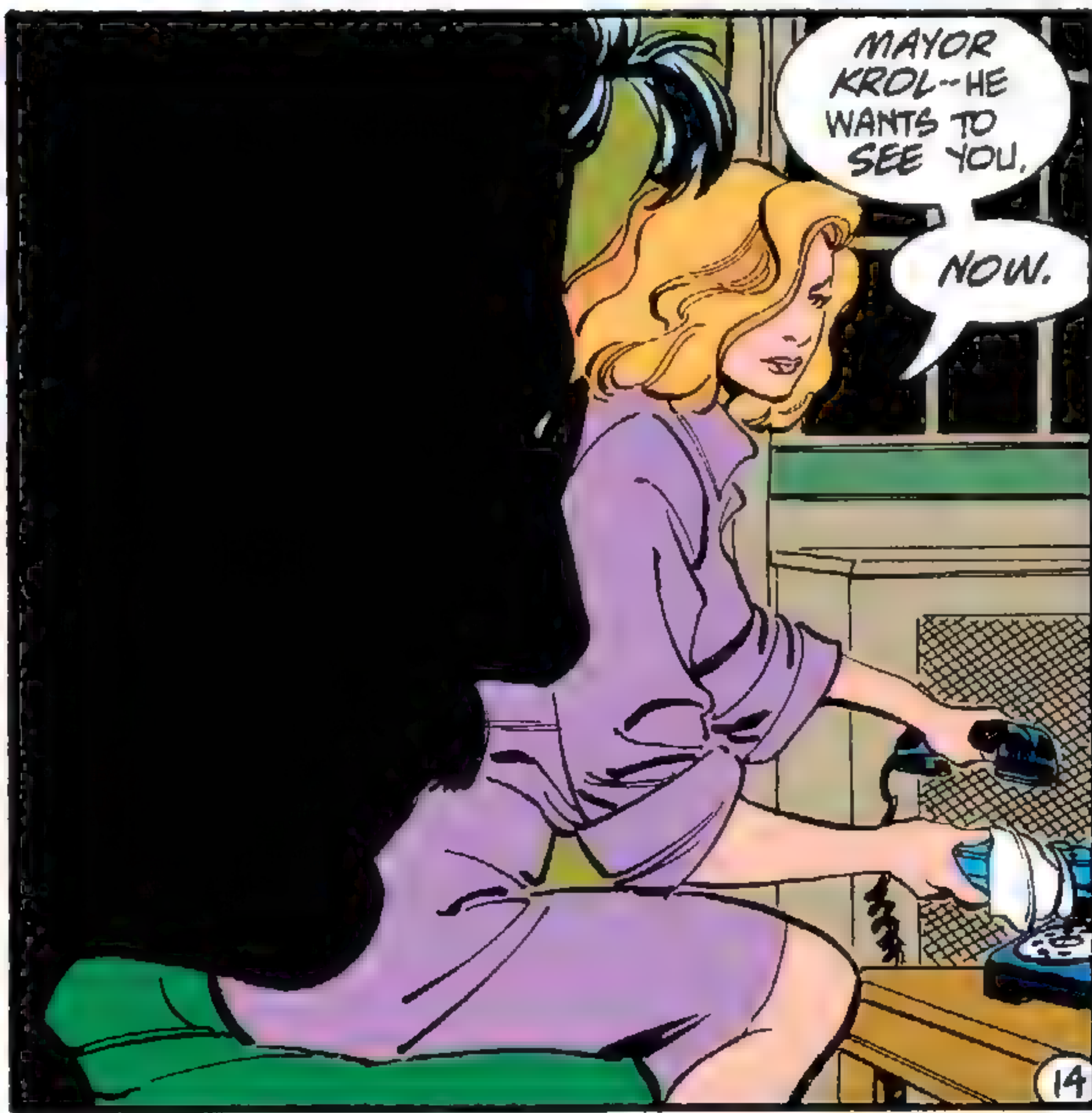
AND NOW...EVEN
THE COSTUME HAS
CHANGED.

BRINGGG



HELLO?
YES...

YES,
I'LL TELL
HIM.



MAYOR
KROL--HE
WANTS TO
SEE YOU.

NOW.

-DISCUSS THE REBUILDING OF ARKHAM ASYLUM LATER, GORDON, BUT RIGHT NOW I'D LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON TAKING OUT THE HEADS OF THREE MAJOR CRIME FAMILIES-- EXCEPT I CAN'T...



...SINCE IT WAS EVIDENTLY ALL THE BATMAN'S DOING.

SO IT WAS, MR. MAYOR.

NORMALLY, POLITICIANS SHY AWAY FROM THE VIGILANTE ISSUE, GORDON...

HALF THE PUBLIC LOVES A VIGILANTE, WHILE THE OTHER HALF CRIES FASCISM-- AND WITH ODDS LIKE THAT, YOU JUST CAN'T WIN IN THE POLLS.

THE BATMAN, OF COURSE, COULD BE VIEWED AS THE ULTIMATE VIGILANTE--



THERE'S A POINT TO ALL THIS, MR. MAYOR?

--BUT I'M BETTING BATMAN'S THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.

I'M BETTING A GOOD SIXTY PERCENT OF THE VOTERS ARE GLAD HE'S OUT THERE, EVEN IF THEY BARELY BELIEVE IN HIM, WHILE THE OTHER FORTY PERCENT AGREES THAT CRIME IS OUT OF CONTROL--



--AND THE POLICE FORCE IS INEFFECTUAL.

ERGO, WITH THE BATMAN'S RESULTS INCREASINGLY SPECTACULAR THESE DAYS--AND AS A LAW AND ORDER MAYOR--I'M THINKING OF DISTANCING MYSELF FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT...

...AND PUBLICLY ENDORSING THE BATMAN'S ACTIVITIES.



IF I WERE YOU, GORDON, THIS WOULD WORRY ME.

INDEED, I'D START FINDING WAYS TO GET THE SAME RESULTS BATMAN IS GETTING.



I'M STILL PROVING MYSELF.

BANE WAS A GOOD START-- BUT BANE STOOD AND FOUGHT, WHILE THIS "MEKROS" IS ELUSIVE,

STILL, THE OLD BATMAN WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM BY NOW.

AND IF THERE'S ANY FUTURE TO BE FELT--

--NOW IS THE TIME TO TRASH THE PAST.

THE MARK IS DEAD, THE BATMAN A MEMORY.

ONLY THE PHOENIX SURVIVES--

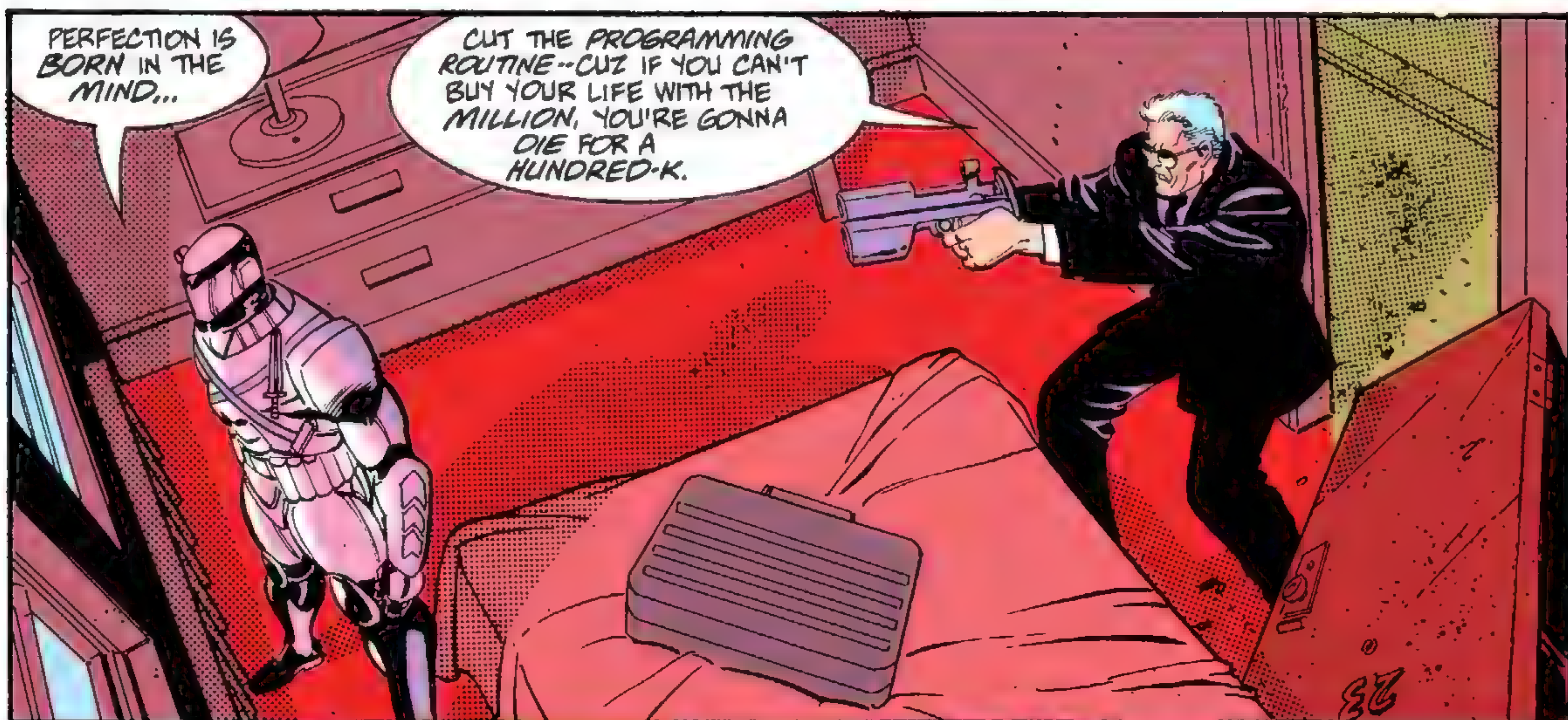
DON'T EVEN TWITCH, MEKROS!

NEW GUN-- LAB FRESH-- ARMOR-- PIERCING-- EVEN YOUR ARMOR!

BWAKT

THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST PIERCE ME, SKYLER? OR DID YOU TRACK ME DOWN TO DISCUSS OLD TIMES?

SCREW THE PAST! I'M WILLING TO DEAL NOW-- PROVIDED MARCELLO ALREADY GAVE YOU YOUR MILLION.



PERFECTION IS
BORN IN THE
MIND...

CUT THE PROGRAMMING
ROUTINE--CUZ IF YOU CAN'T
BUY YOUR LIFE WITH THE
MILLION, YOU'RE GONNA
DIE FOR A
HUNDRED-K.



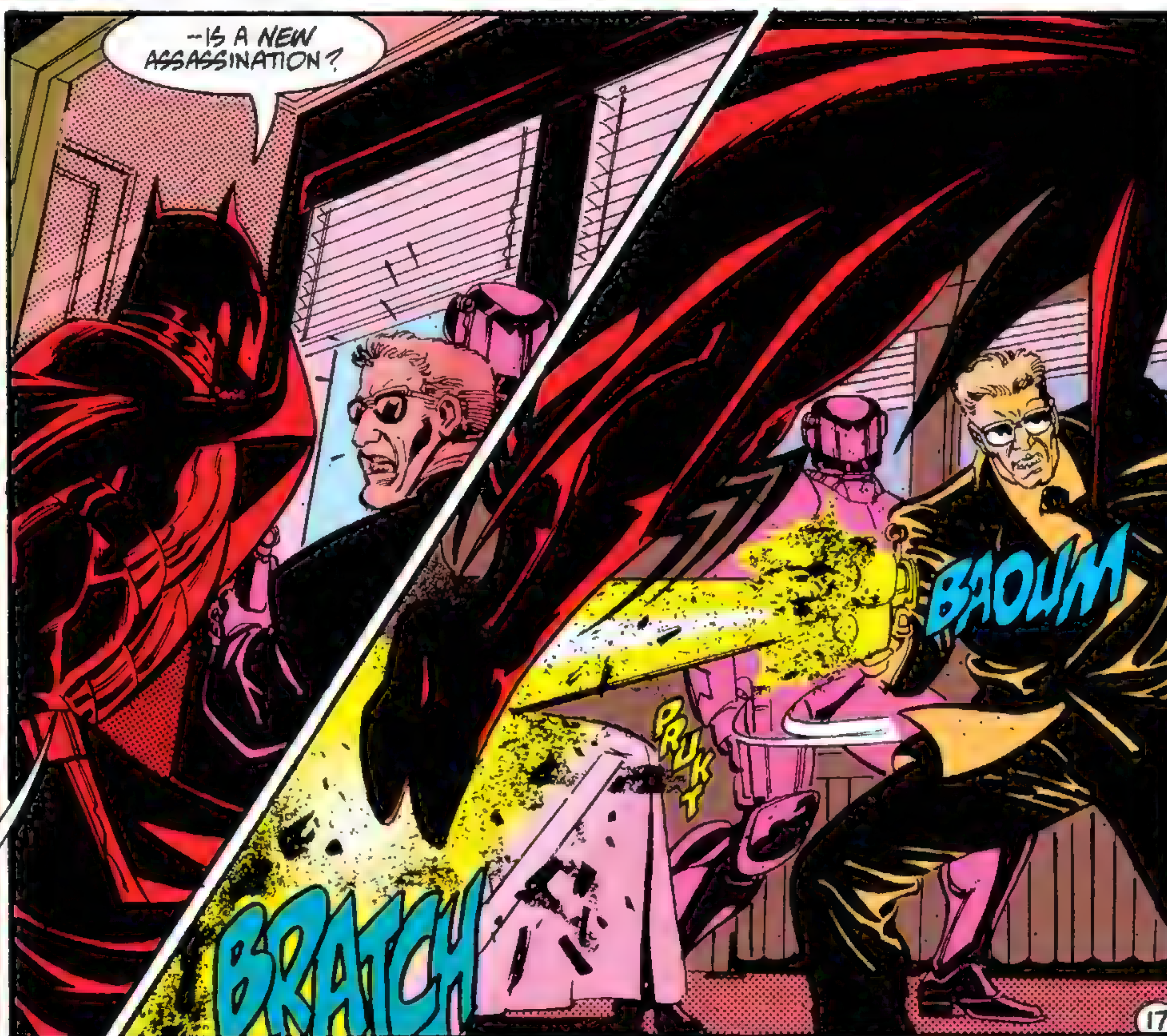
YOU WORK *CHEAP*
THESE DAYS, SKYLER,
EVEN IF THAT IS
GENEROUS FOR THE
AGENCY...

THEY'VE
DECIDED YOUR CURRENT
CONTRACT IS TOO TOUGH,
MEKROS, EVEN FOR YOU--
AND IF HE TAKES YOU DOWN,
THEY FIGURE YOU'LL START
TALKING ABOUT THOSE
"OLD TIMES"...



...IMPLICATING
THEM IN PAST
ASSASSINATIONS.

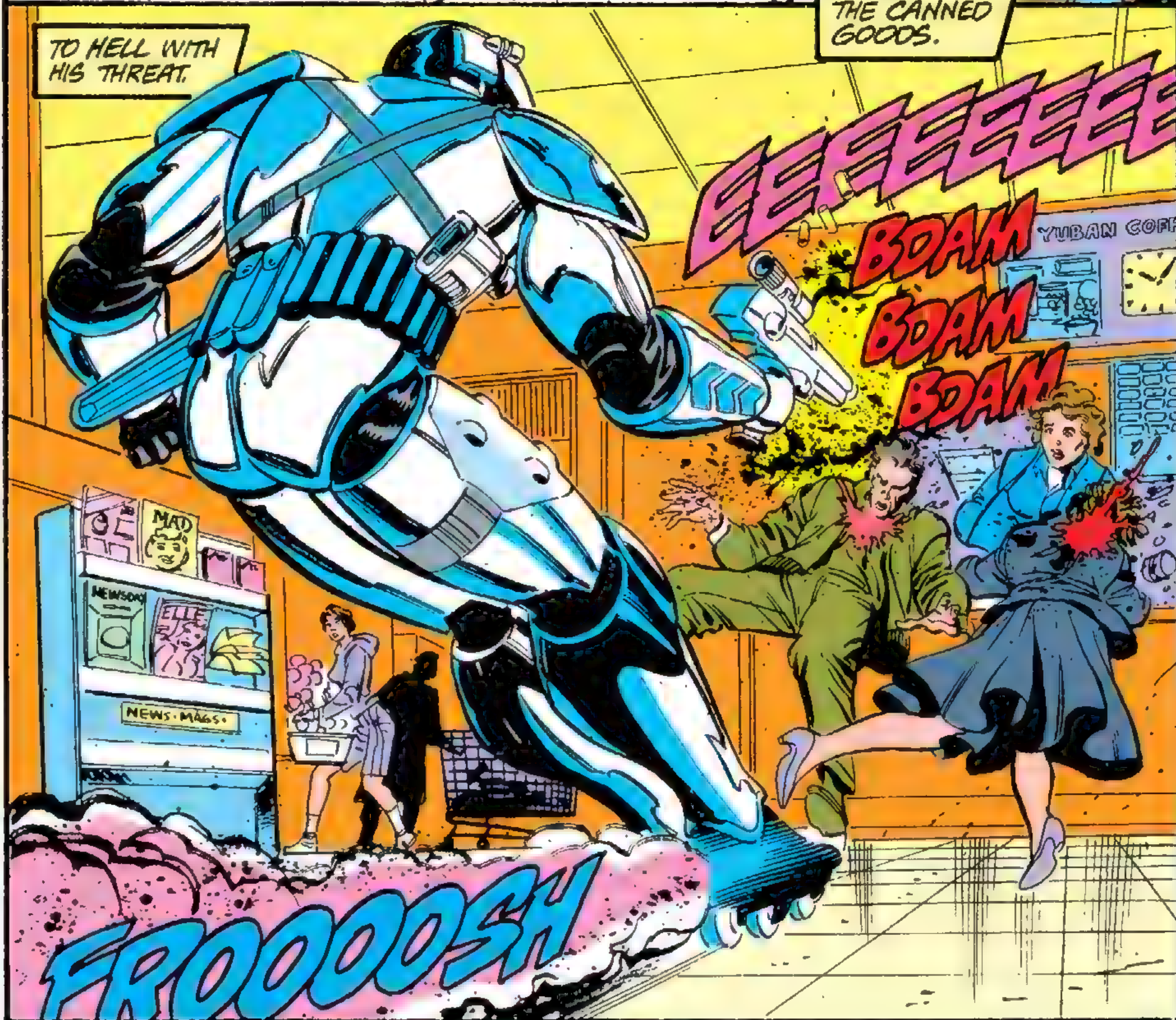
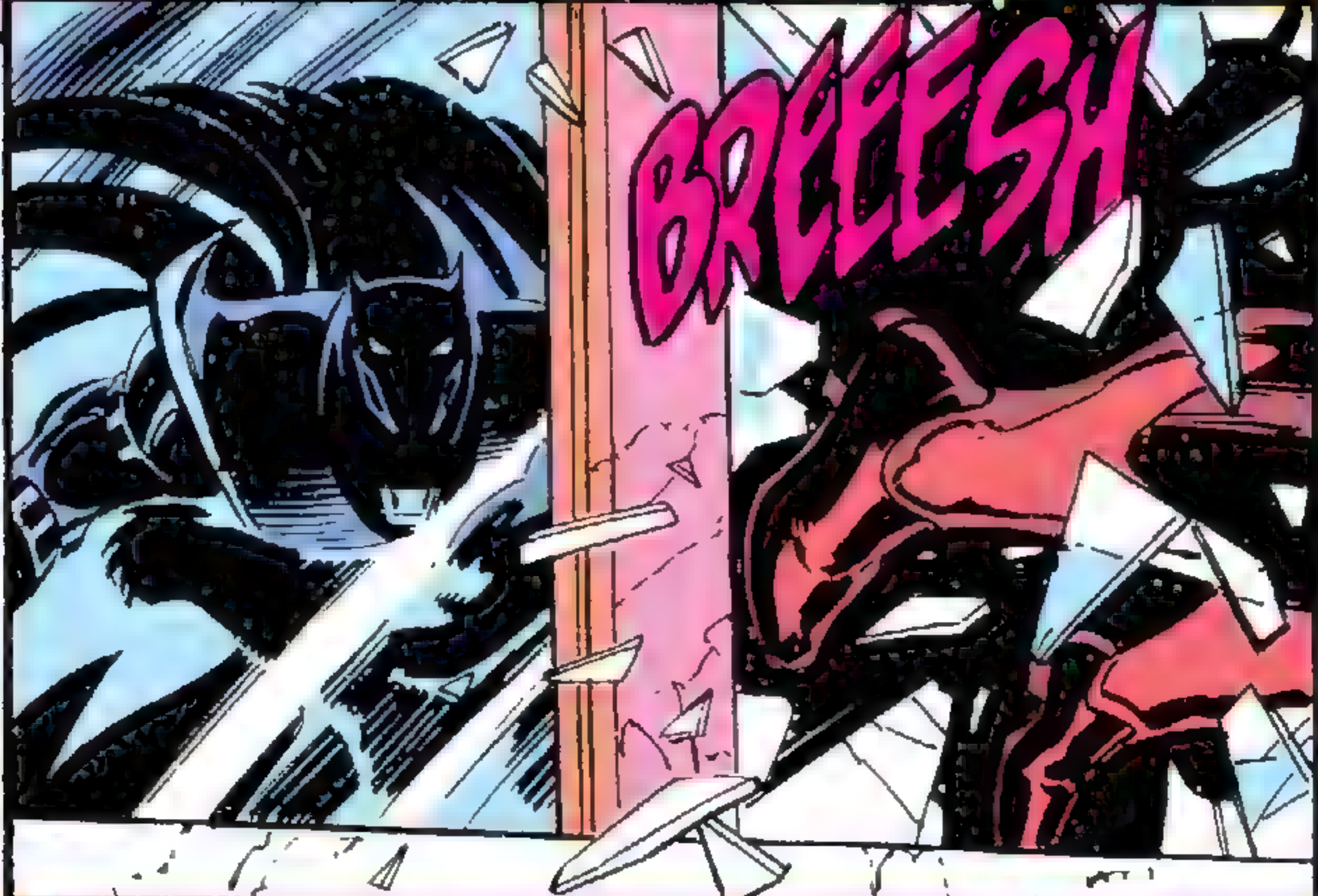
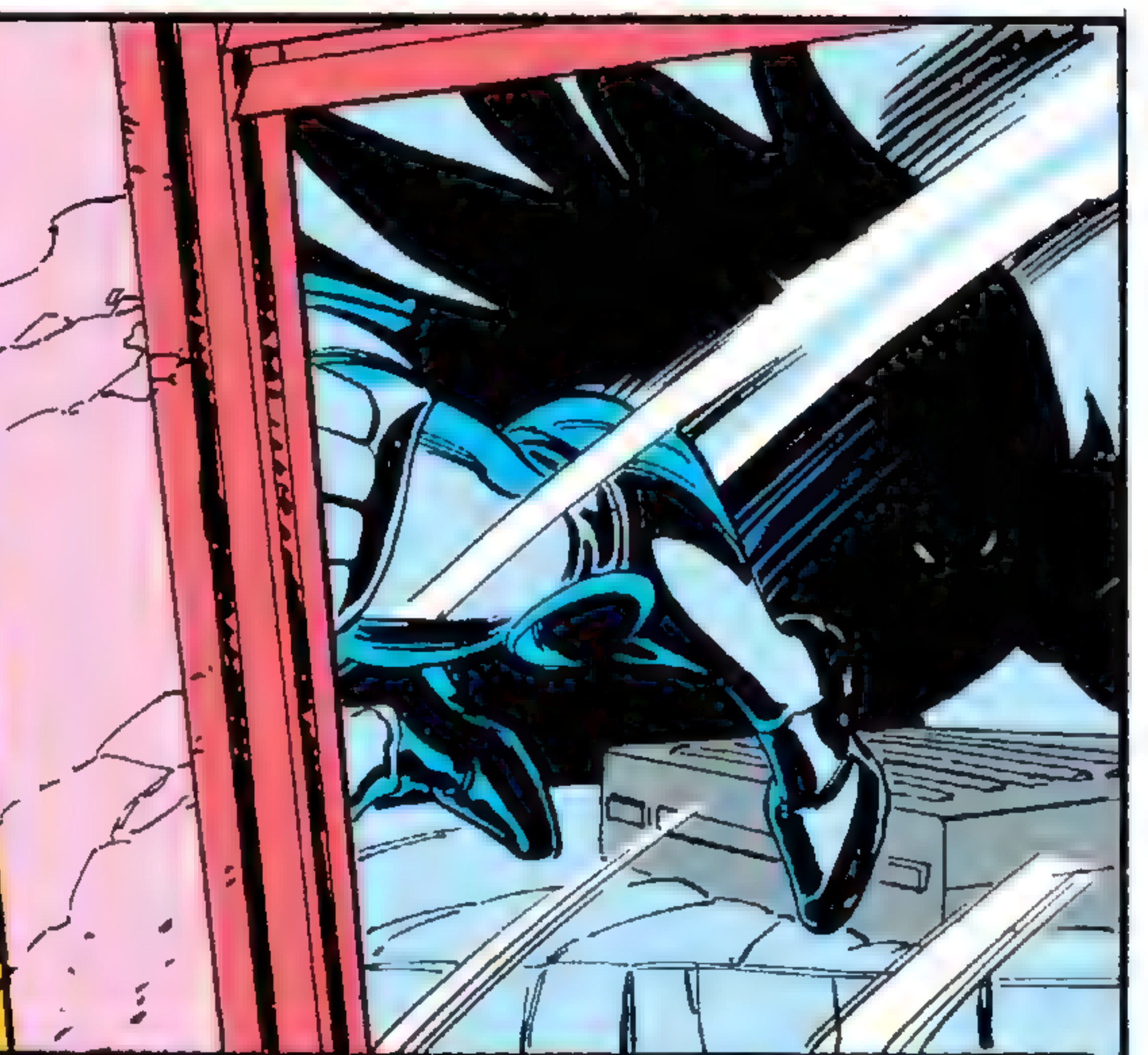
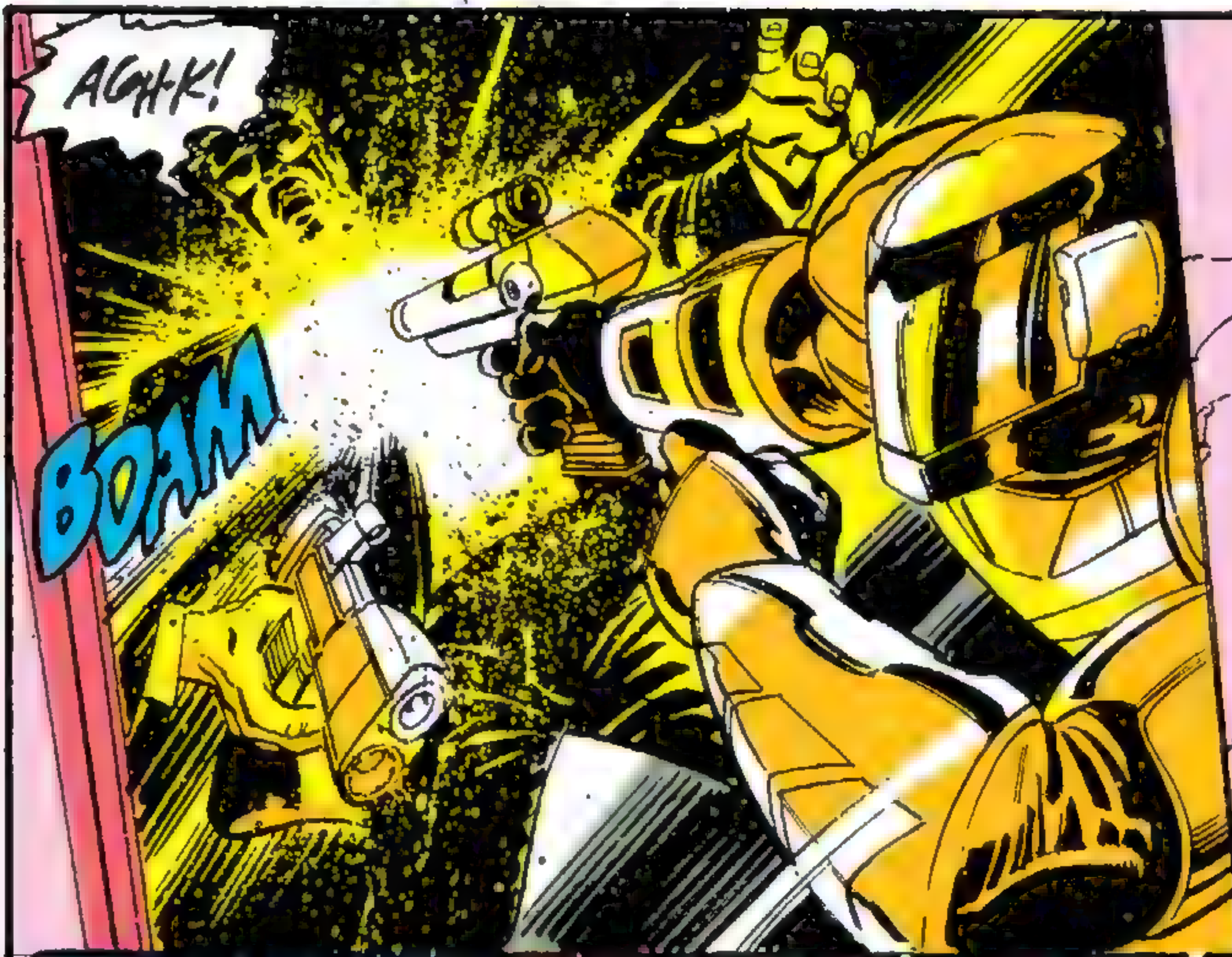
SO THEIR
SOLUTION--

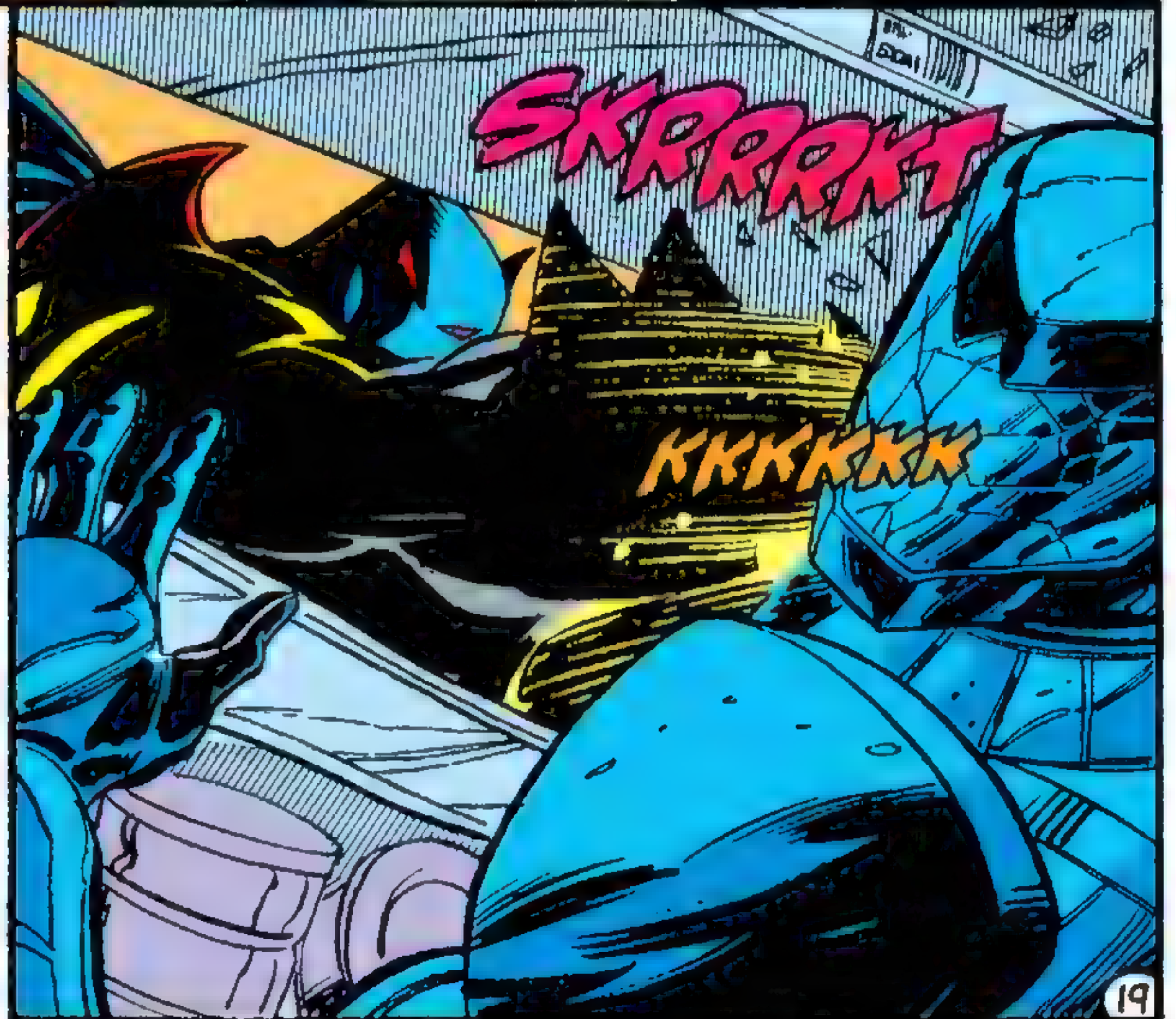
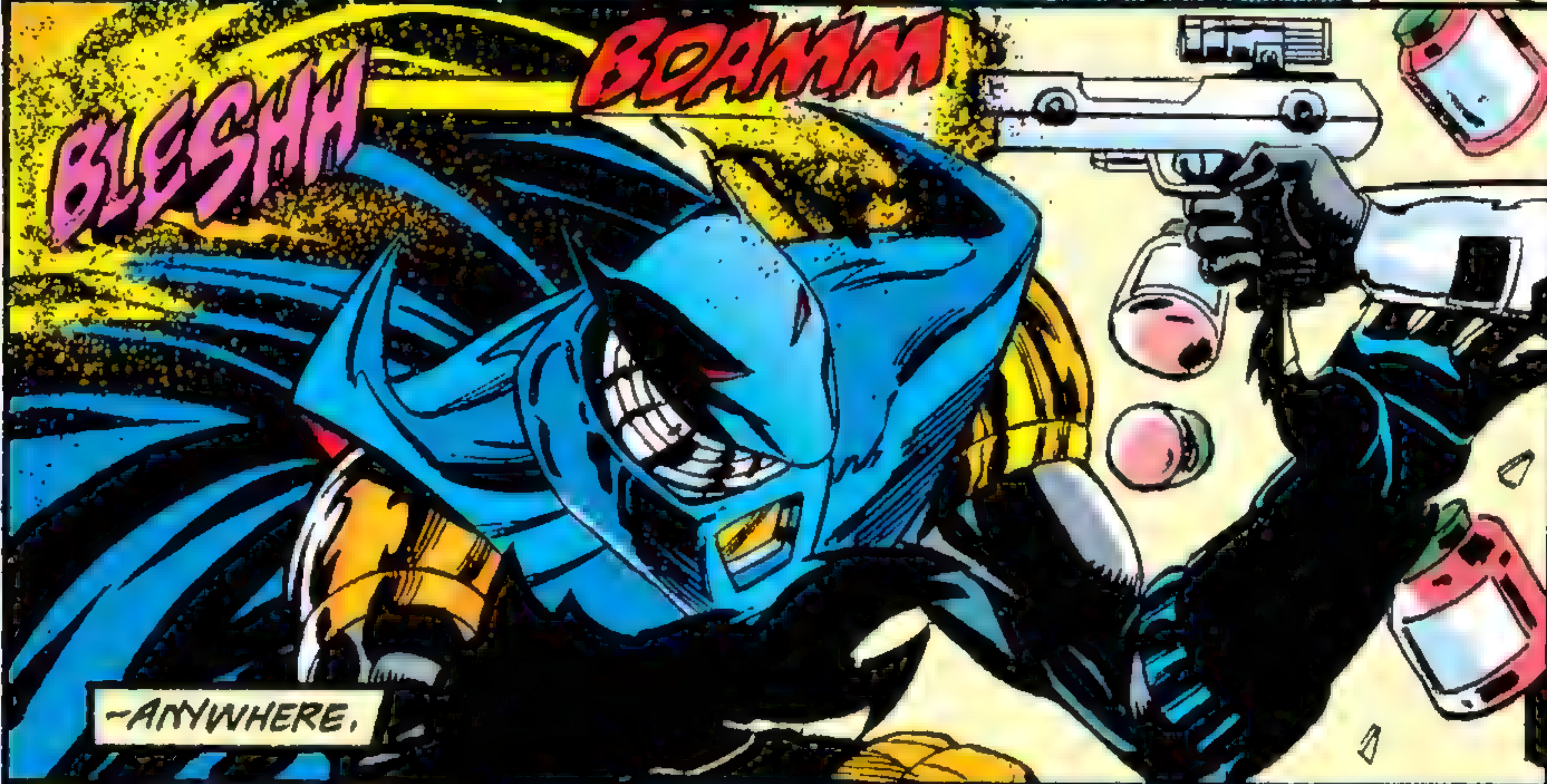
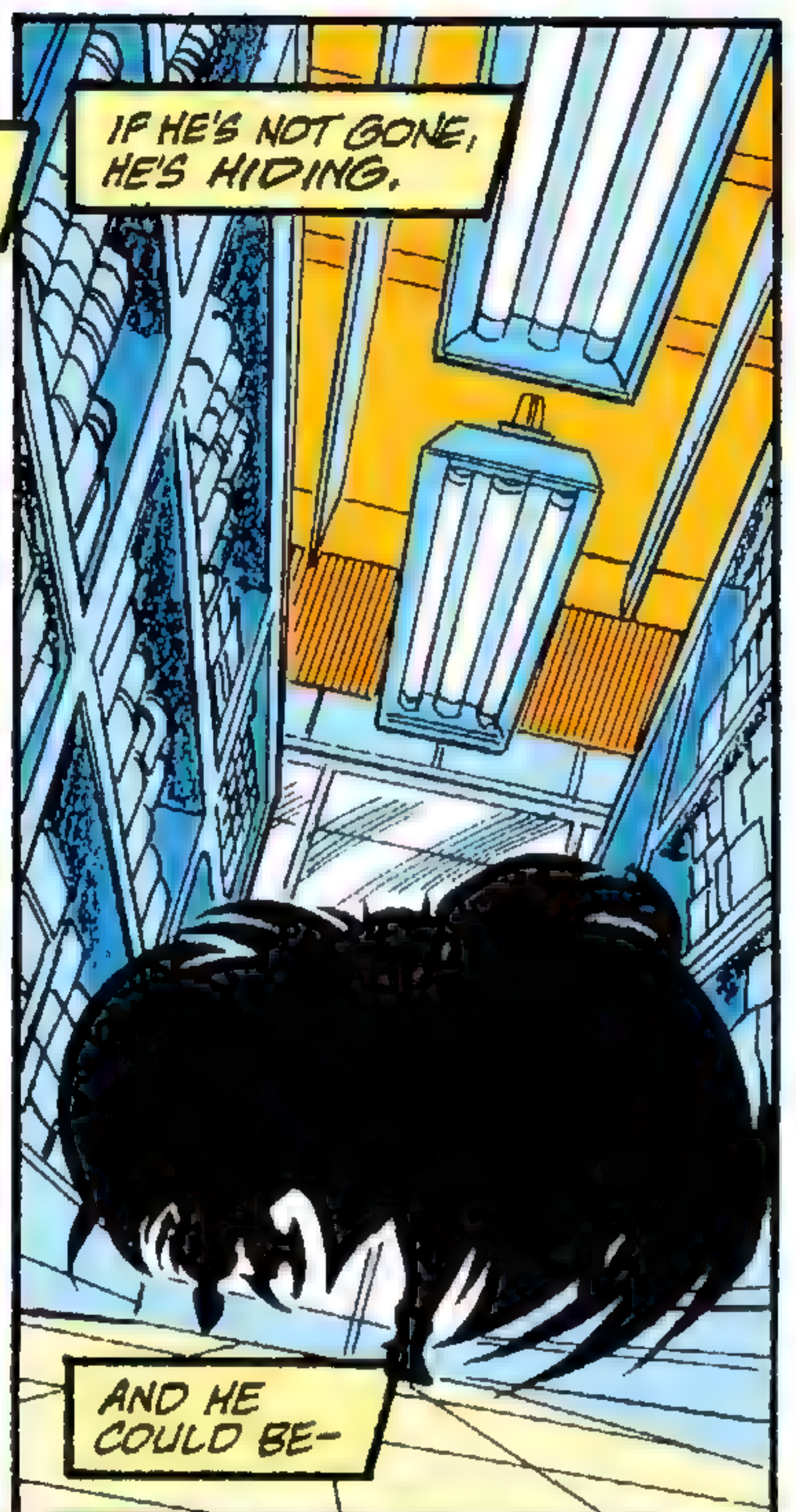
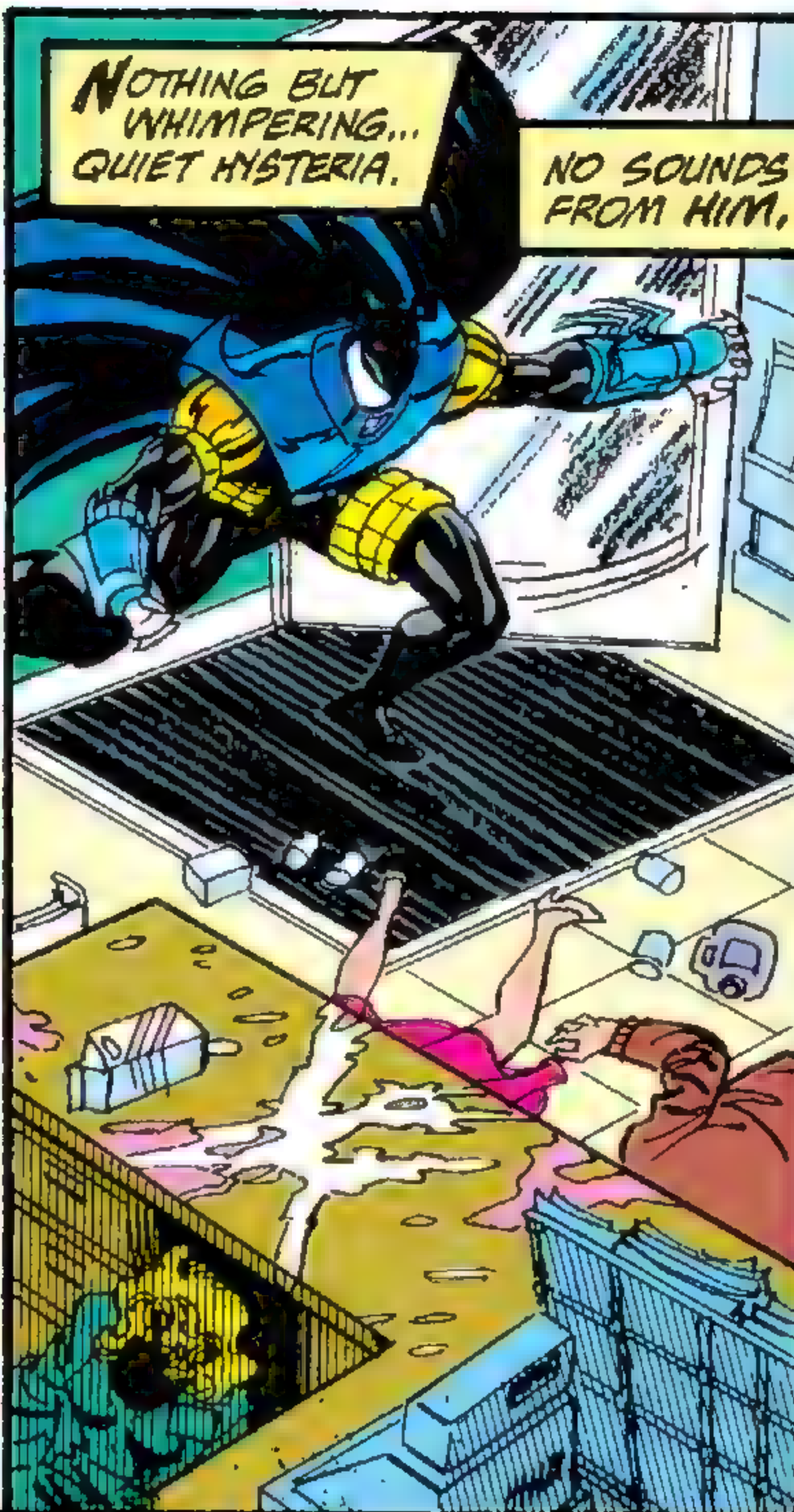


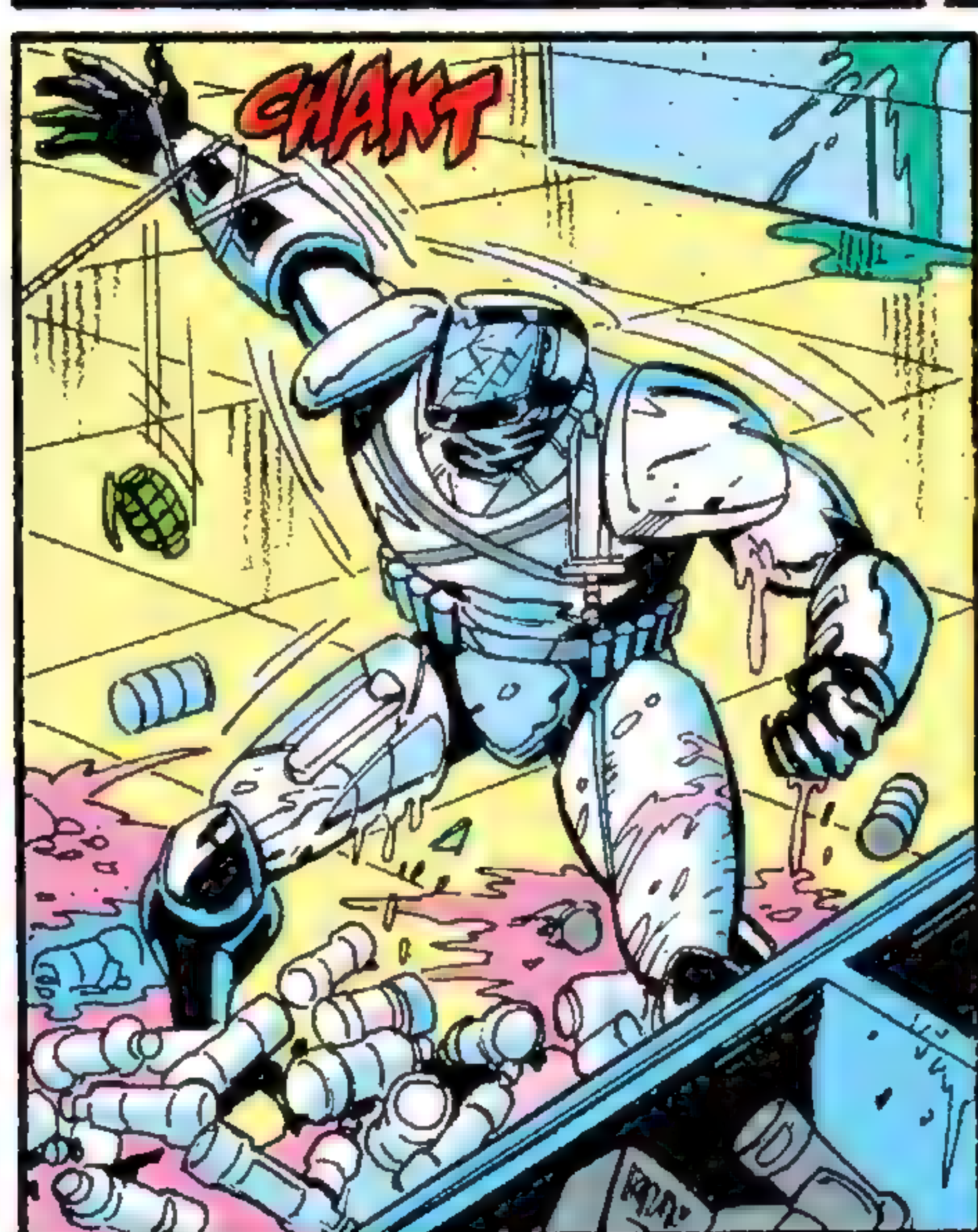
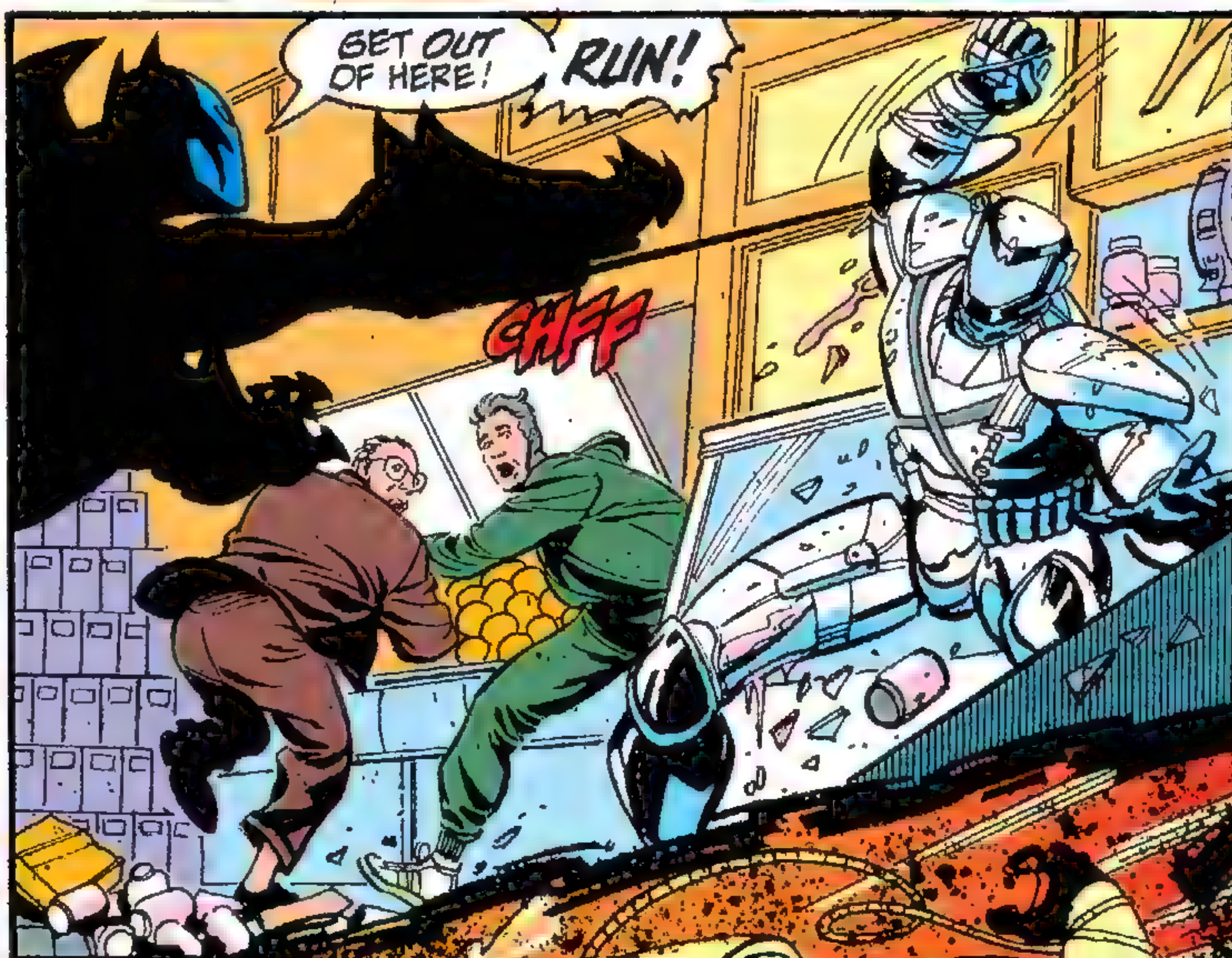
--IS A NEW
ASSASSINATION?

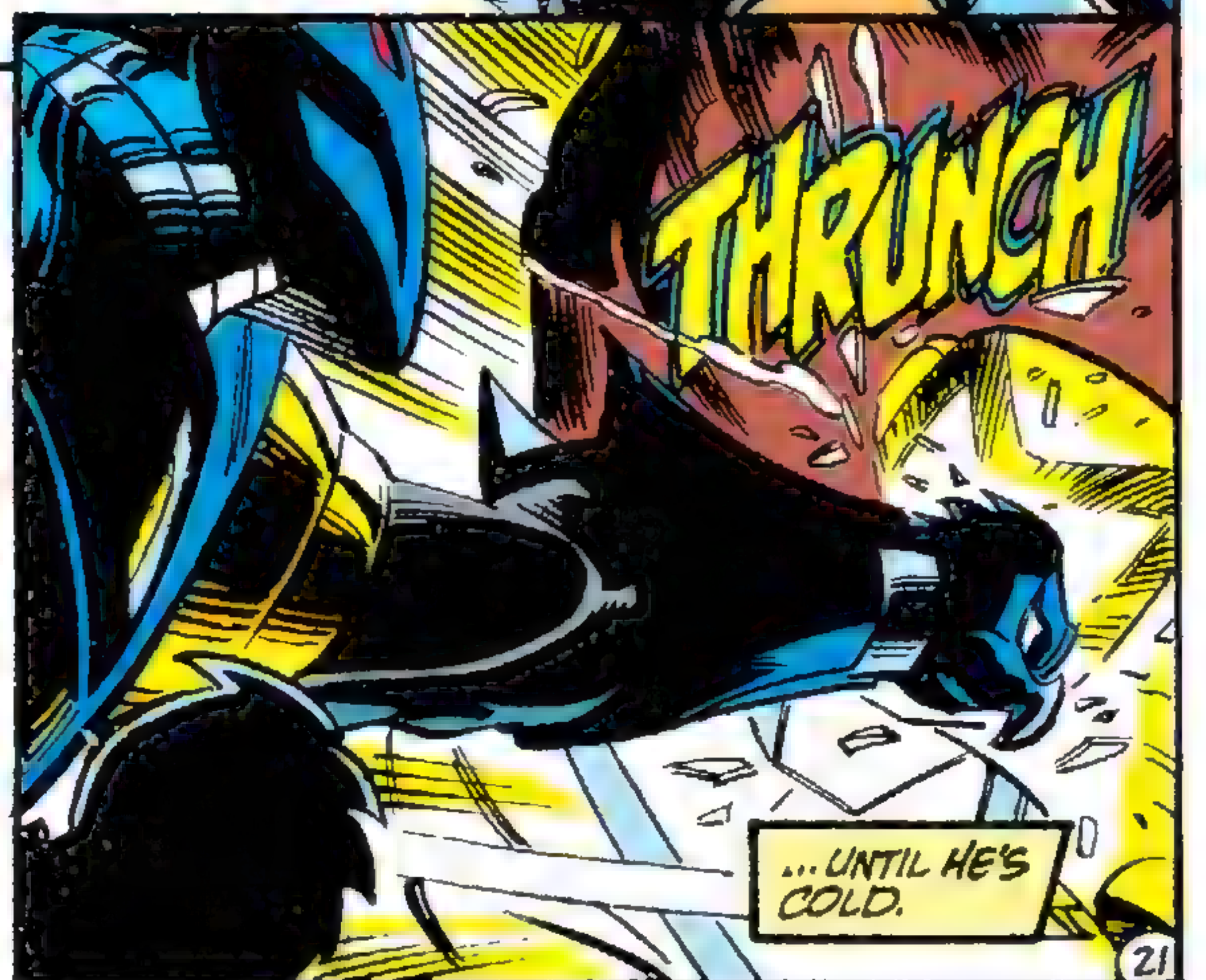
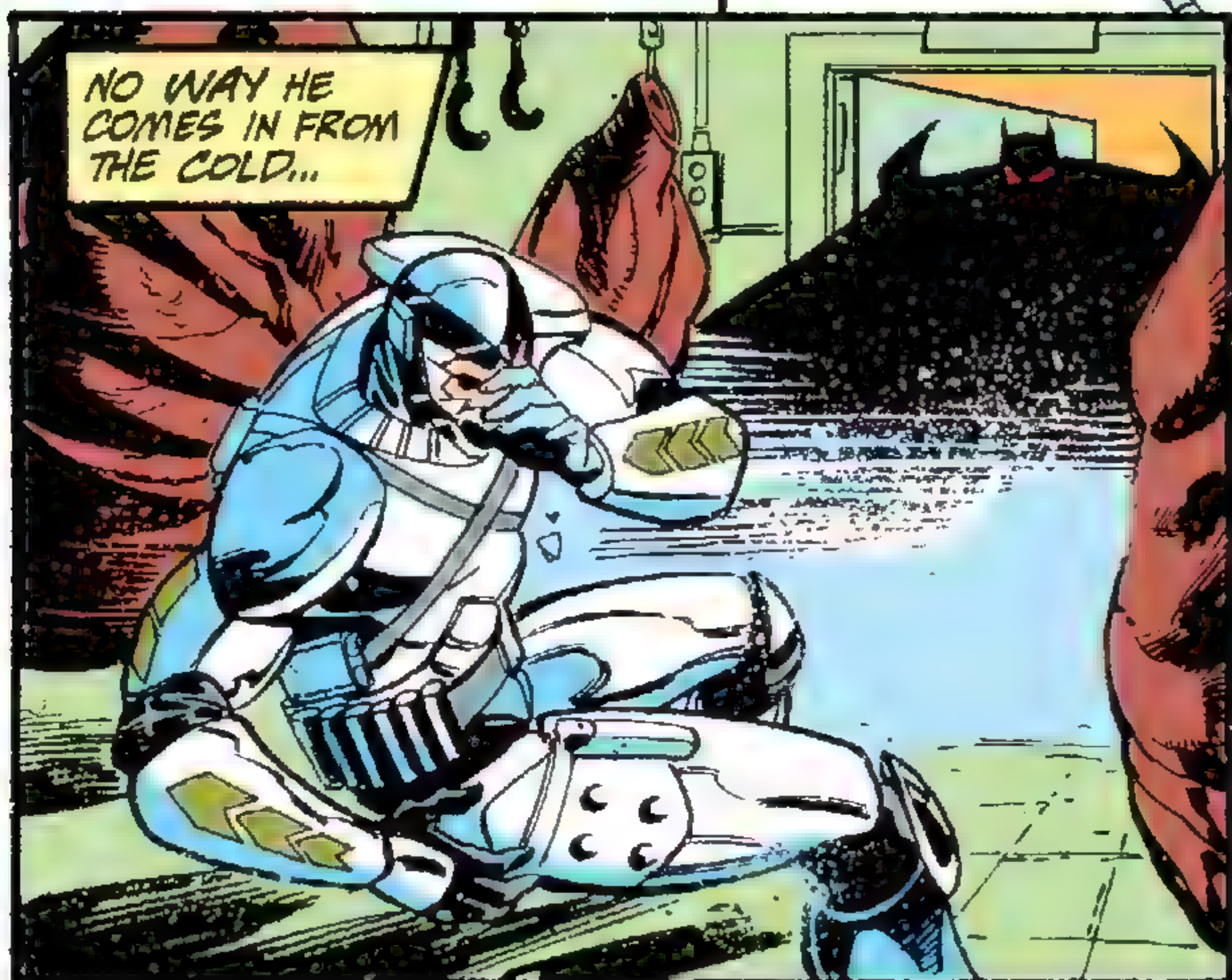
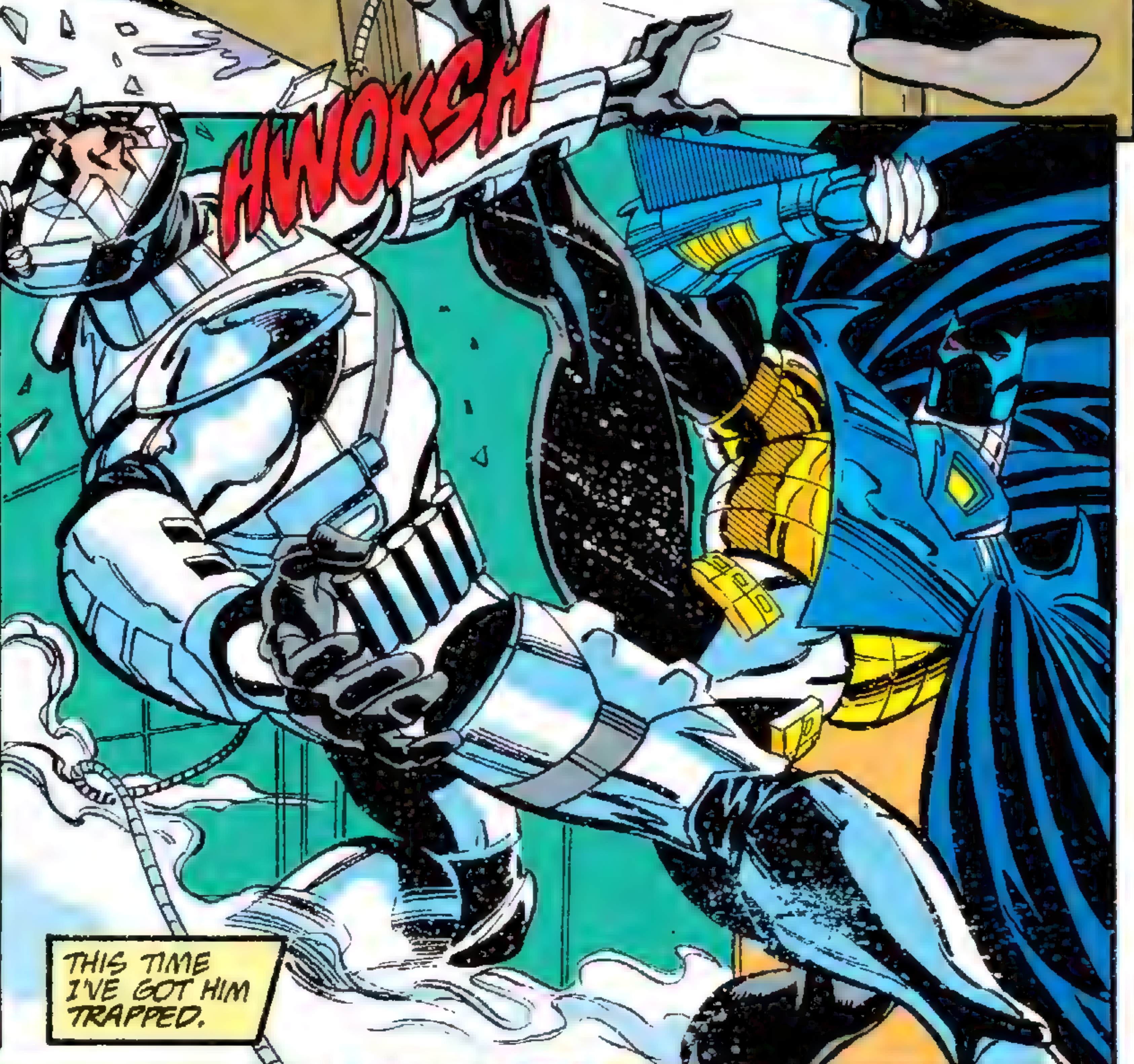
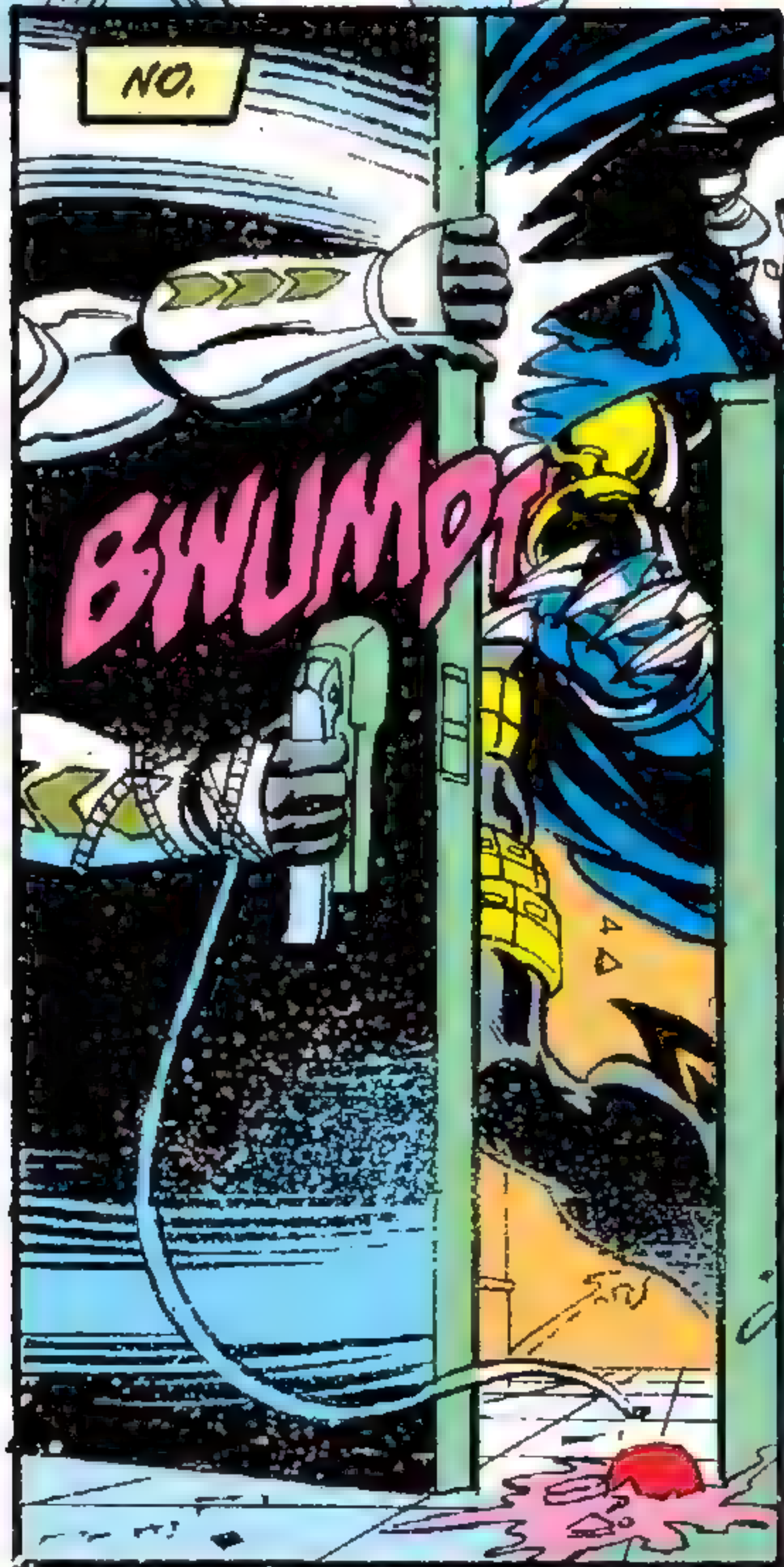
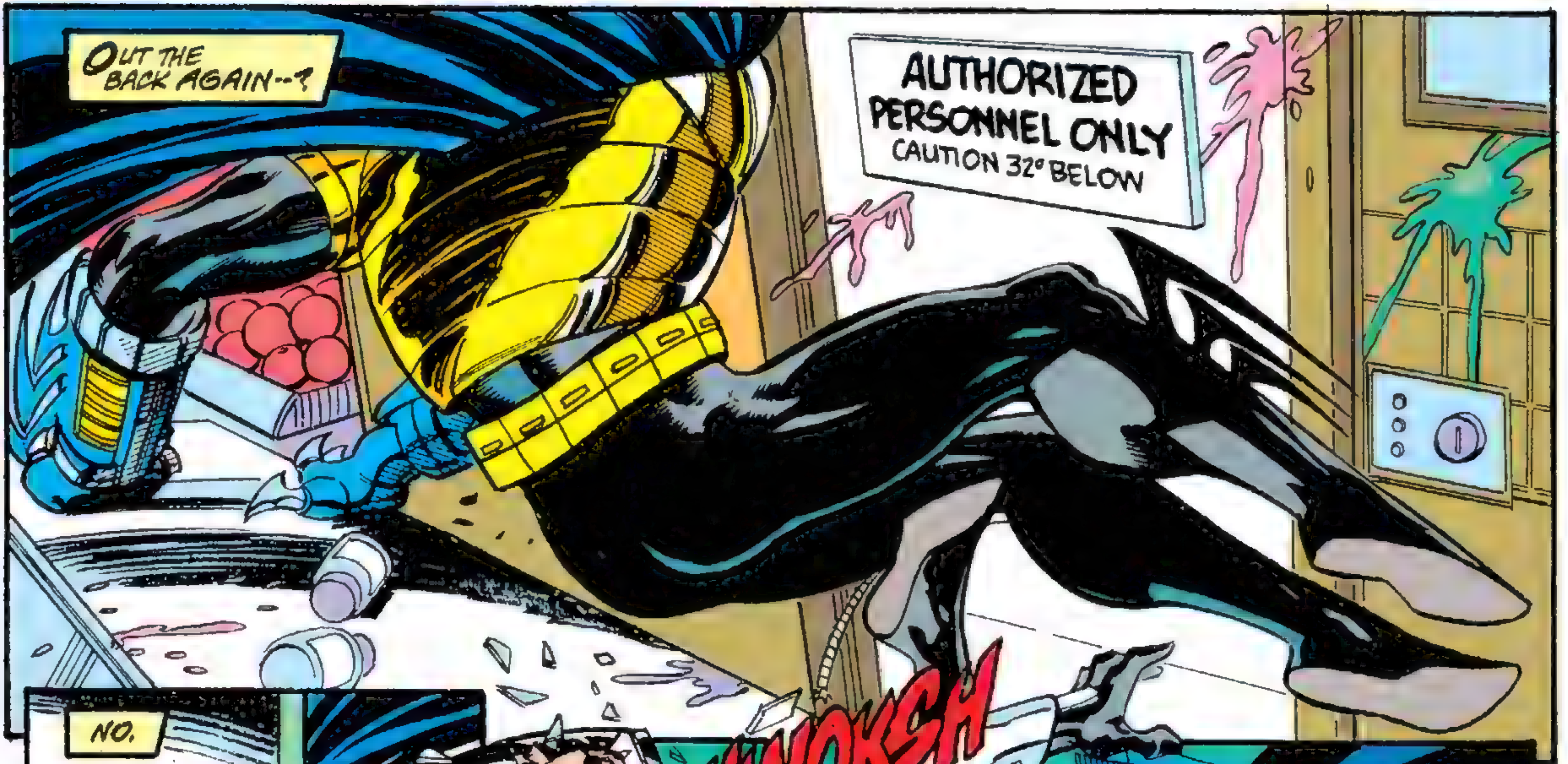
BAOUM

BRATCH







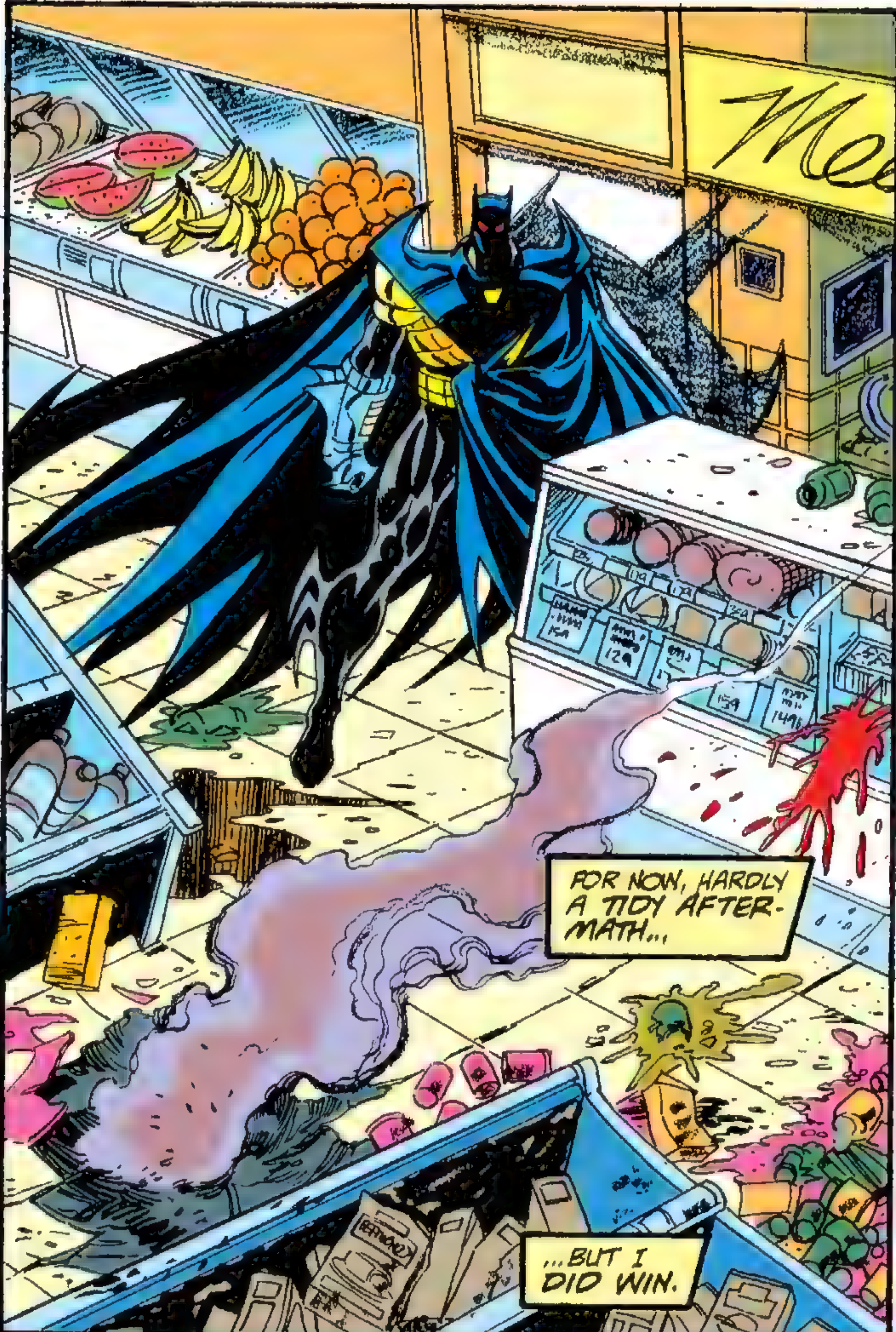


THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM, WHEN ONCE SHOULD HAVE DONE IT.

THE COSTUME IS IMPROVED, BUT BARELY ENOUGH TO PROVE MYSELF.

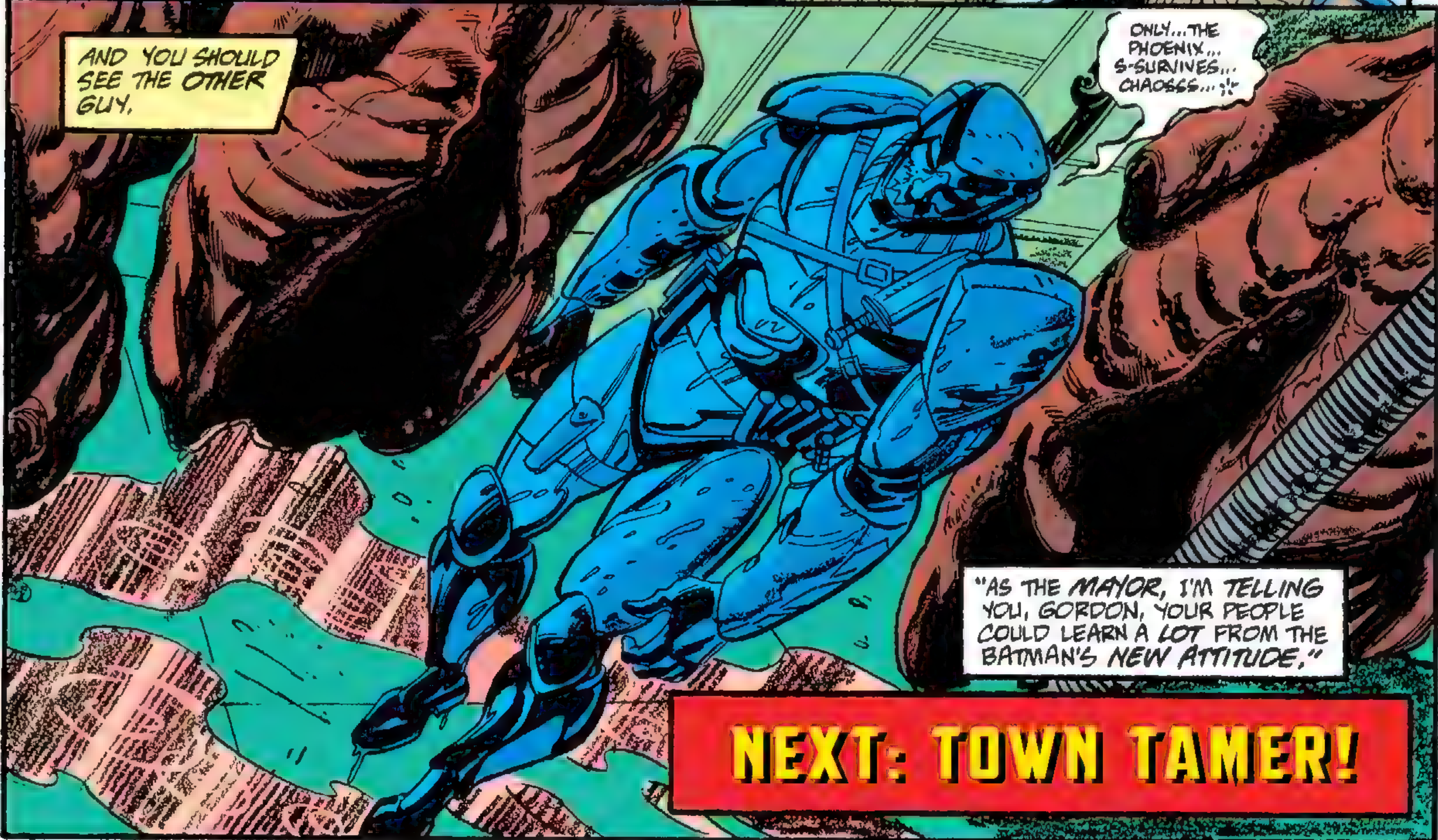


EVENTUALLY I'LL NEED MORE.



FOR NOW, HARDLY A TIDY AFTER-MATH...

...BUT I DID WIN.



AND YOU SHOULD SEE THE OTHER GUY.

ONLY...THE PHOENIX...S-SURVIVES...CHAOSSES...!!

"AS THE MAYOR, I'M TELLING YOU, GORDON, YOUR PEOPLE COULD LEARN A LOT FROM THE BATMAN'S NEW ATTITUDE."

NEXT: TOWN TAMER!



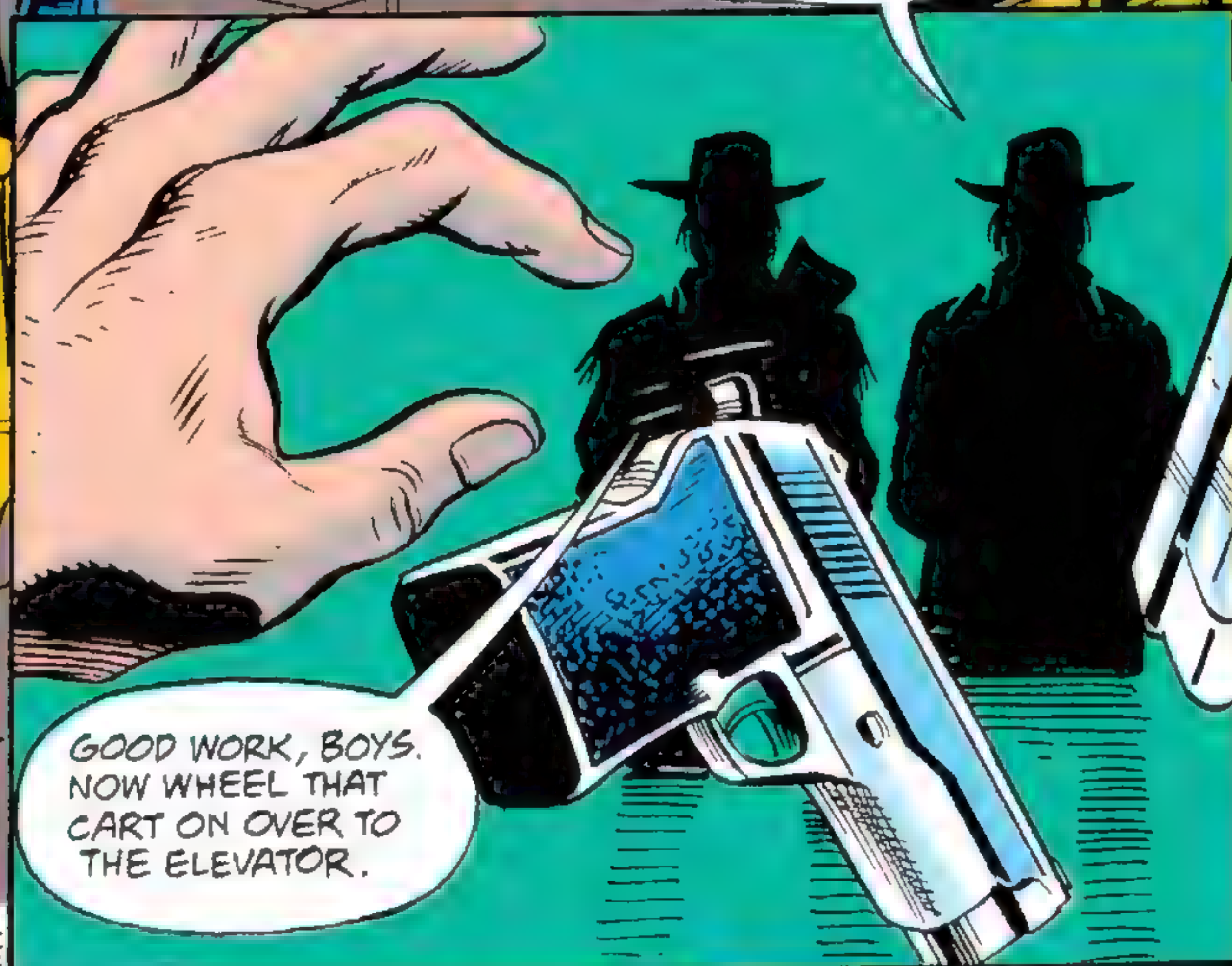
TOWN TAMER

CHUCK DIXON • GRAHAM NOLAN • EDUARDO BARRETO
Writer Penciler Inker
ADRIENNE ROY • JOHN COSTANZA • DARREN VINCENZO
Colorist Letterer Asst. Editor
SCOTT PETERSON - Editor • BATMAN created by BOB KANE

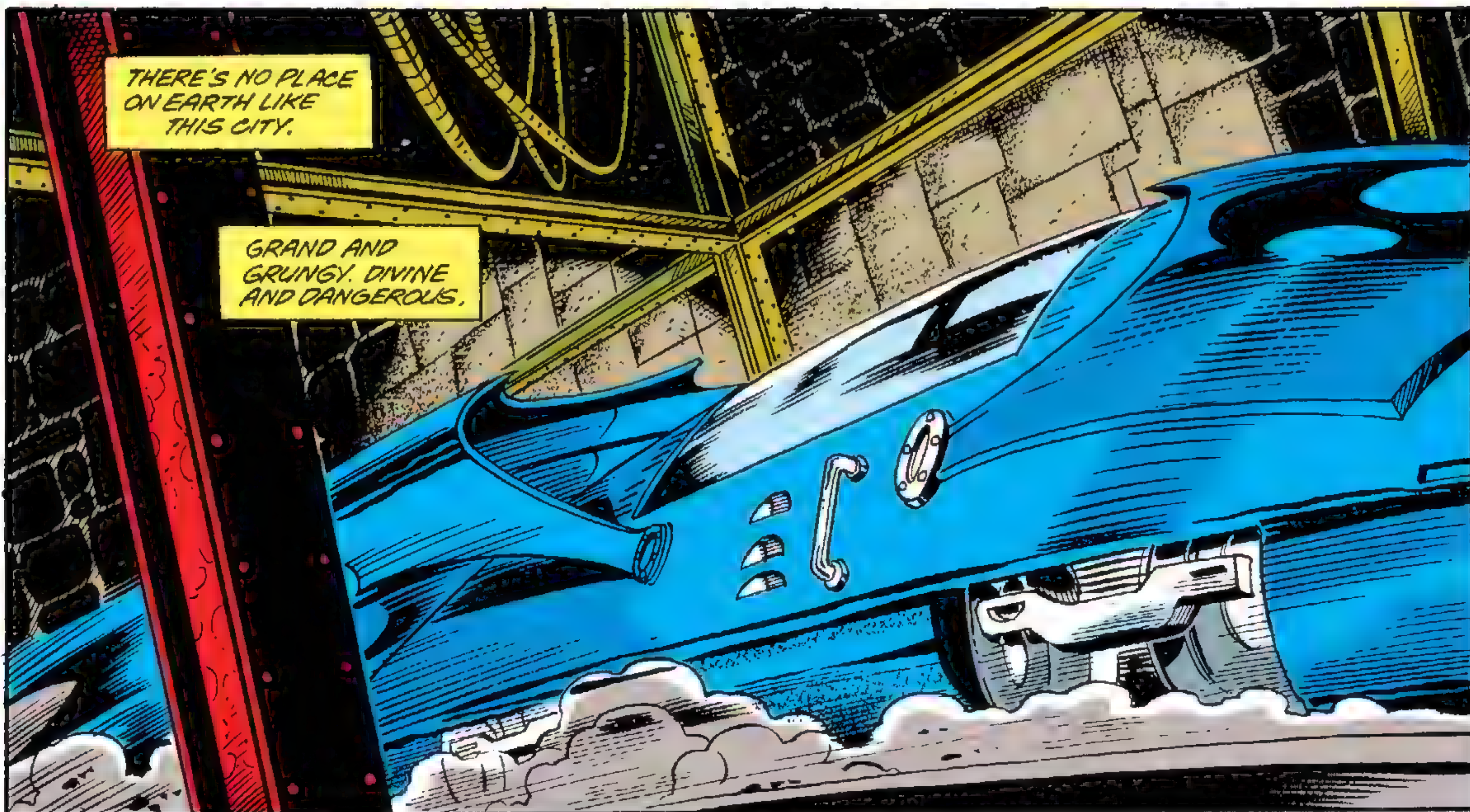
STAND AND
DELIVER!

GRAB SOME
SKY, BOYS, AND
NO FAST
MOVES!



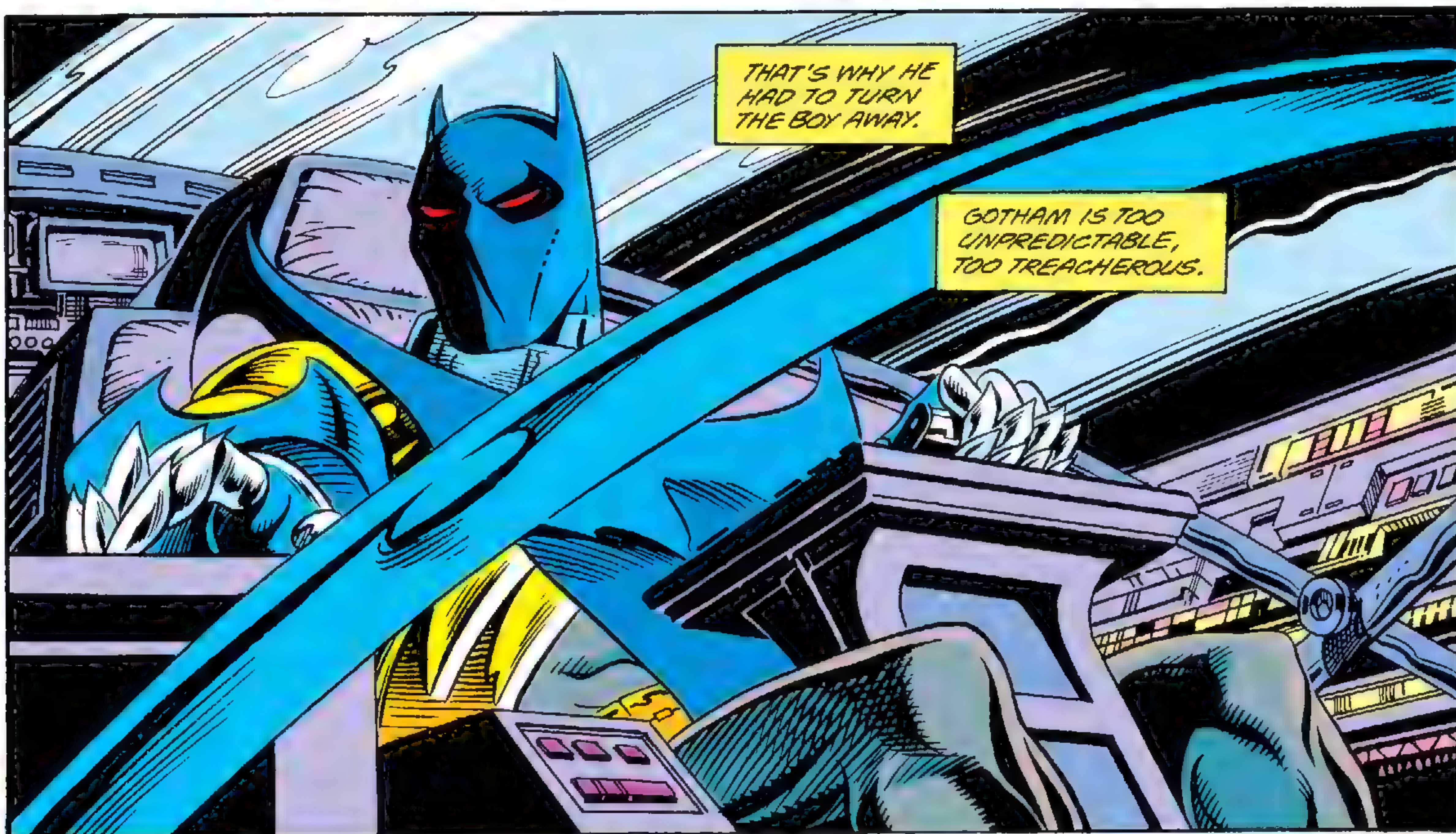






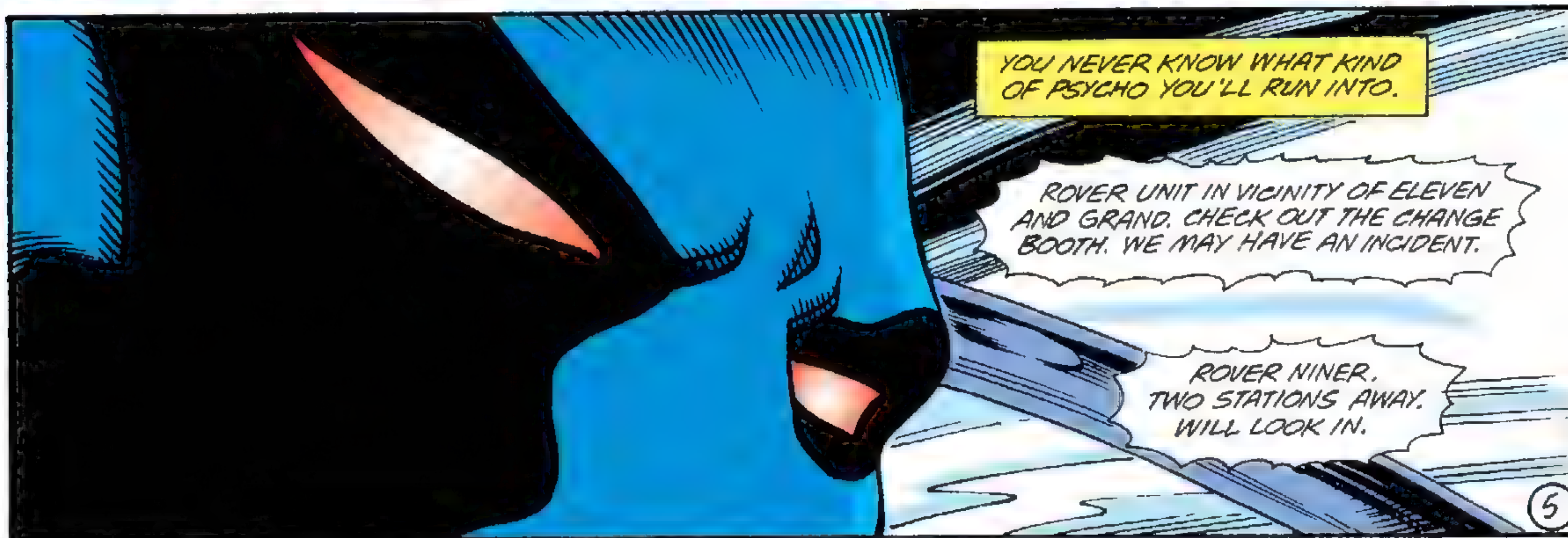
THERE'S NO PLACE
ON EARTH LIKE
THIS CITY.

GRAND AND
GRUNGY. DIVINE
AND DANGEROUS.



THAT'S WHY HE
HAD TO TURN
THE BOY AWAY.

GOTHAM IS TOO
UNPREDICTABLE,
TOO TREACHEROUS.

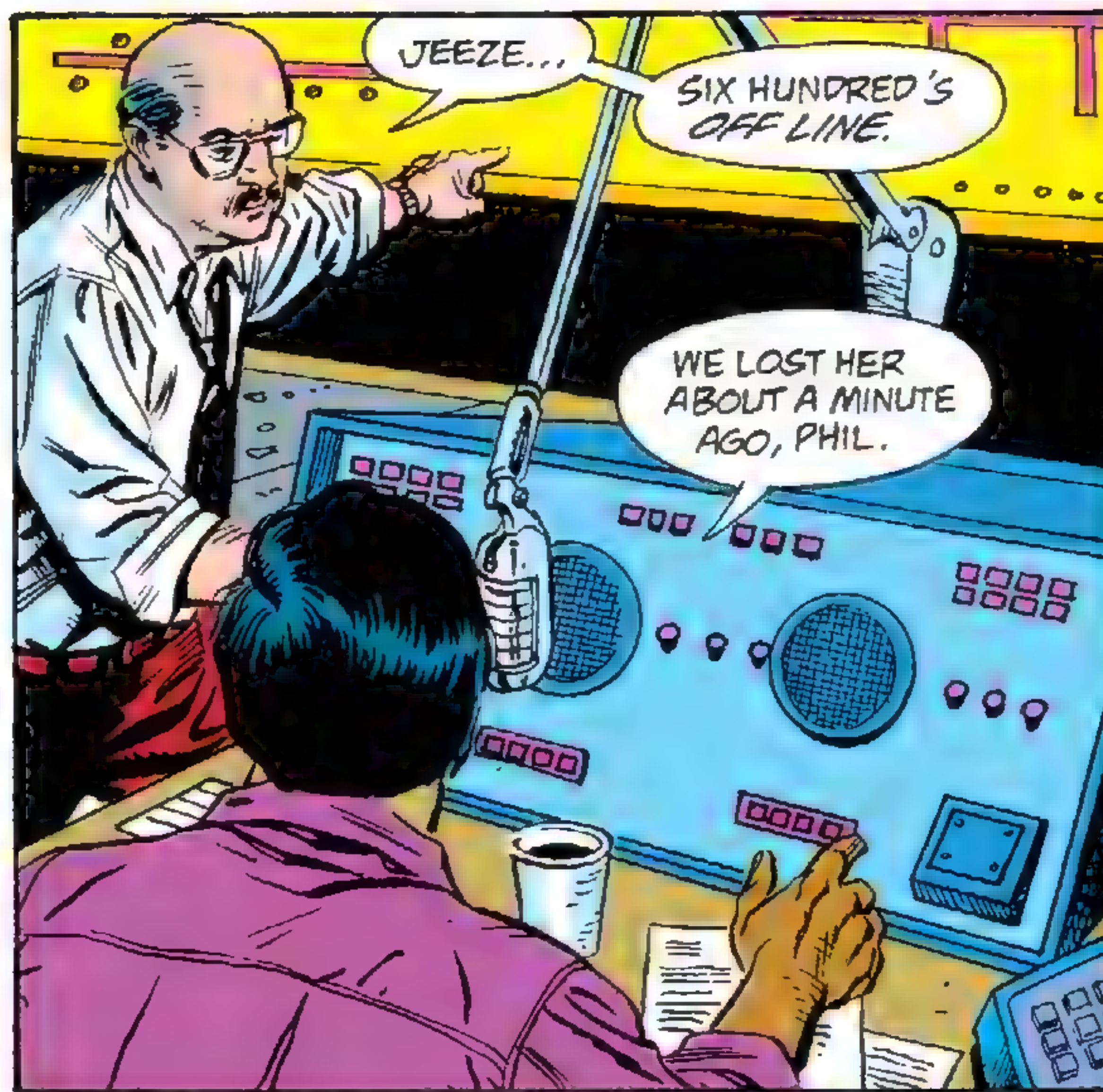
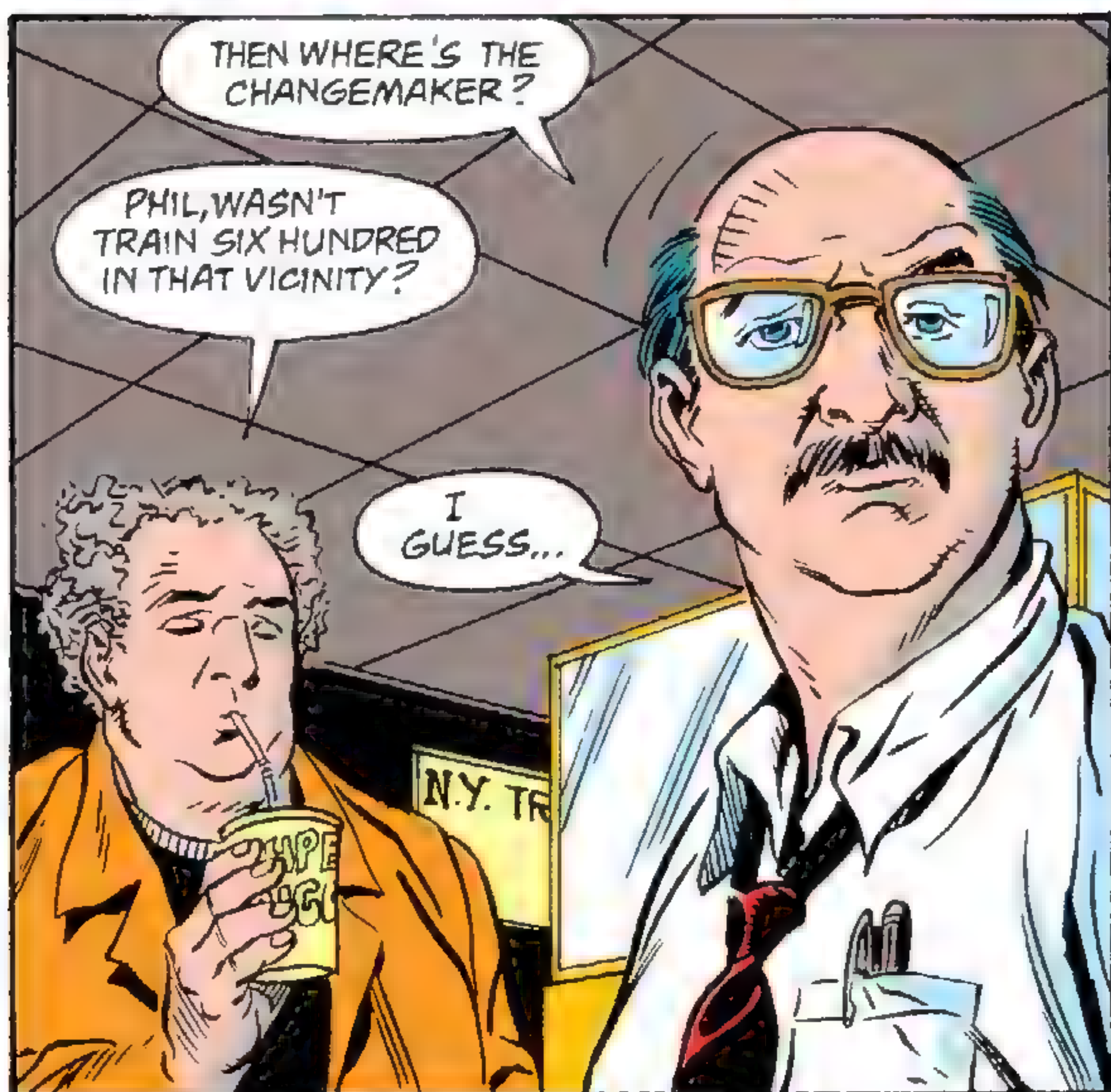


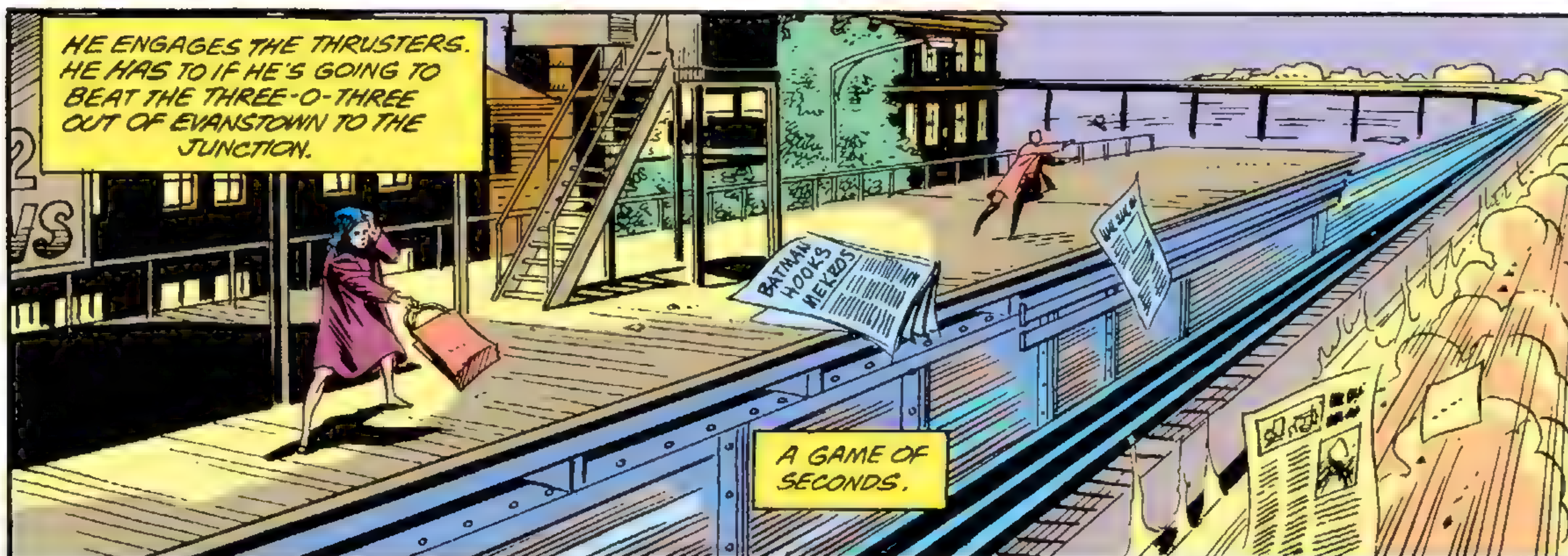
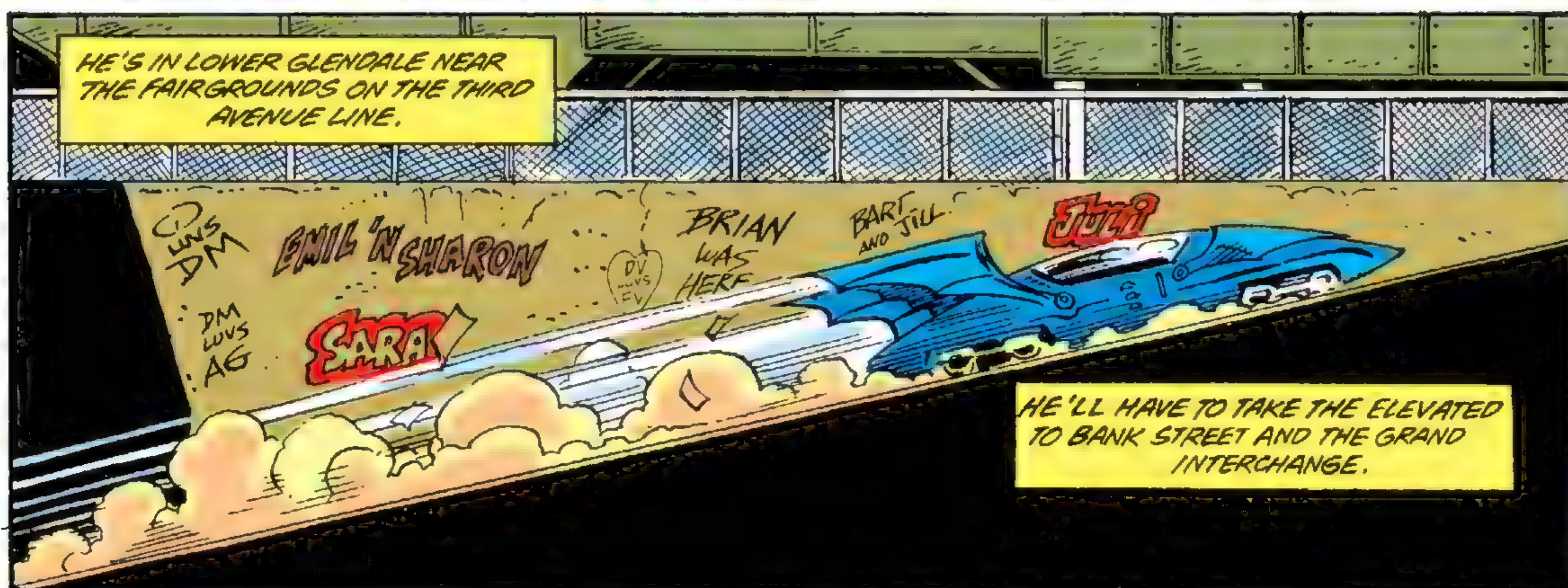
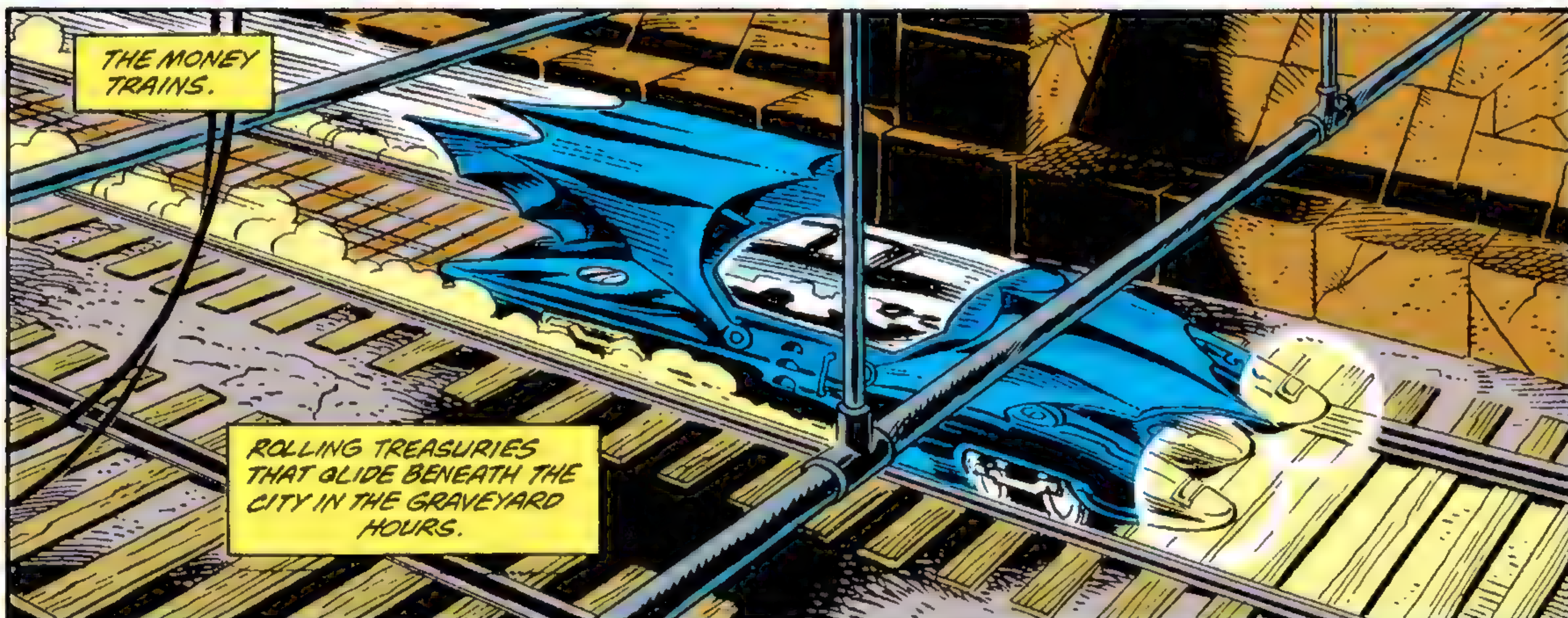
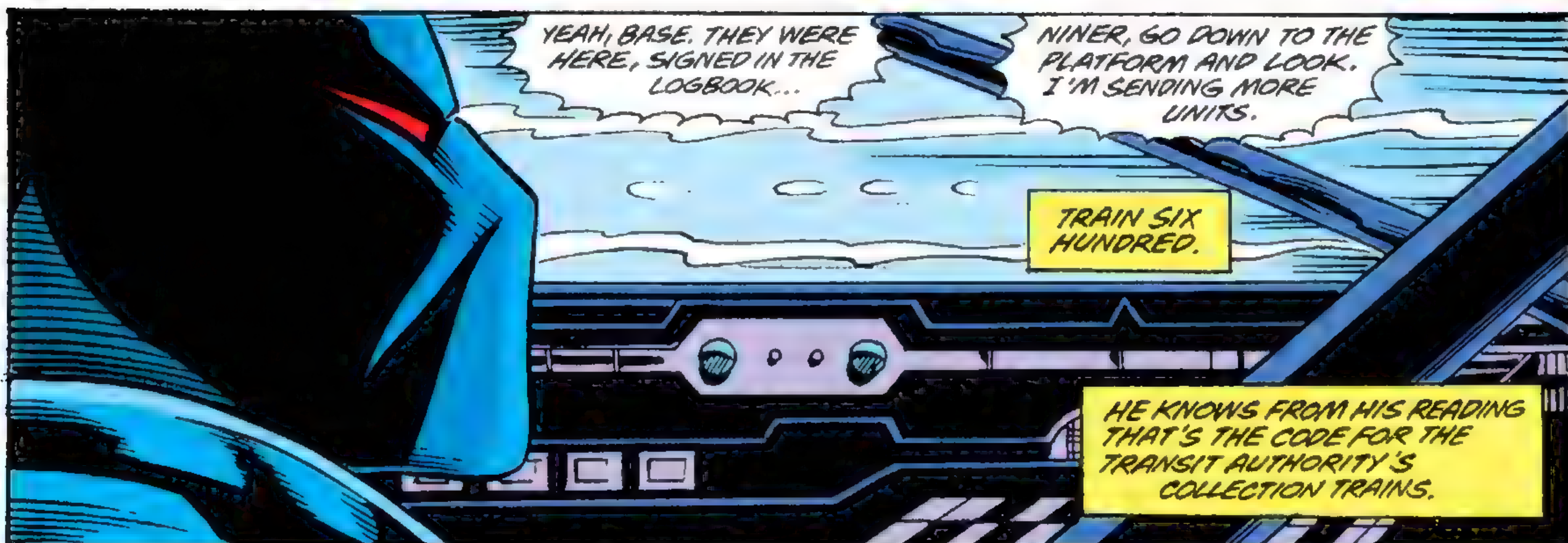
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT KIND
OF PSYCHO YOU'LL RUN INTO.

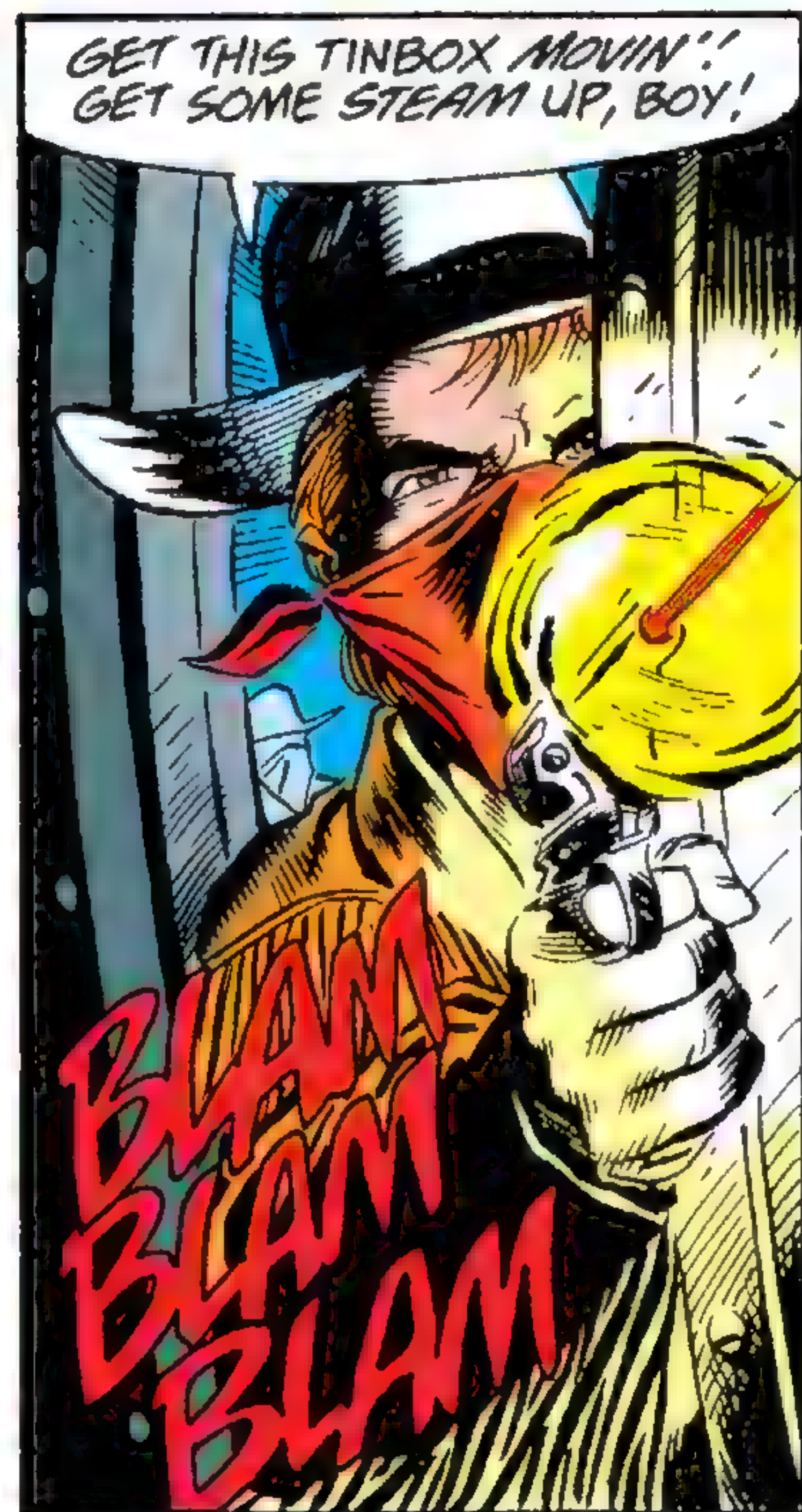
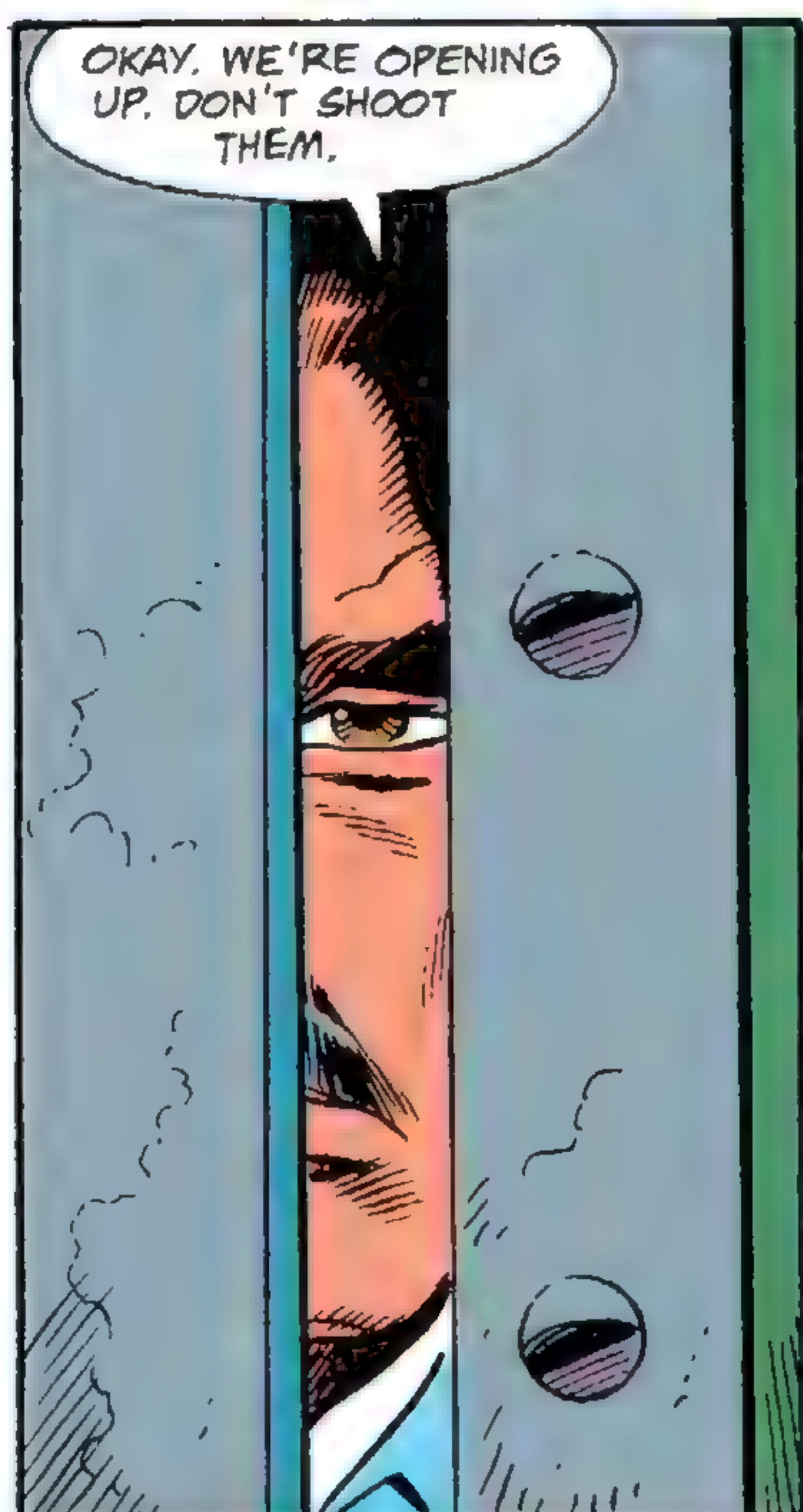
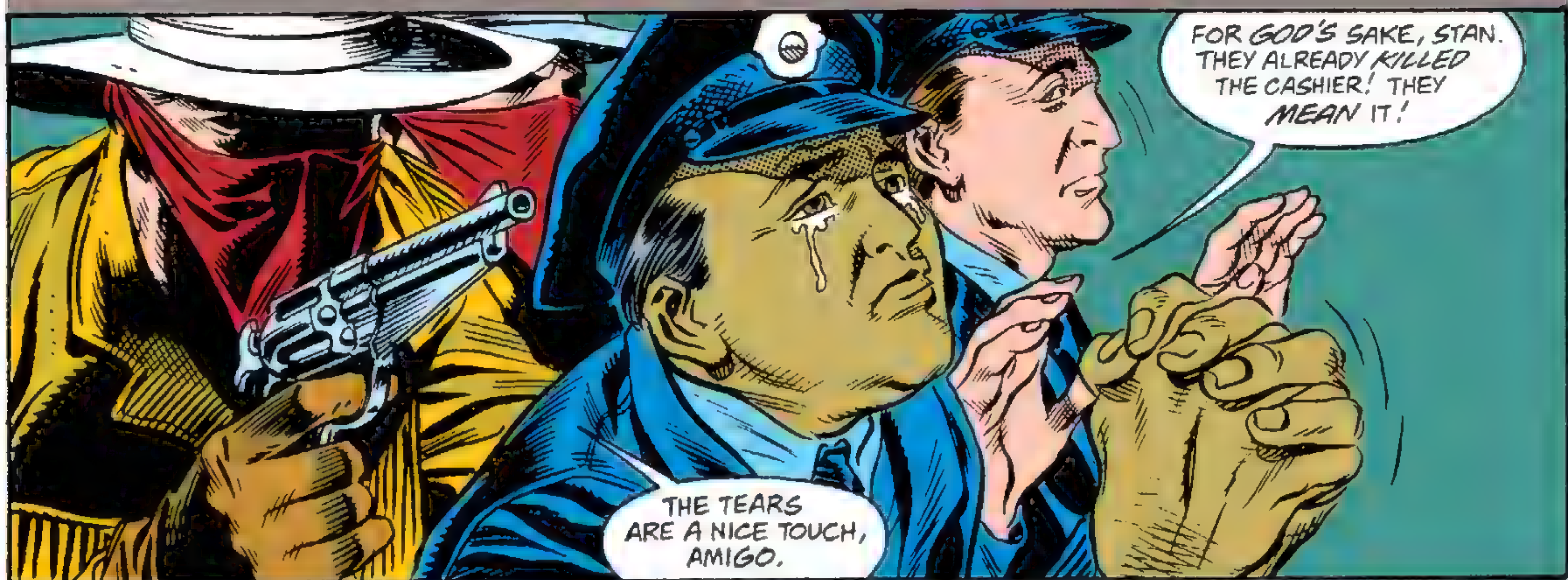
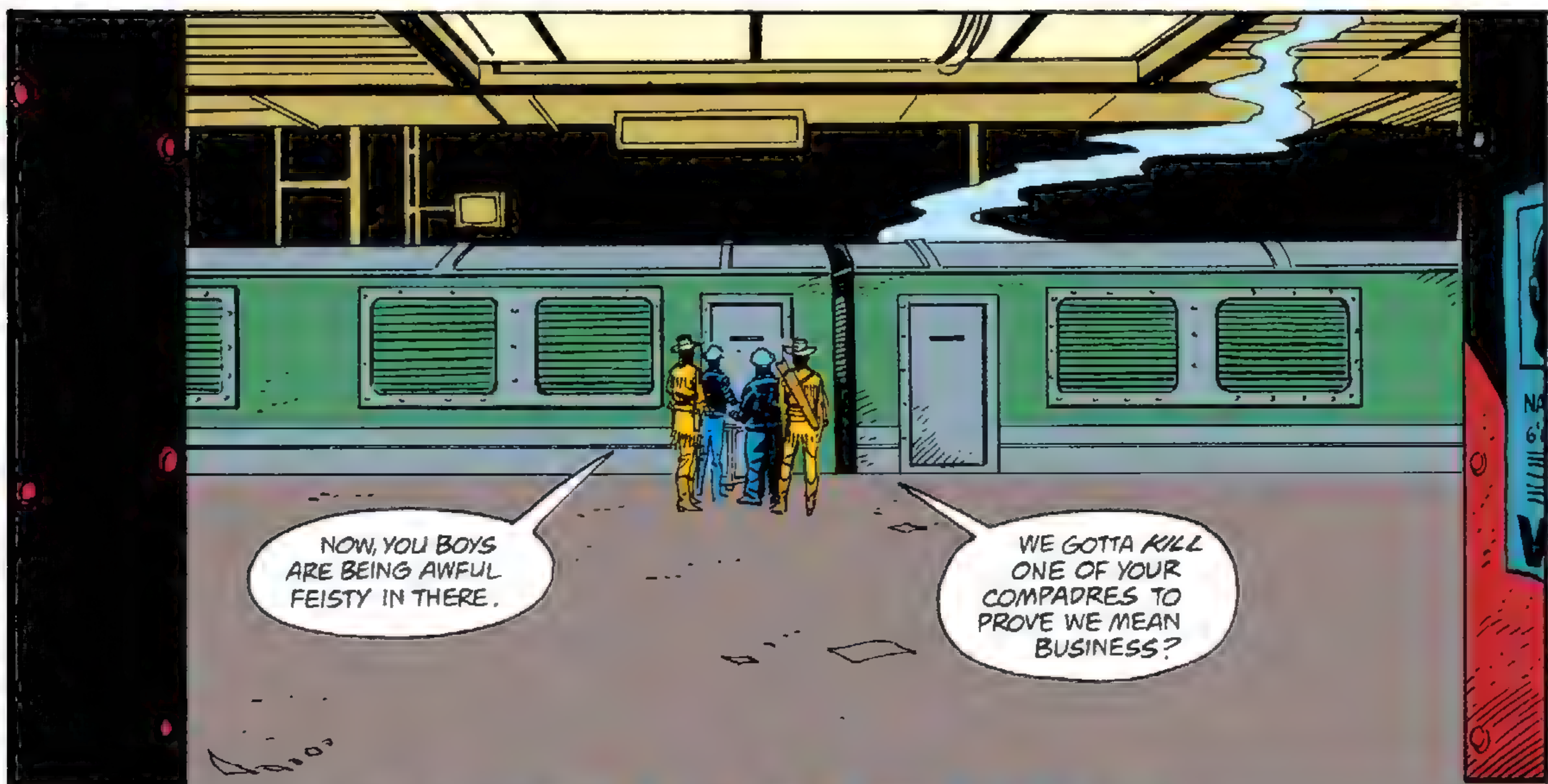
ROVER UNIT IN VICINITY OF ELEVEN
AND GRAND. CHECK OUT THE CHANGE
BOOTH. WE MAY HAVE AN INCIDENT.

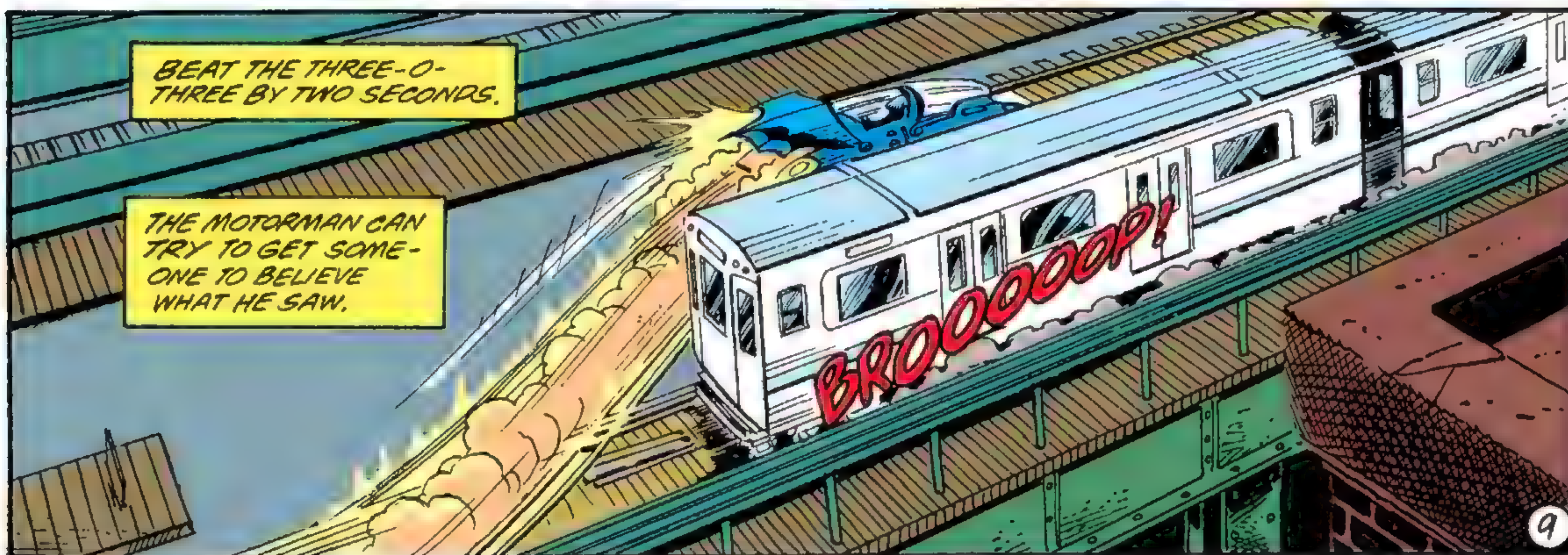
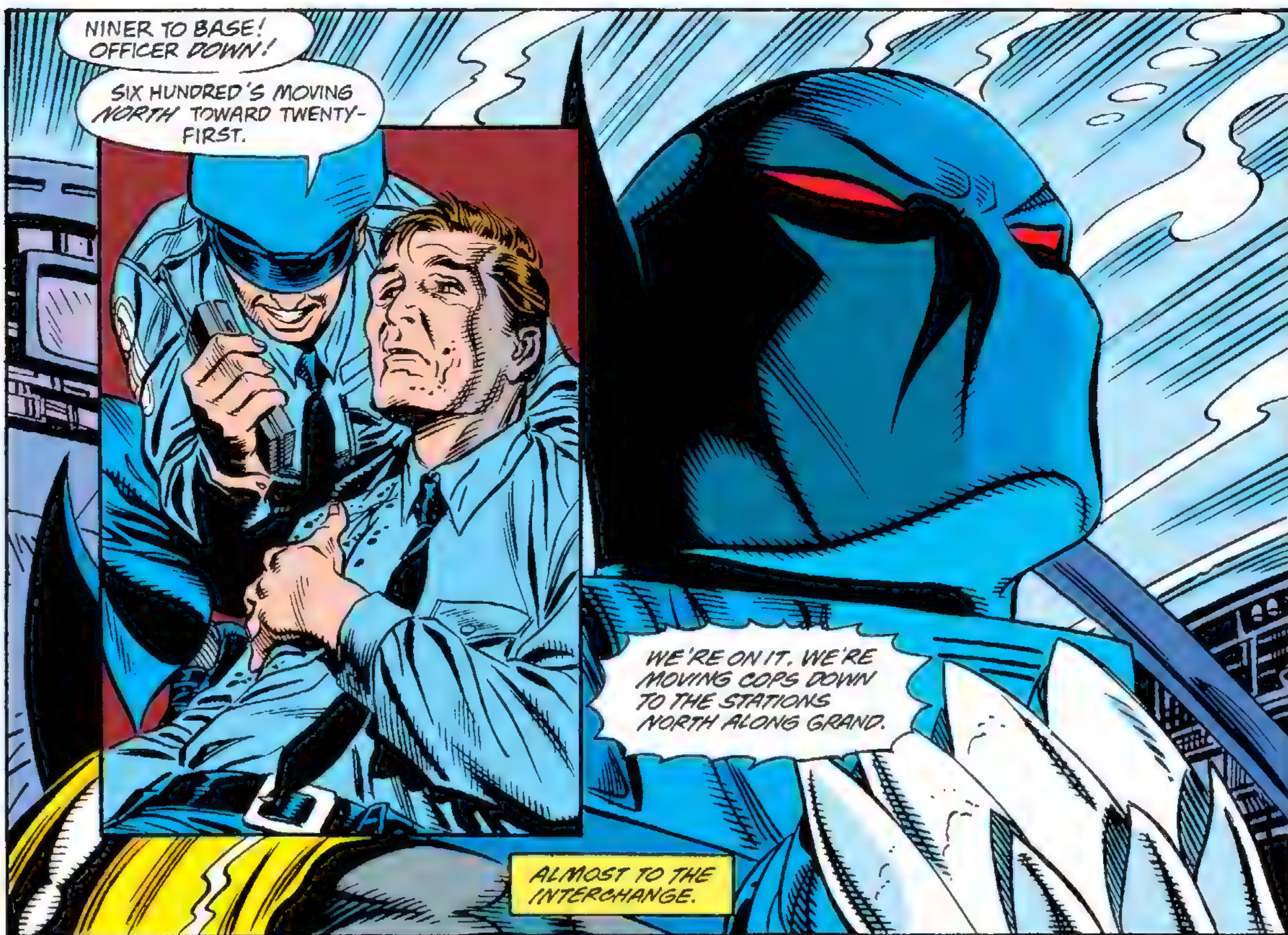
ROVER NINER.
TWO STATIONS AWAY.
WILL LOOK IN.

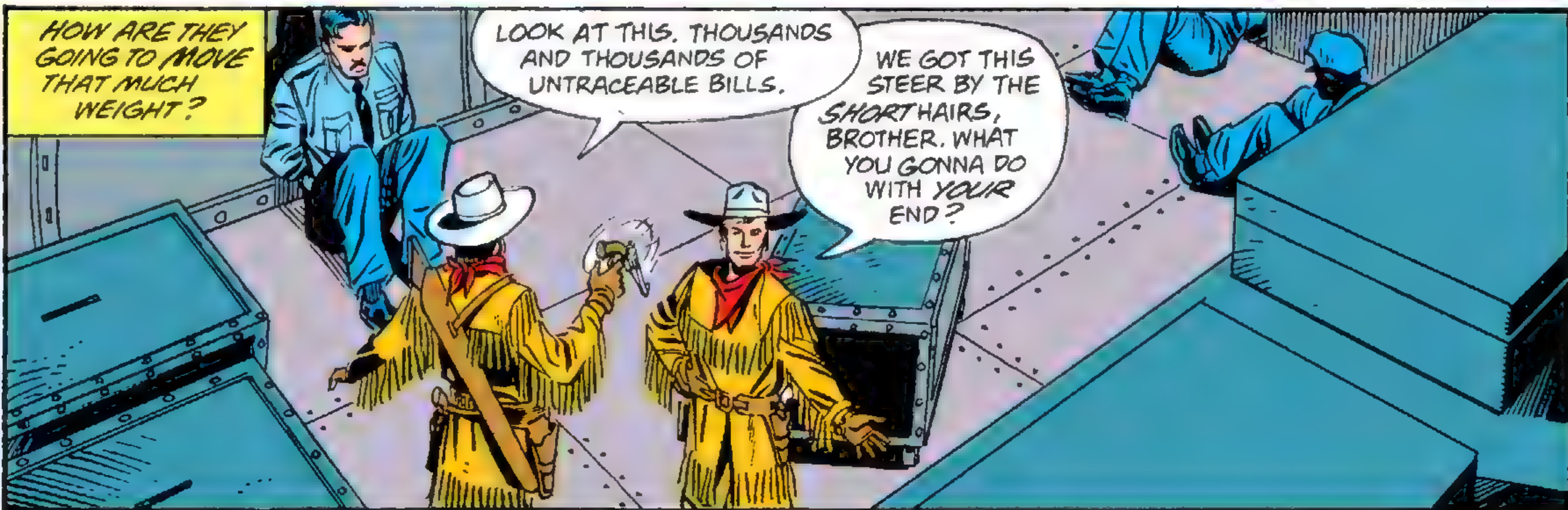
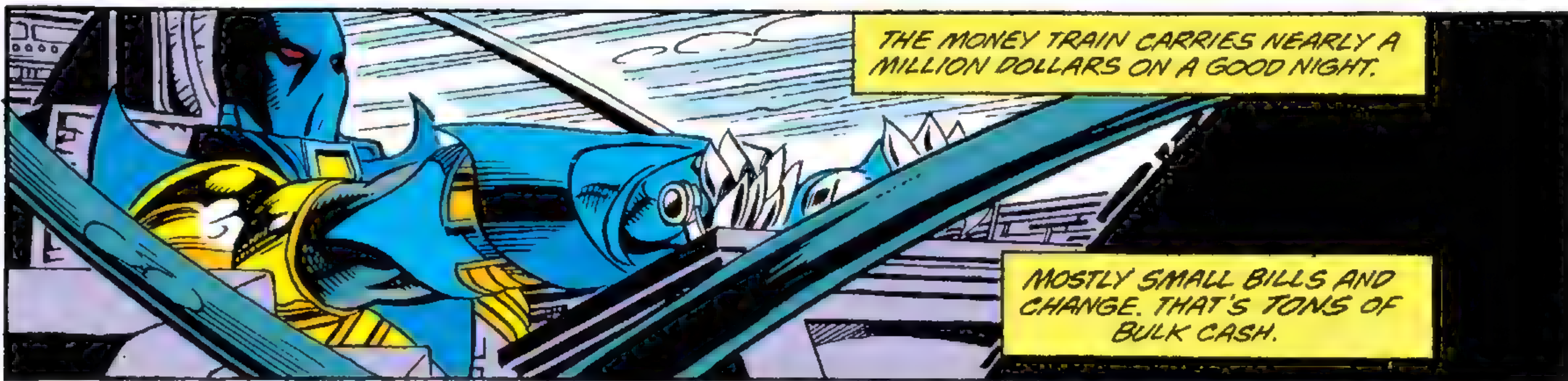
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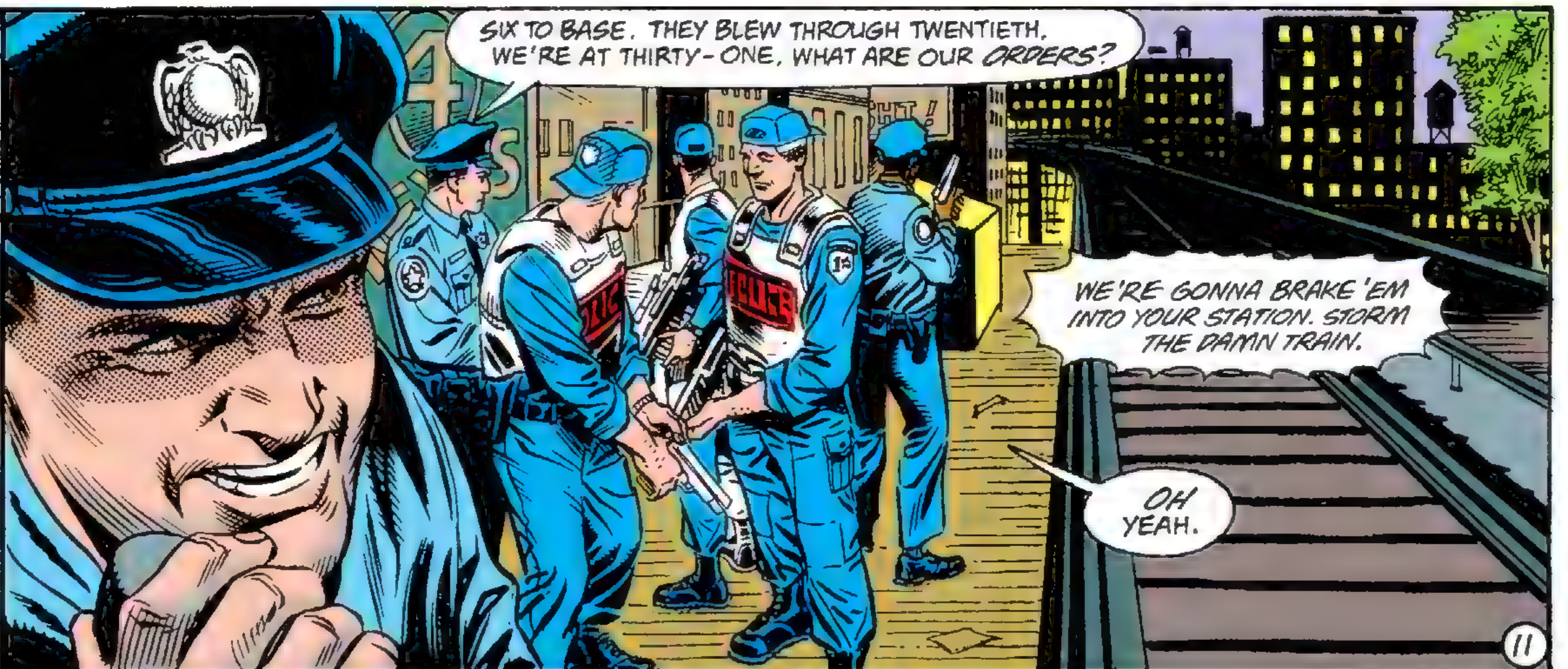
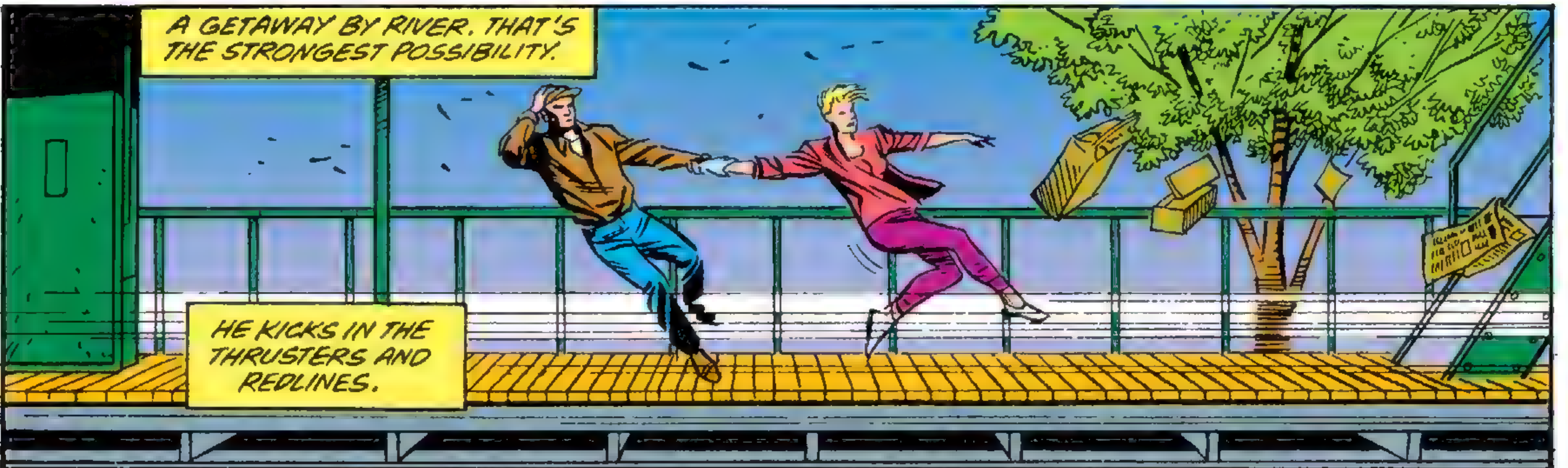
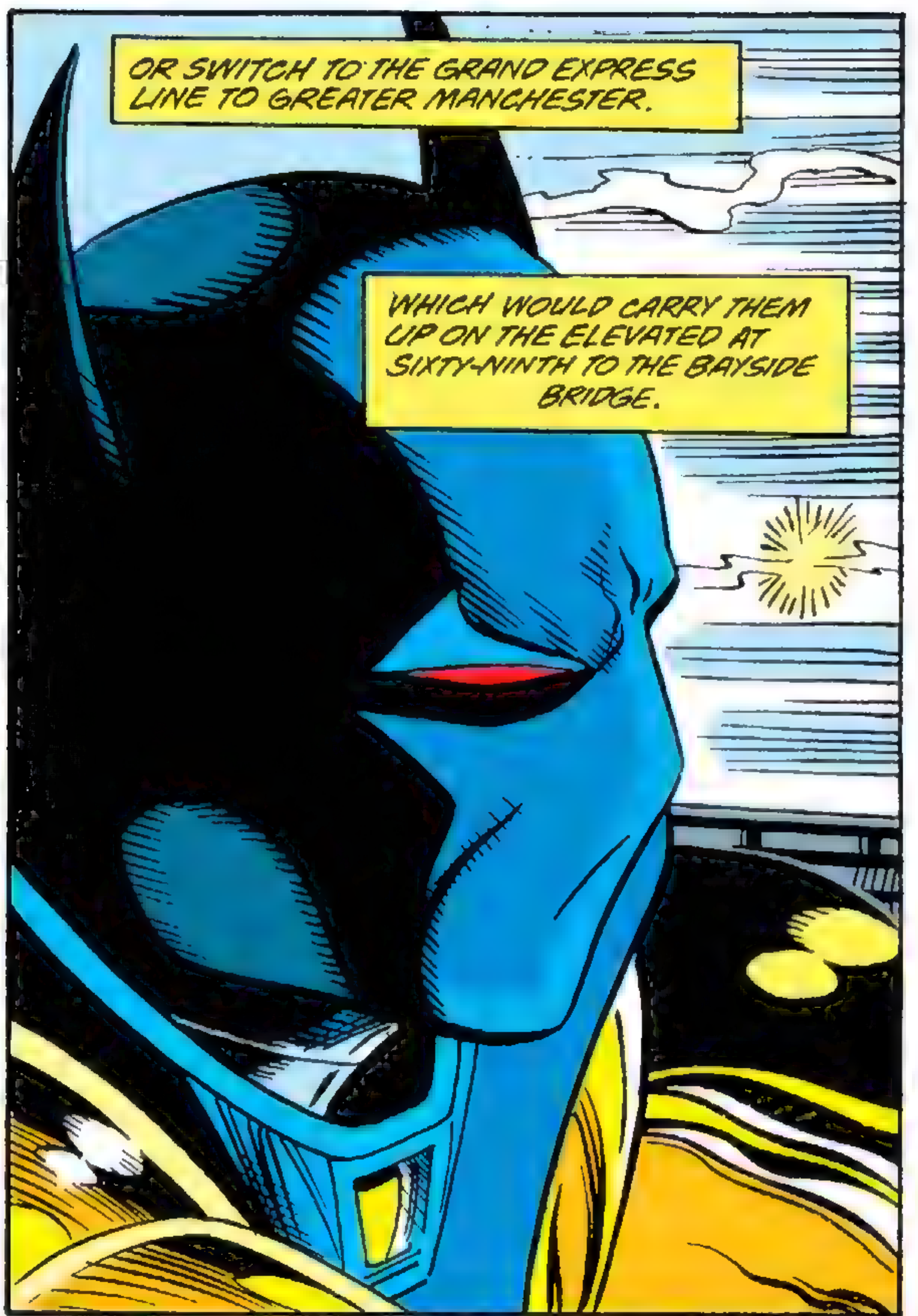
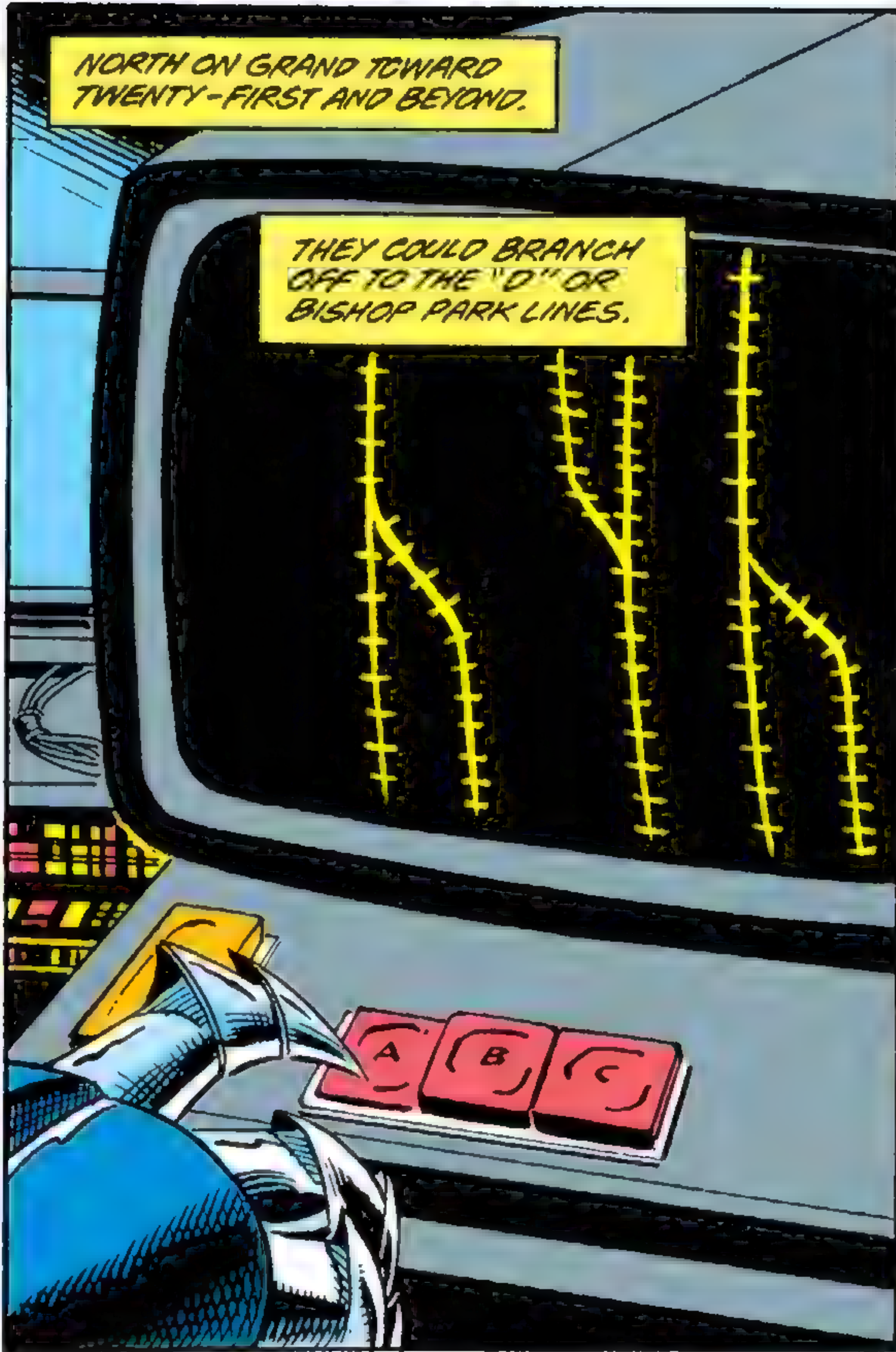


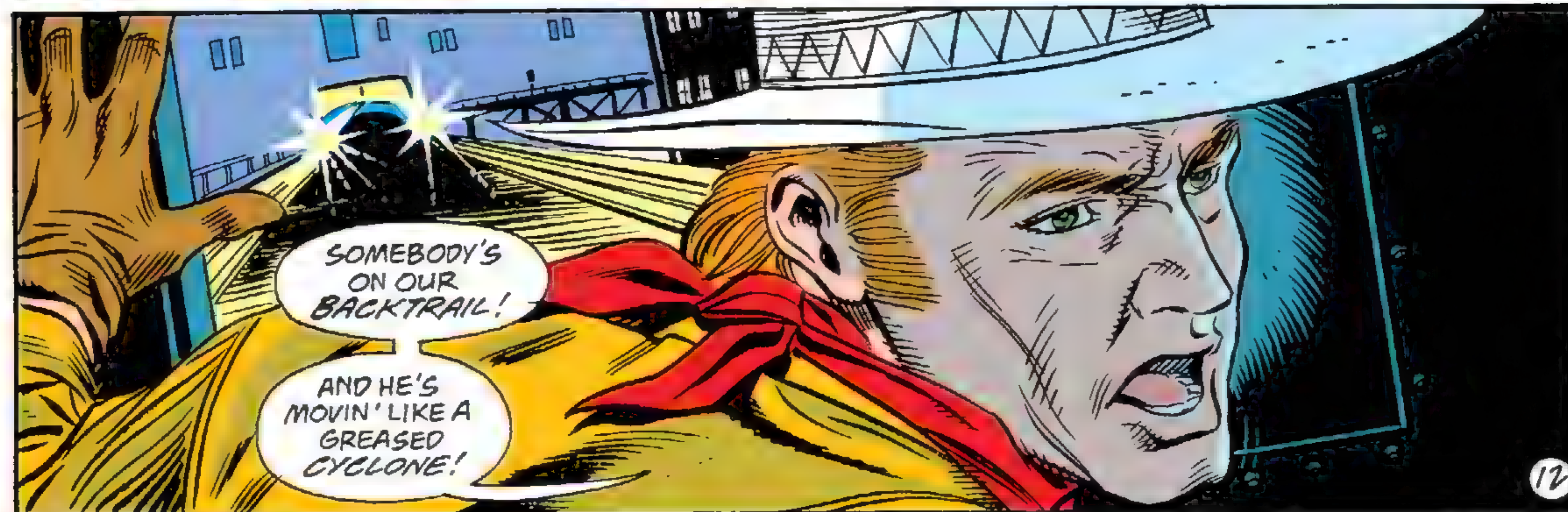
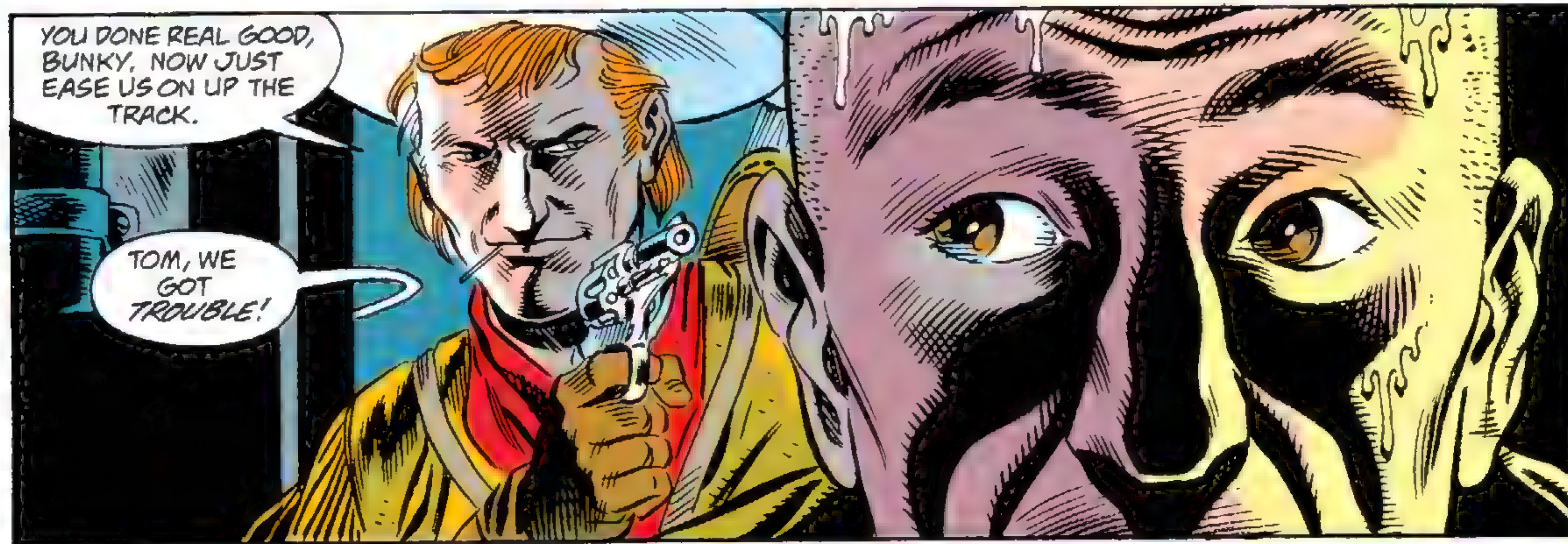












THREE HUNDRED
MILES PER HOUR.

THROWING ON THE
SPOILERS. DON'T
WANT TO RAM THEM.

GOOD THING I BROUGHT
THE WINNIE. SEE HOW THIS
COYOTE LIKES THE TASTE
OF 44-40'S.

IT AIN'T
A BUFFALO,
TOM.

SHAK

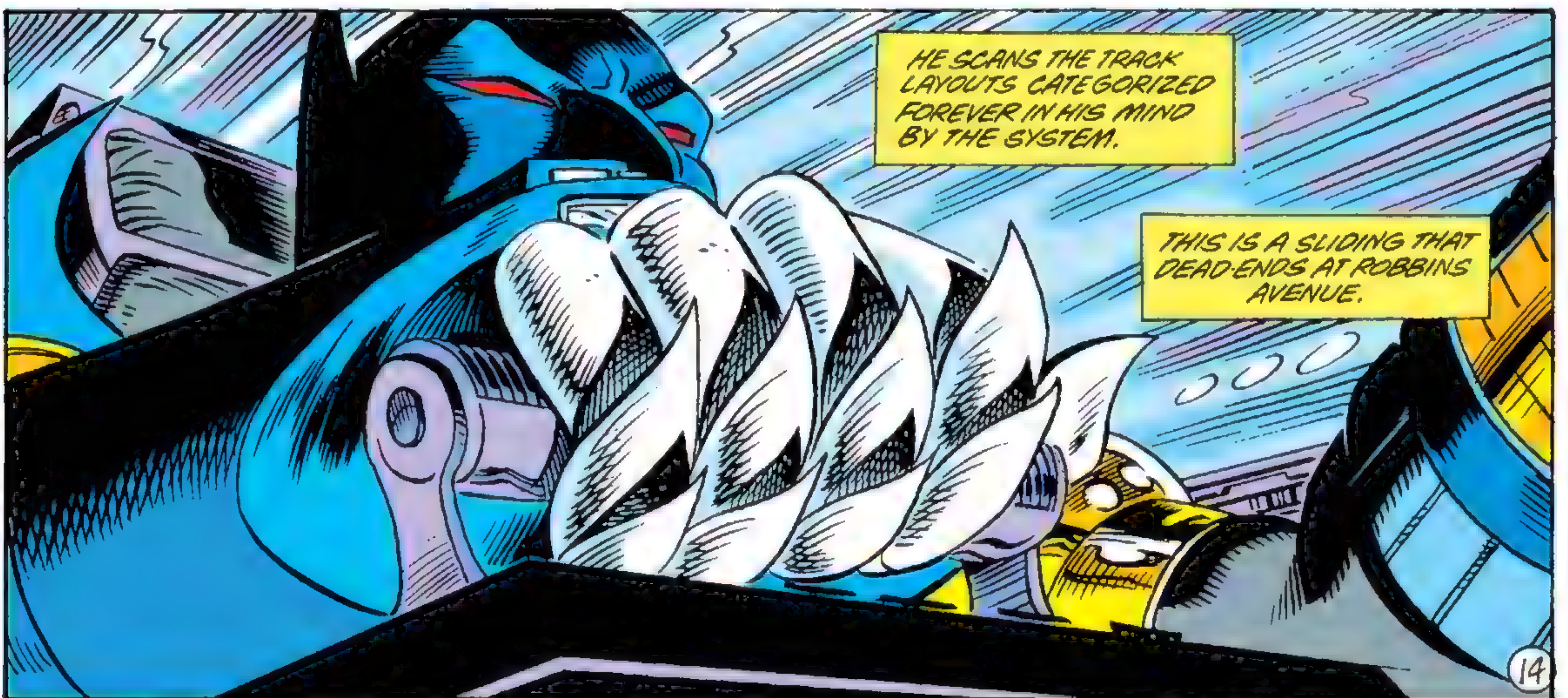
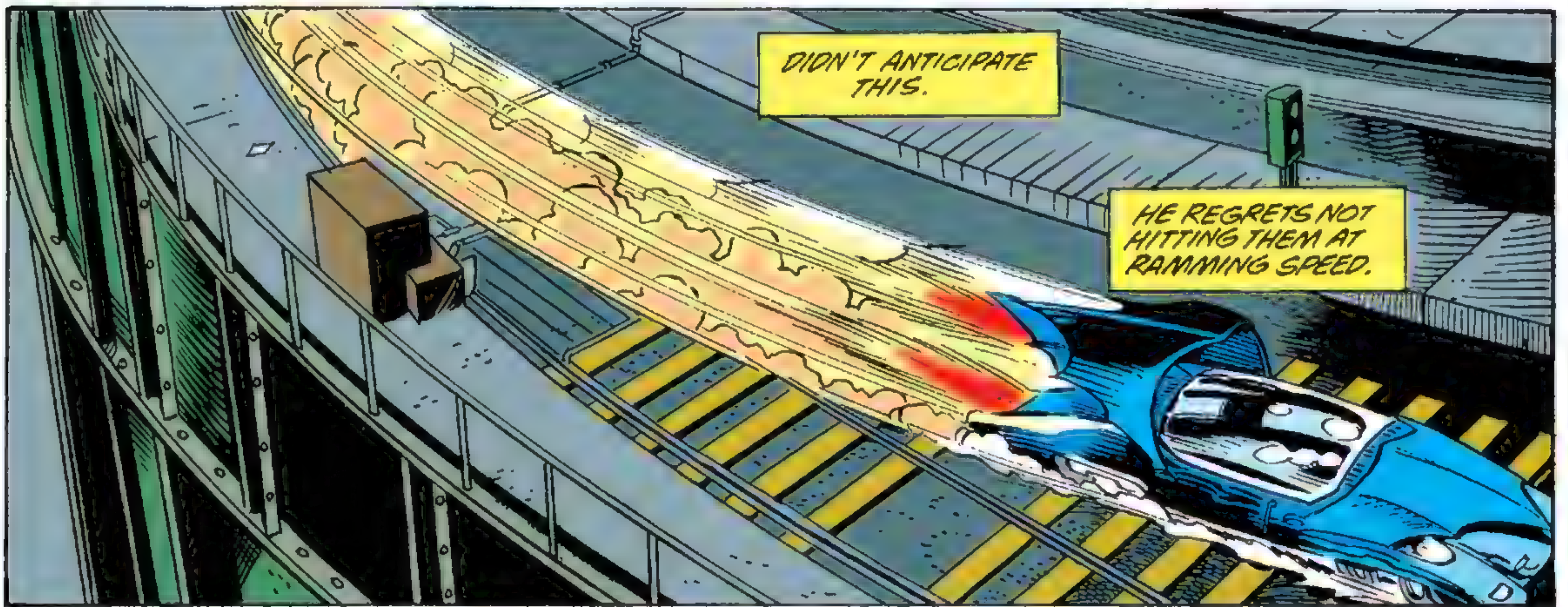
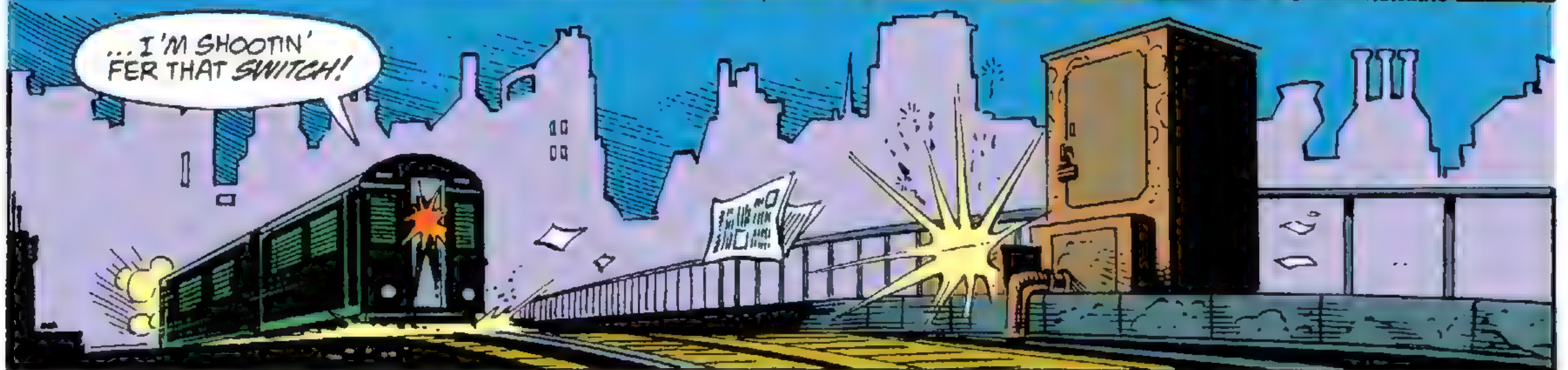
KRAK

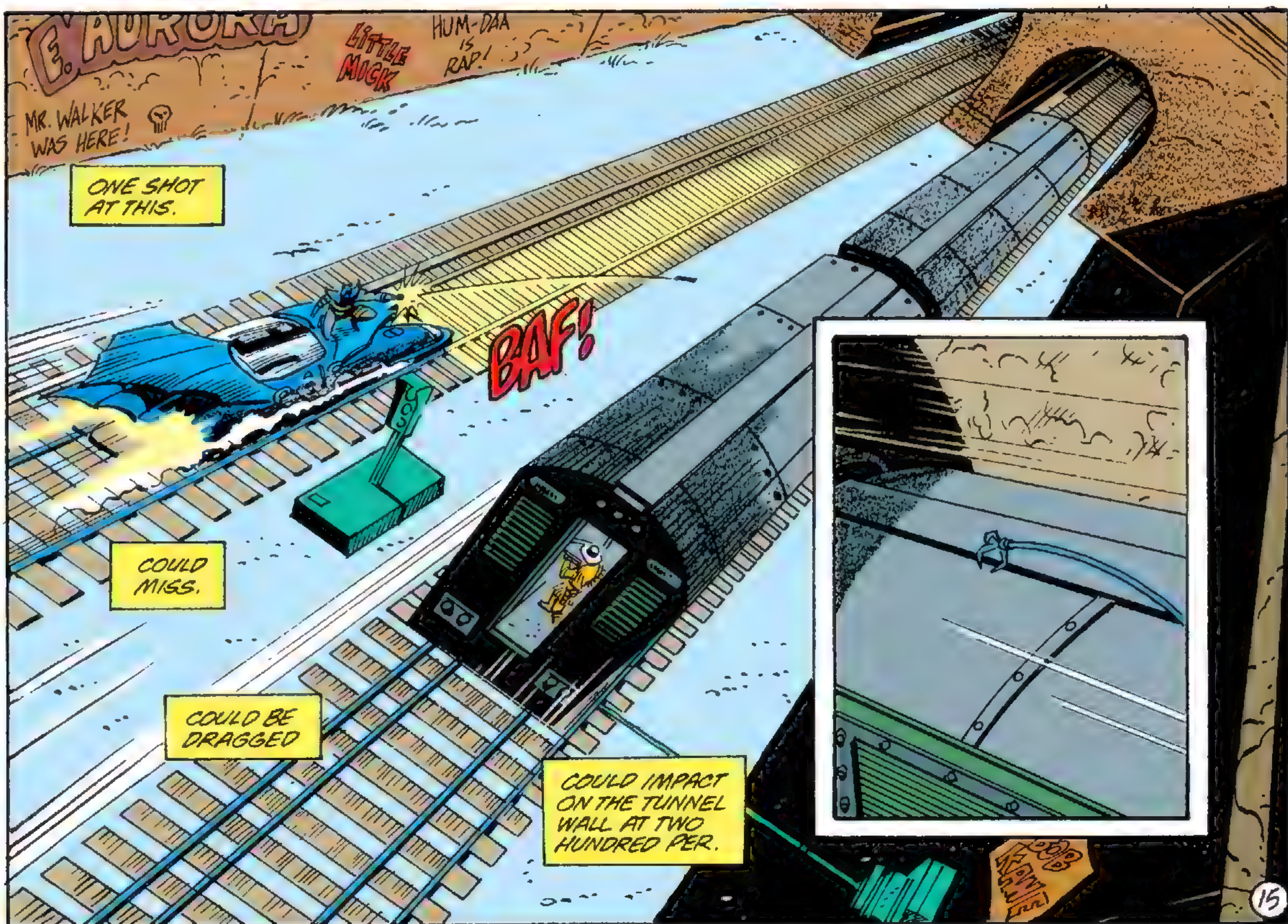
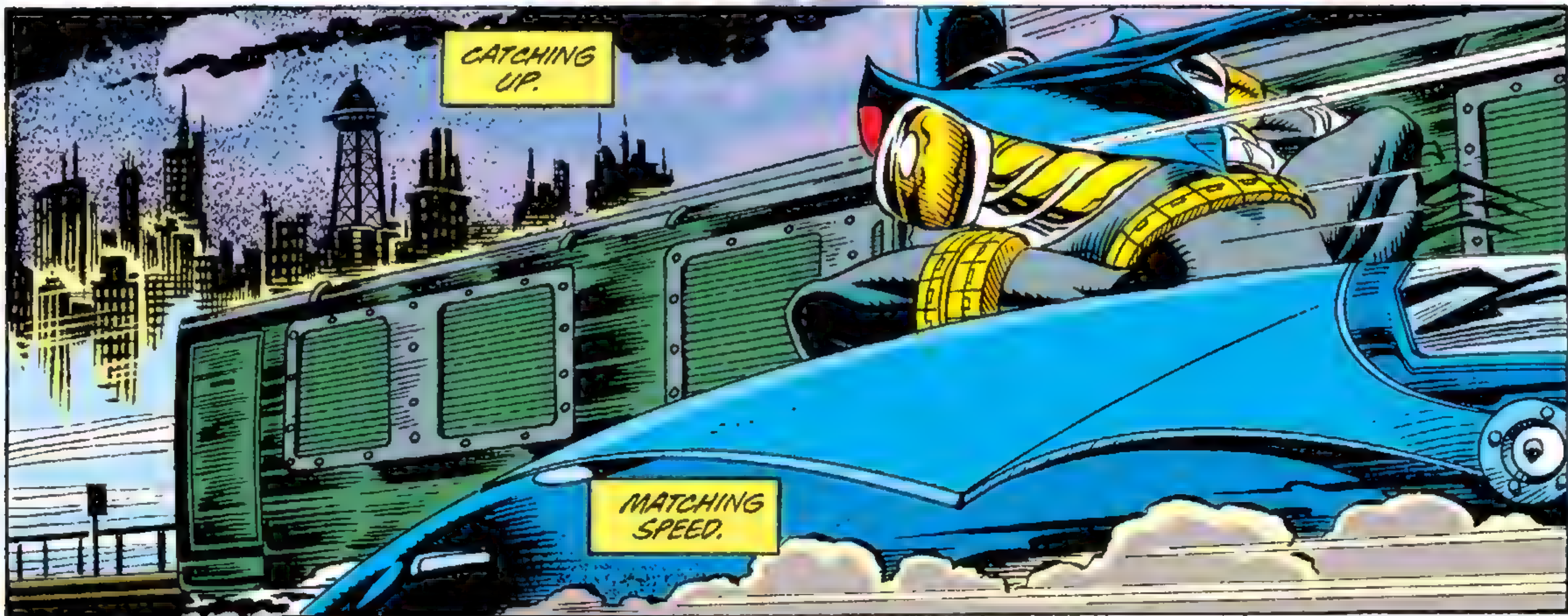
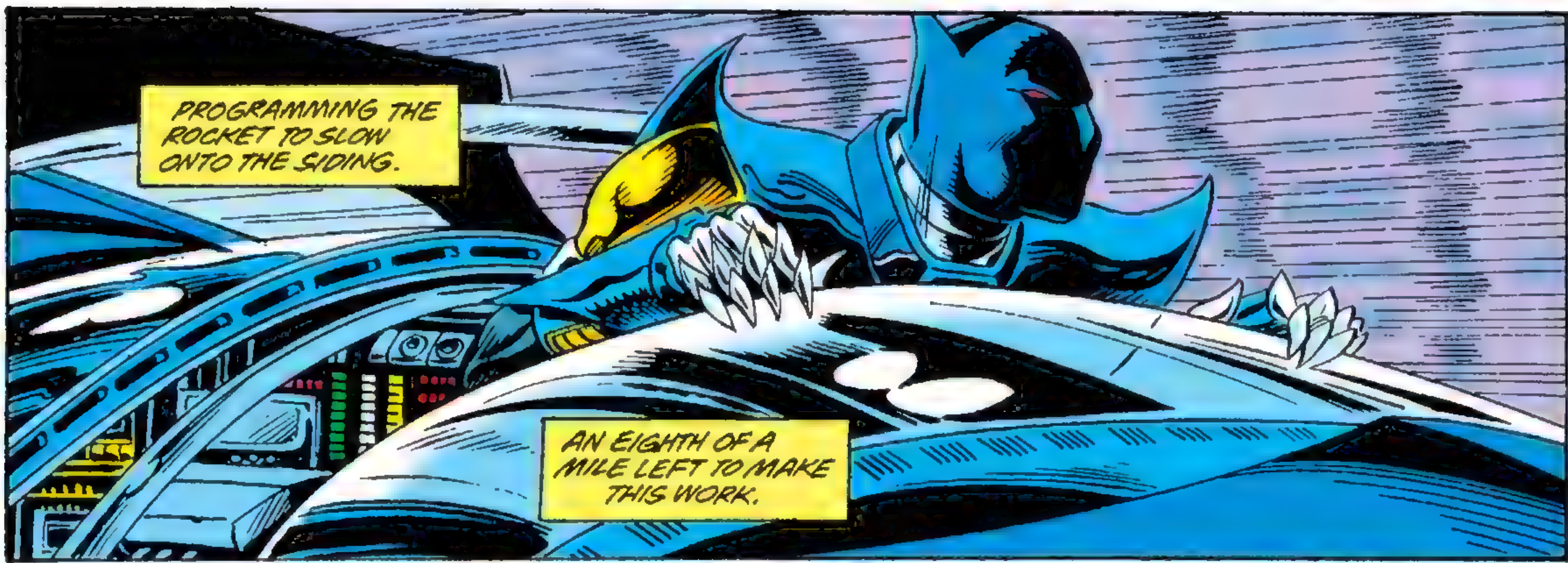
AND IT
AIN'T BULL
NEITHER,
TAD.

THEY'RE SHOOTING
AT HIM WITH AN
ANTIQUE.

THIS CITY IS
A MADHOUSE.

13





ARM NEARLY
WRENCHED
FROM ITS
SOCKET.

TWO-TON
TEST CABLE
HUMS.

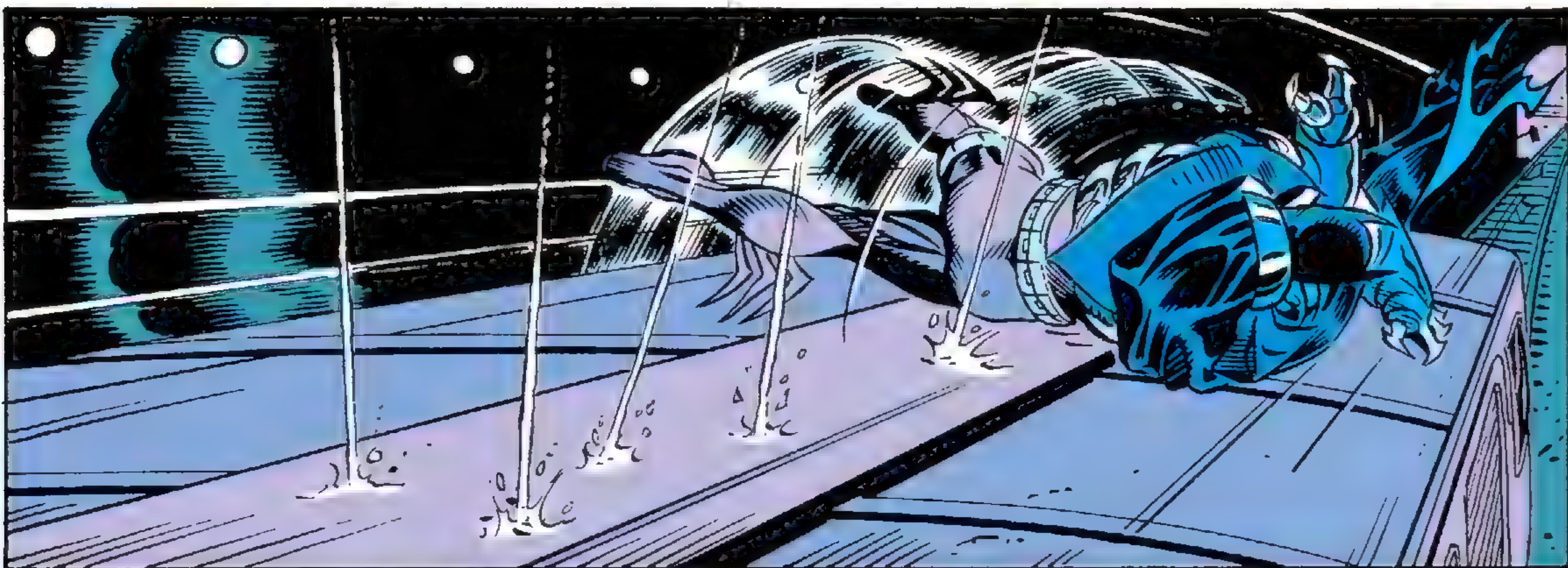
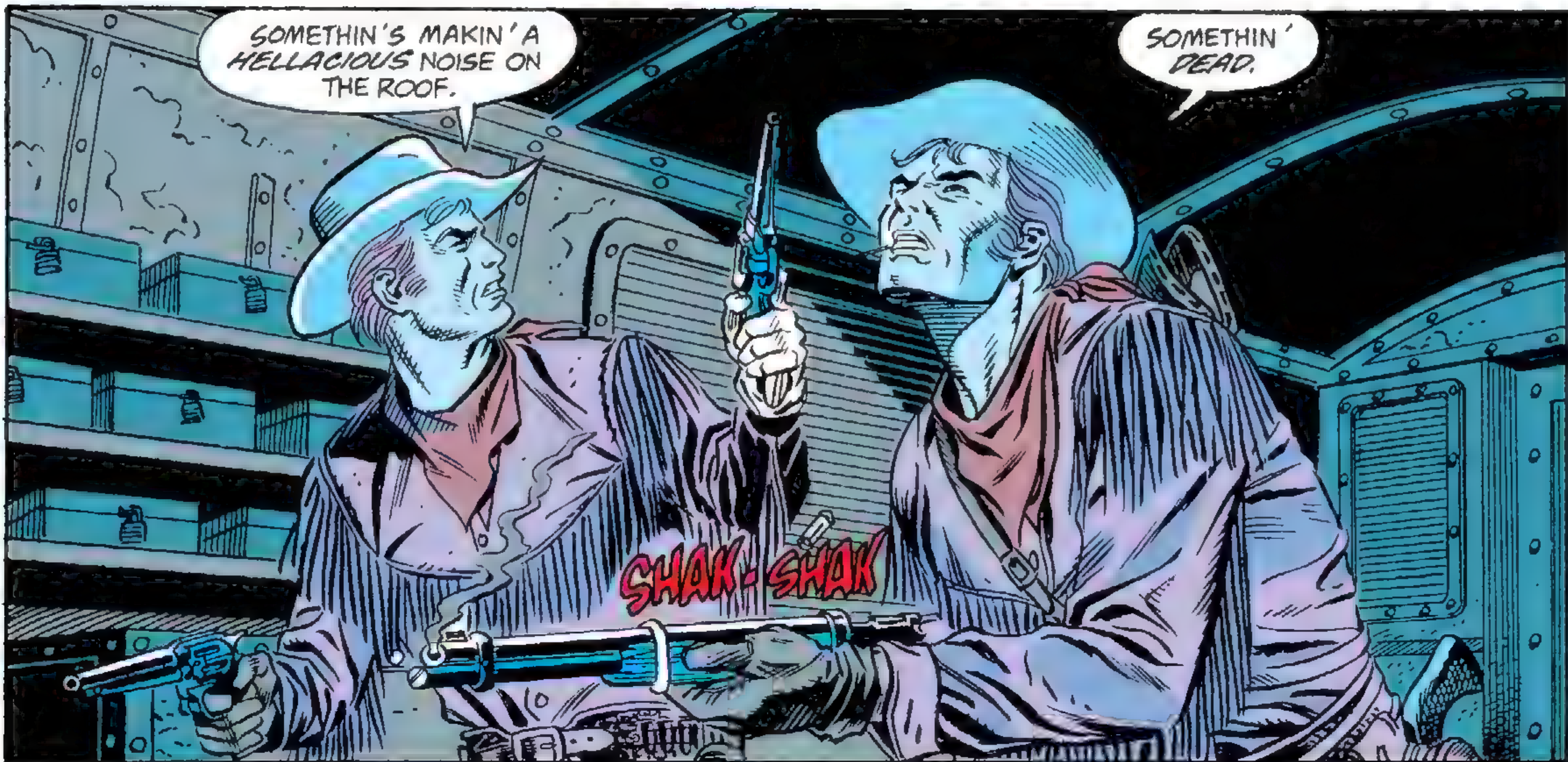
THE SHEAR CLAWS AT HIM,
TEARING HIM OFF THE ROOF.

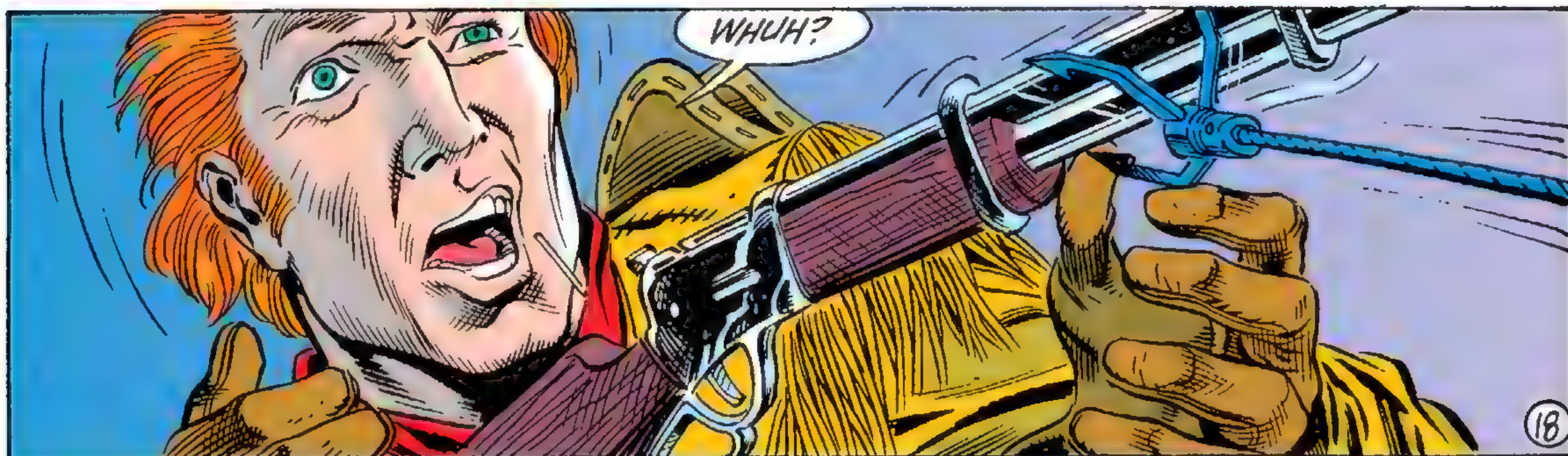
HURR--

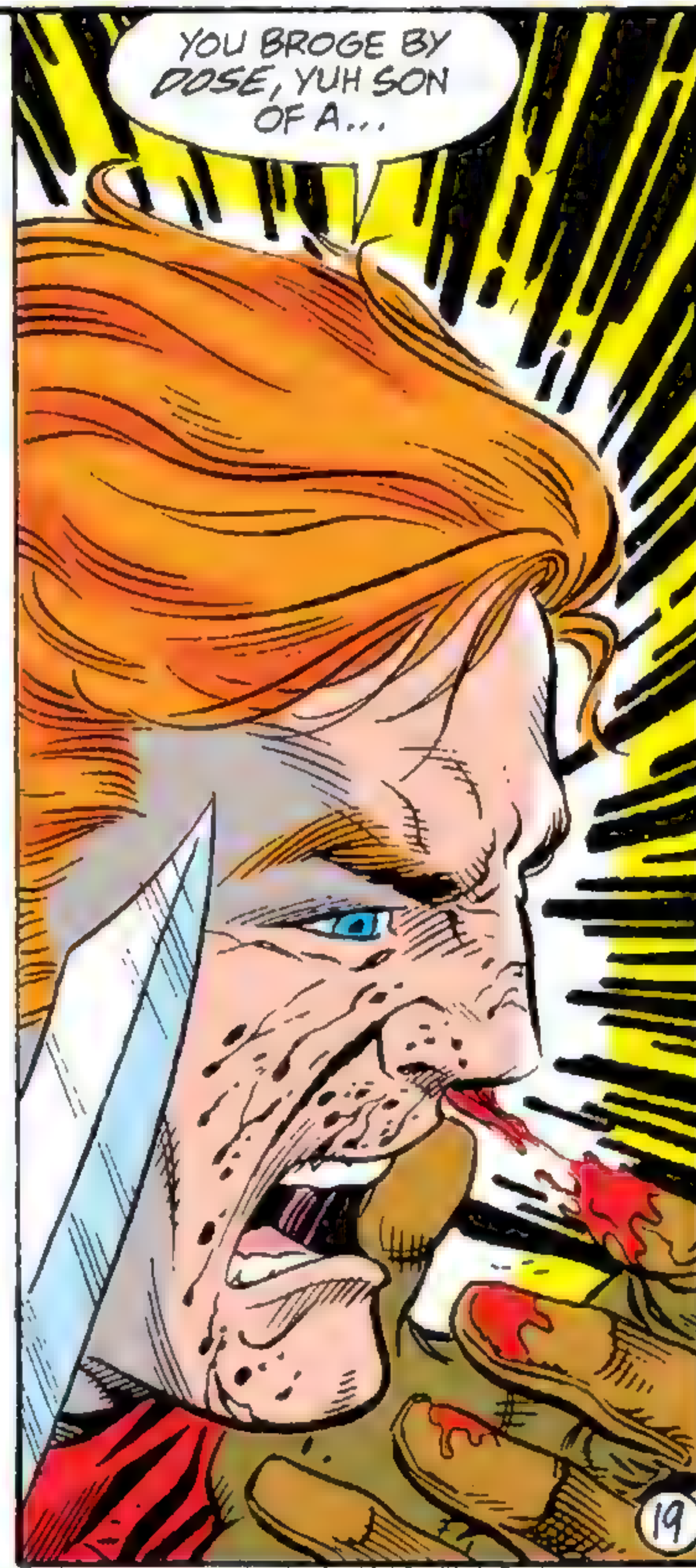
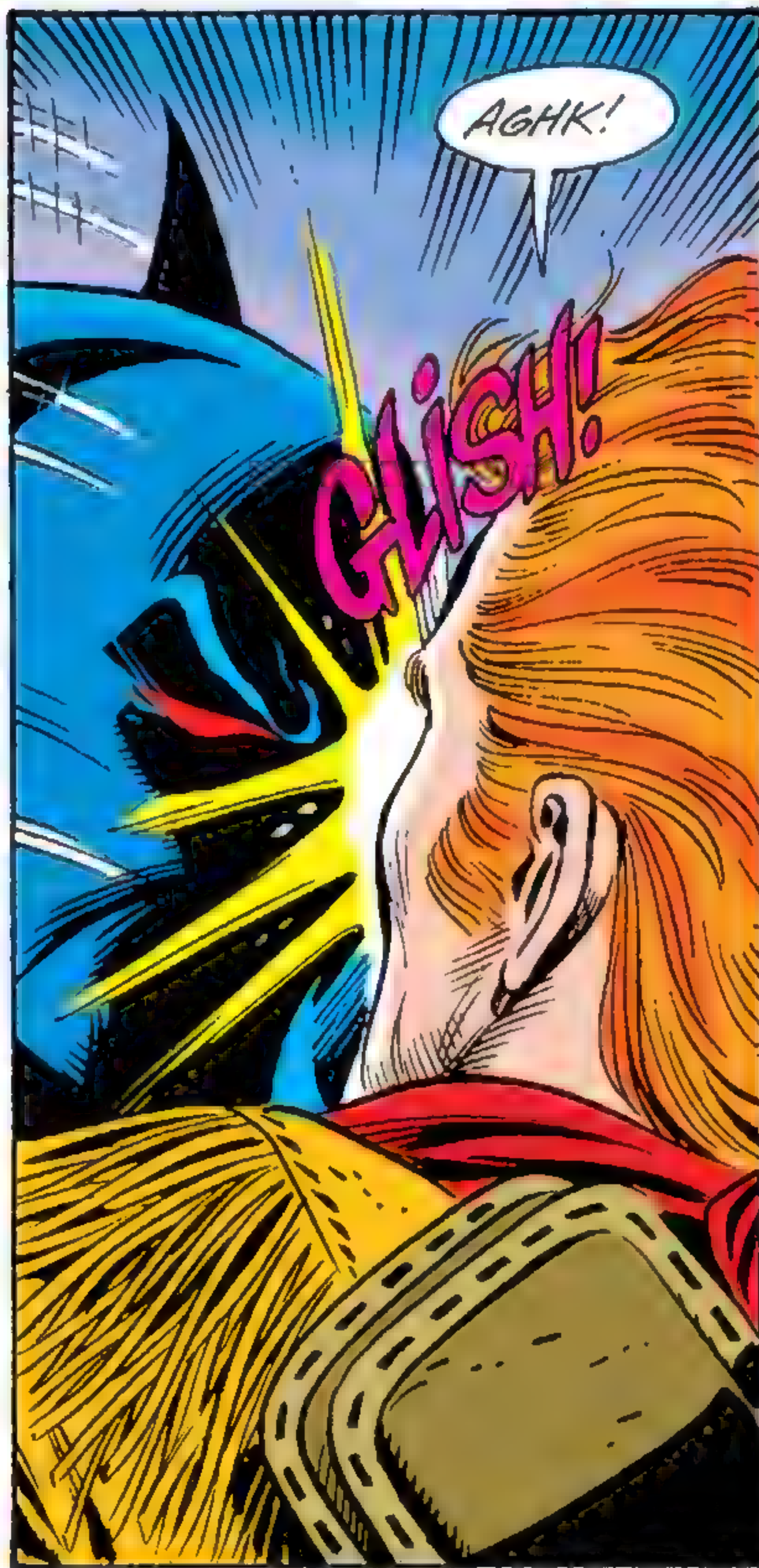
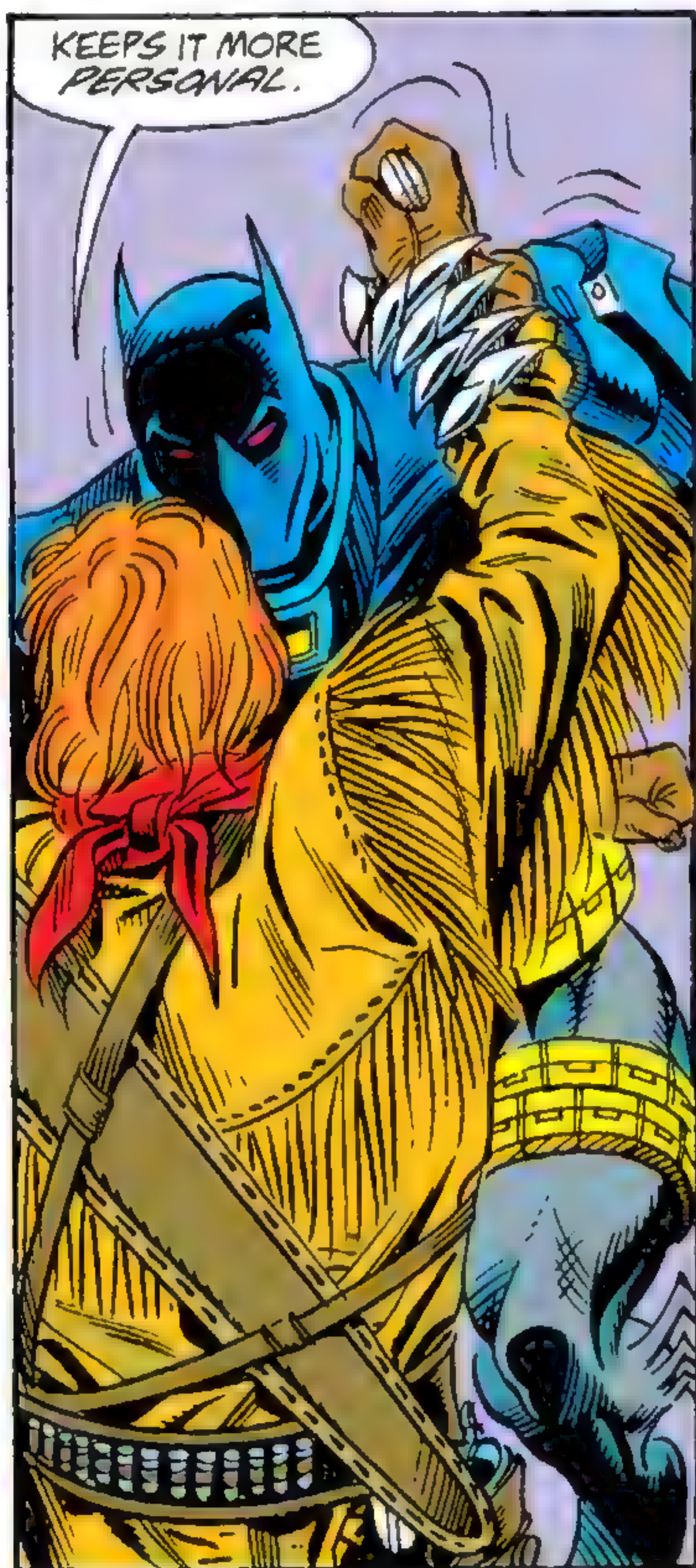
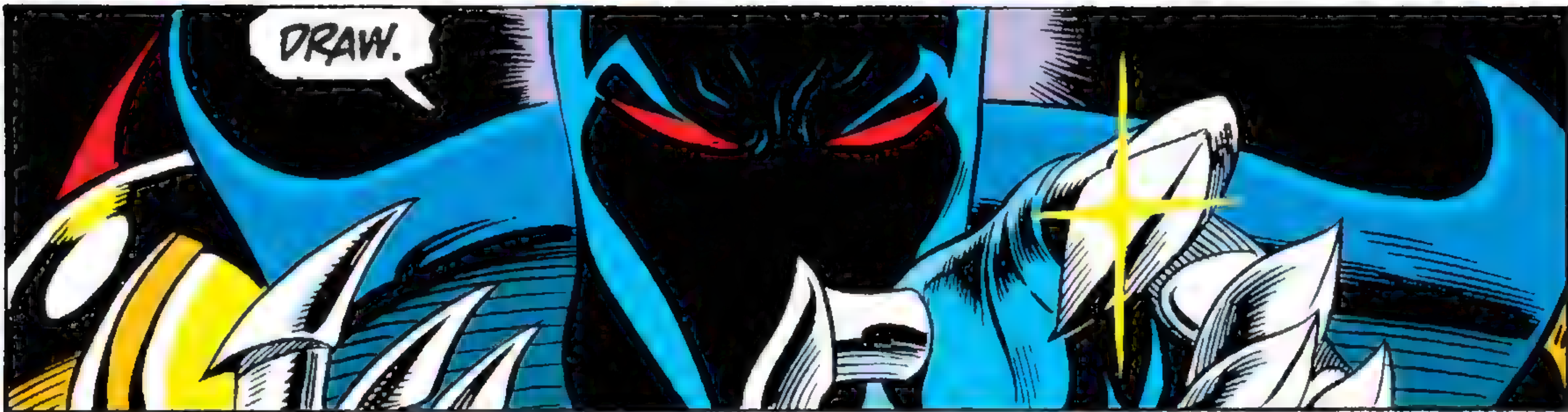
NO
HANDHOLDS.

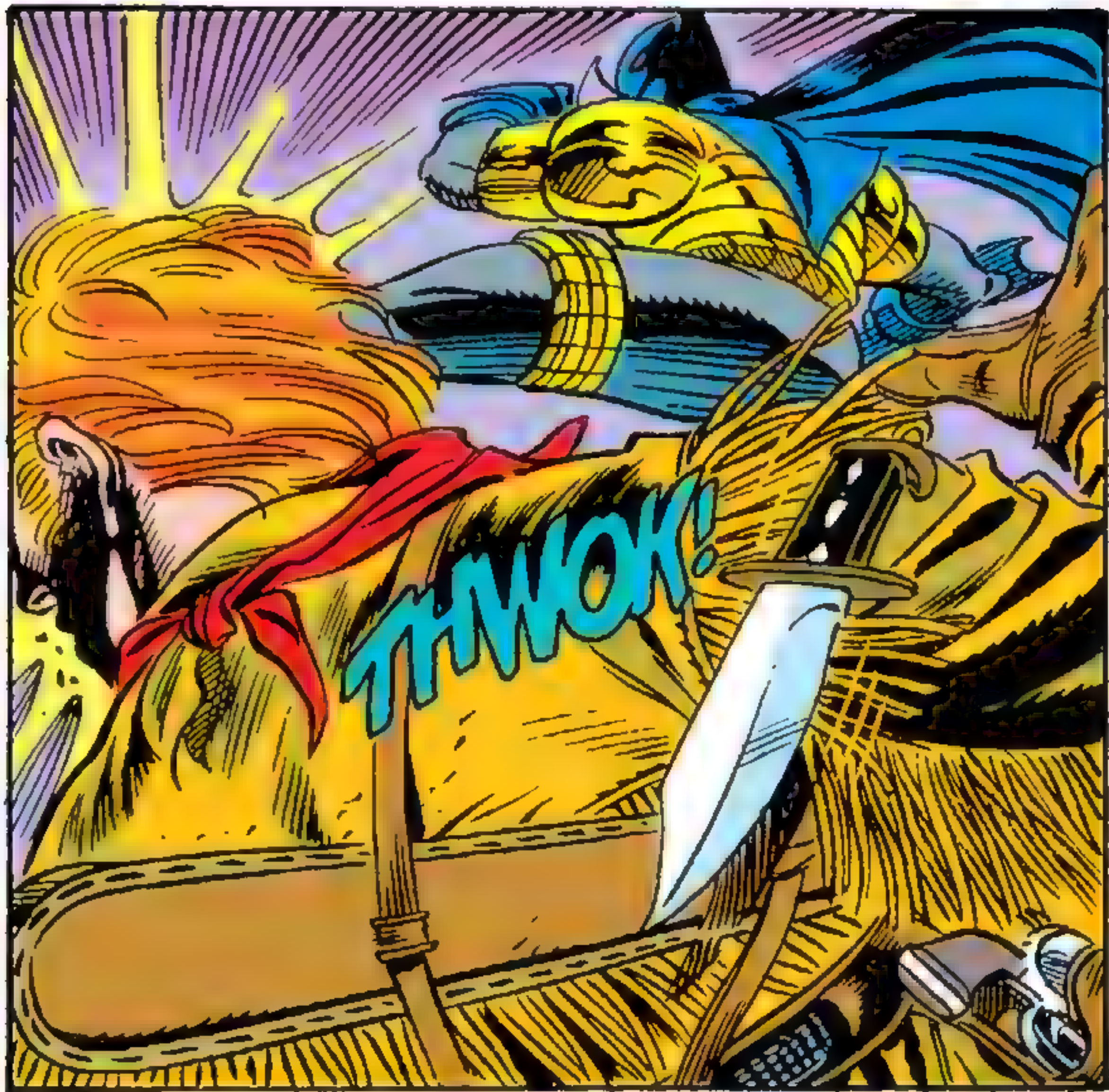
MAKE A
HANDHOLD.

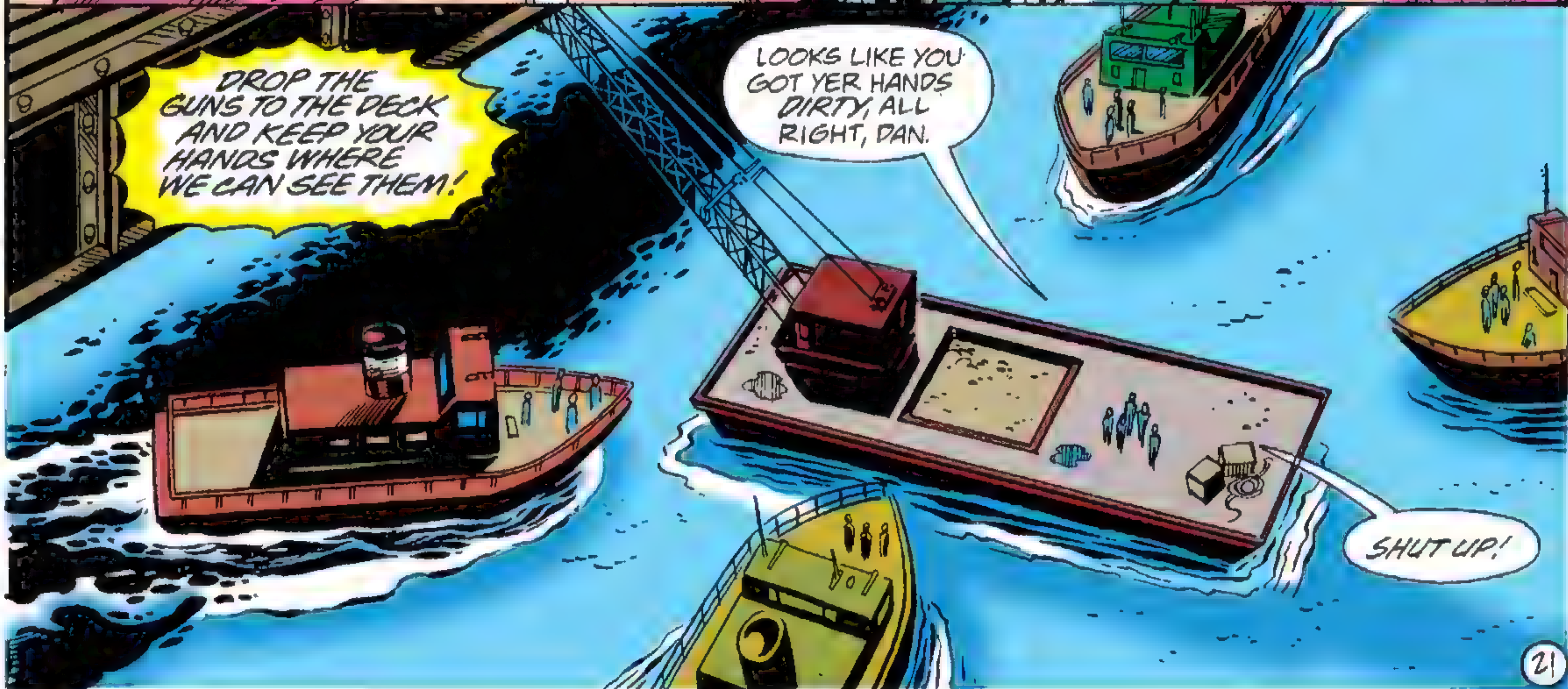
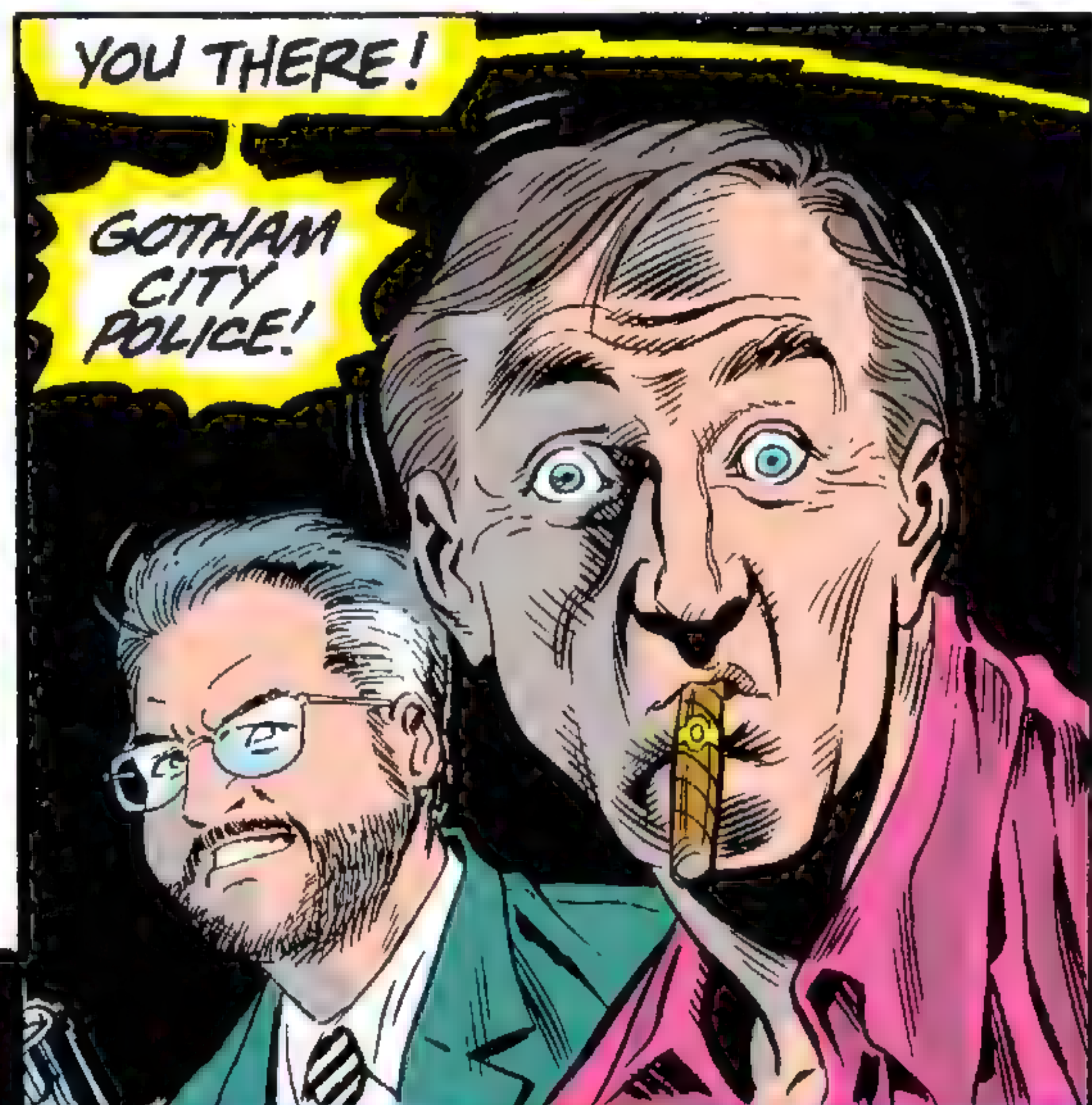
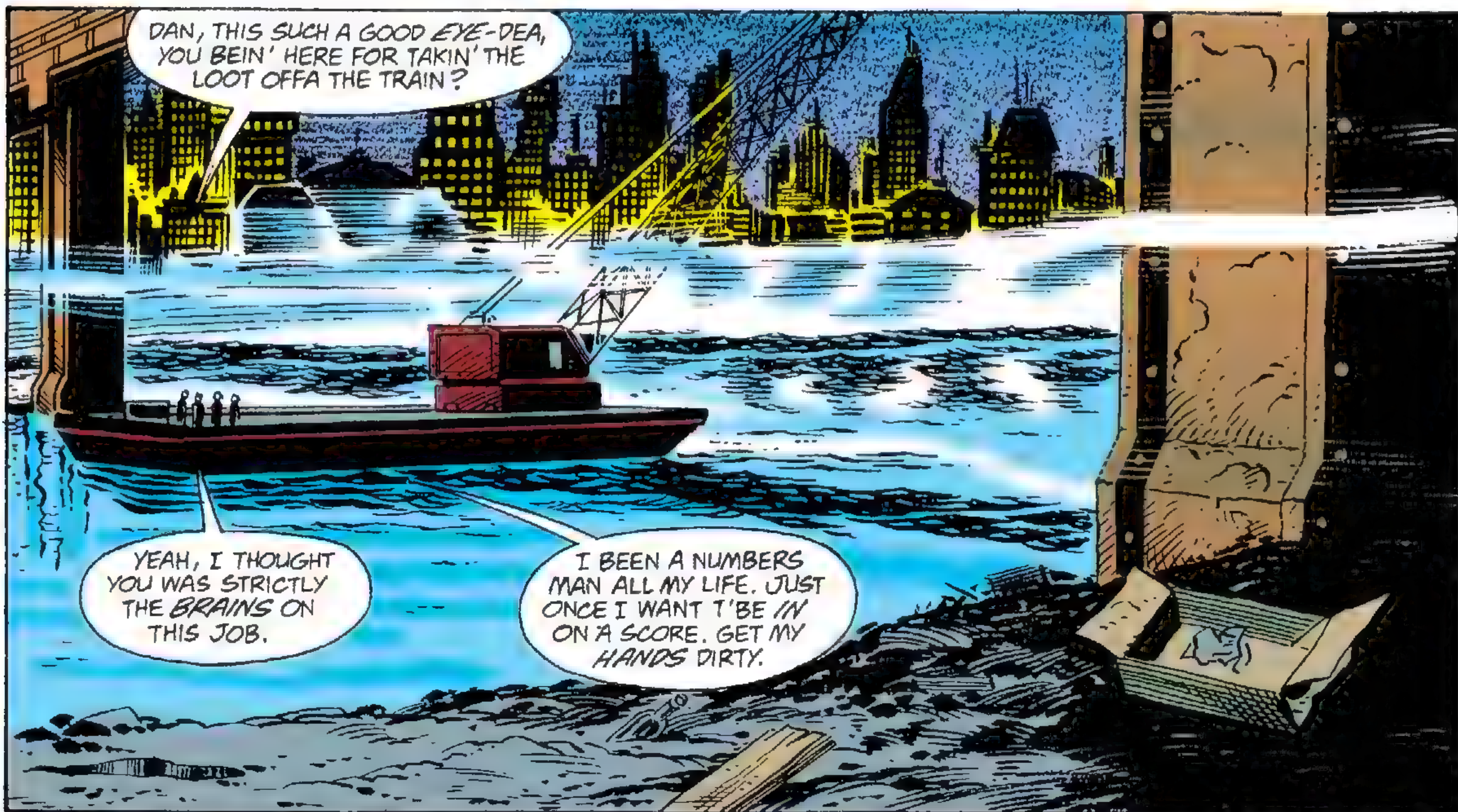
--ARRRRR!



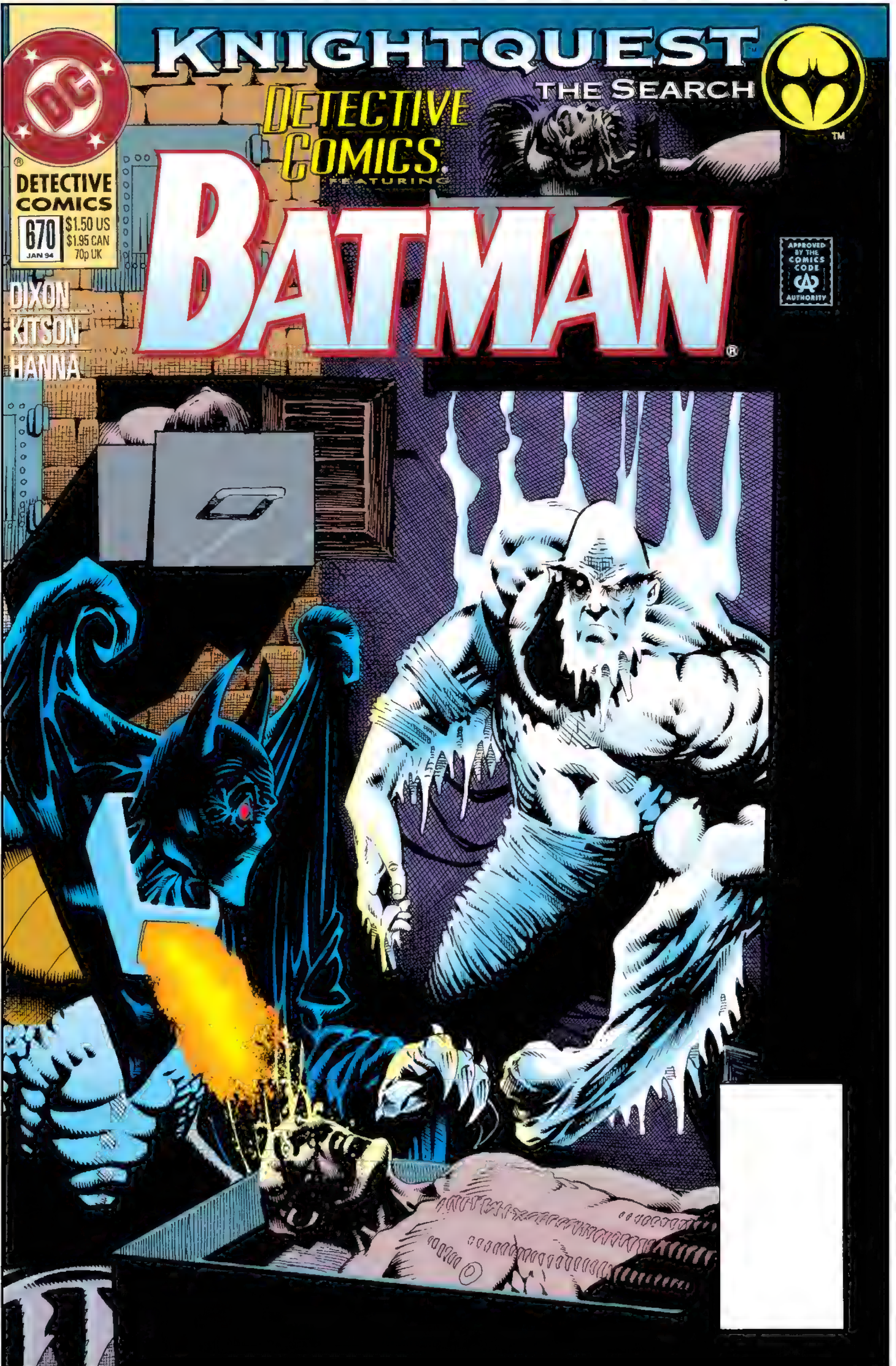












COLD CASES

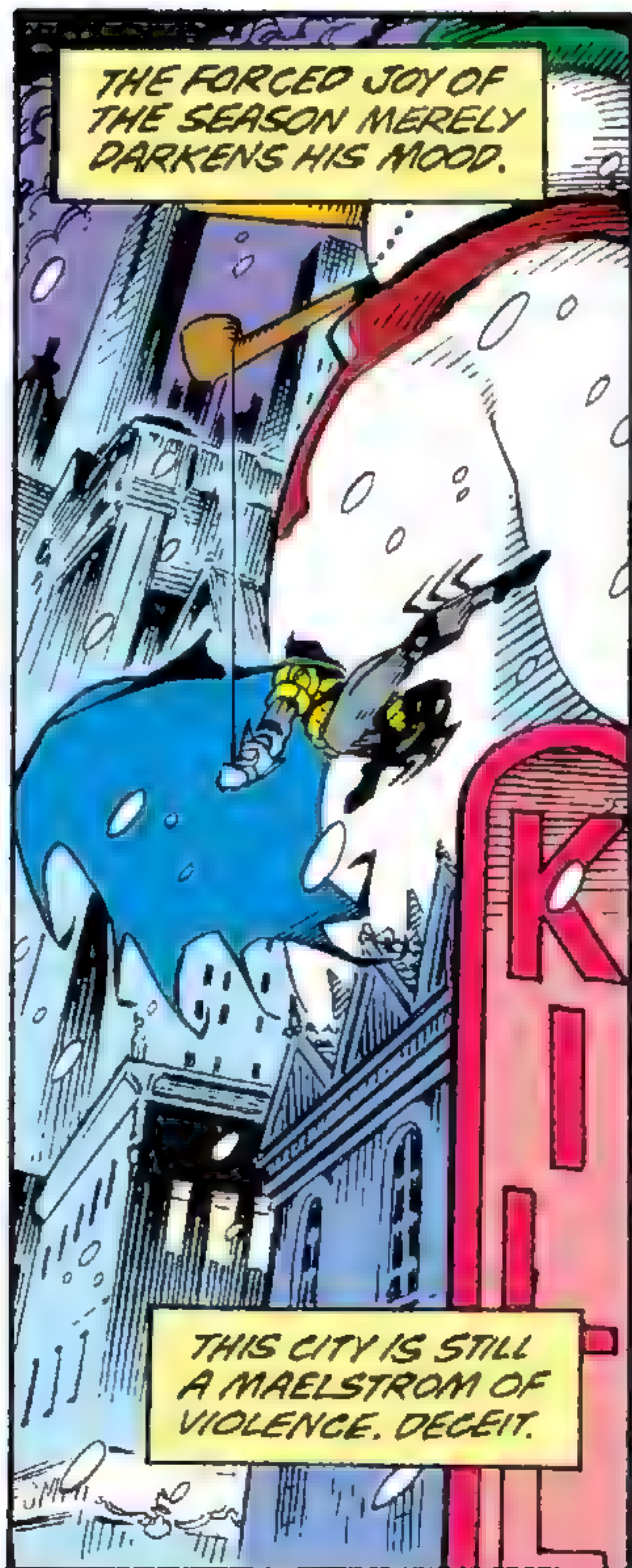
IT'S THE WEEK BEFORE
THE YULE SEASON.

IN THESE WEEKS DOWNTOWN
GOTHAM IS ALIVE WITH BRIGHT
LIGHTS AND HAPPY SHOPPERS
AND CANNED MUSIC.

BUT THE GAUDY DISPLAY
ONLY SERVES TO MAKE
THE SHADOWS AWAY FROM
THE HUSTLING THROUGH
DEEPER.

CHUCK DIXON writer
BARRY KITSON quest penciller
SCOTT HANNA inker
ADRIENNE ROY colorist
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
DARREN VINCENZO asst. editor
SCOTT PETERSON editor

BATMAN created by BOB KANE



THE FORCED JOY OF
THE SEASON MERELY
DARKENS HIS MOOD.

THIS CITY IS STILL
A MAELSTROM OF
VIOLENCE. DECEIT.



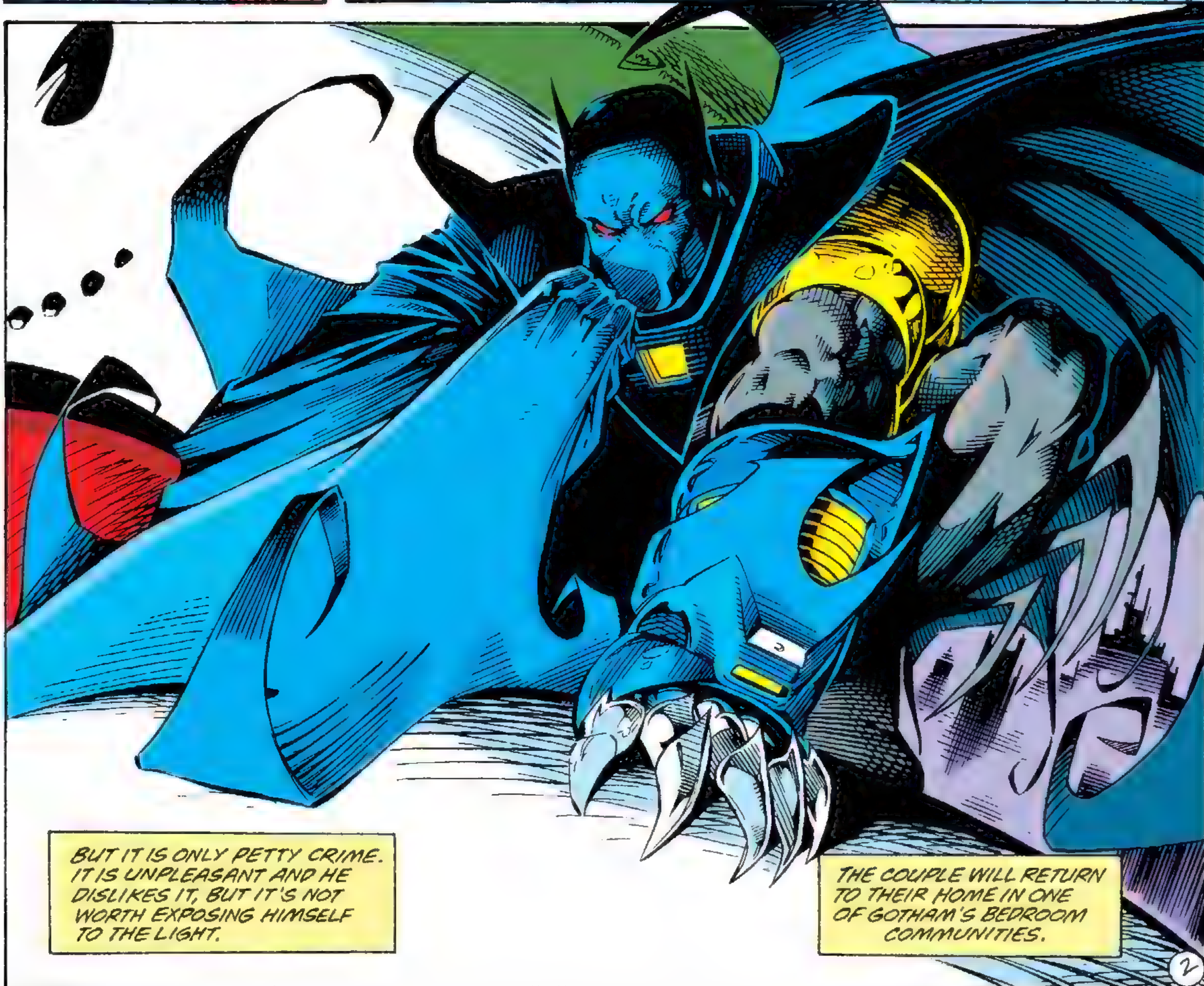
ALL THE TINSEL AND GARLAND IN
THE WORLD CANNOT HIDE THAT.

THE SEASON DOES
NOT CHANGE THE
CITY'S TRUE NATURE.



YET STILL SOME
SHOPPERS RUN THE
GAUNTLET TO INDULGE
IN THE DECORATIONS
AND ERSATZ CHEER.

MORE THAN
FOOLISH.

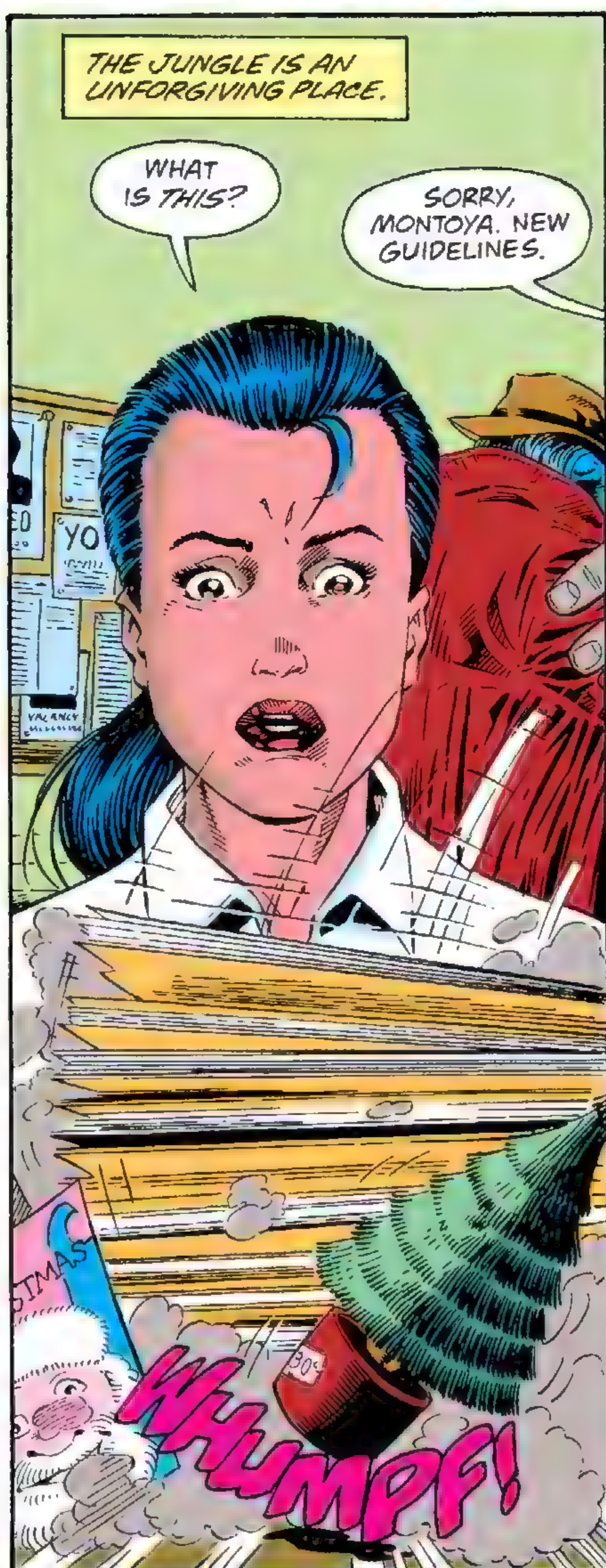


BUT IT IS ONLY PETTY CRIME.
IT IS UNPLEASANT AND HE
DISLIKES IT, BUT IT'S NOT
WORTH EXPOSING HIMSELF
TO THE LIGHT.

THE COUPLE WILL RETURN
TO THEIR HOME IN ONE
OF GOTHAM'S BEDROOM
COMMUNITIES.



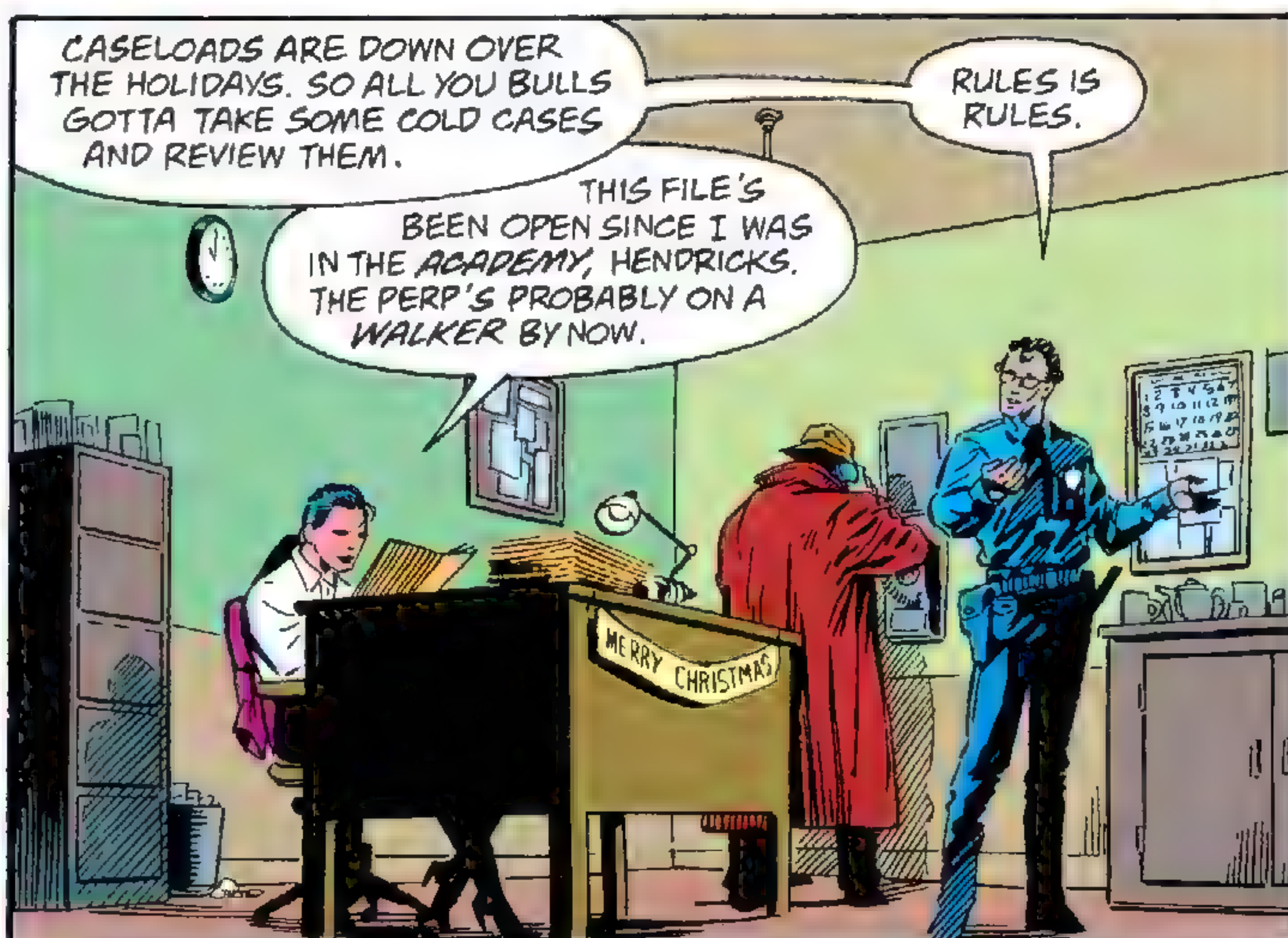
AND AT LEAST THEY'LL HAVE LEARNED A LESSON THEY WOULD NOT HAVE SEEN ON A HOLIDAY TELEVISION SPECIAL.



THE JUNGLE IS AN UNFORGIVING PLACE.

WHAT IS THIS?

SORRY, MONTOYA. NEW GUIDELINES.



CASELOADS ARE DOWN OVER THE HOLIDAYS. SO ALL YOU BULLS GOTTA TAKE SOME COLD CASES AND REVIEW THEM.

RULES IS RULES.

THIS FILE'S BEEN OPEN SINCE I WAS IN THE ACADEMY, HENDRICKS. THE PERP'S PROBABLY ON A WALKER BY NOW.



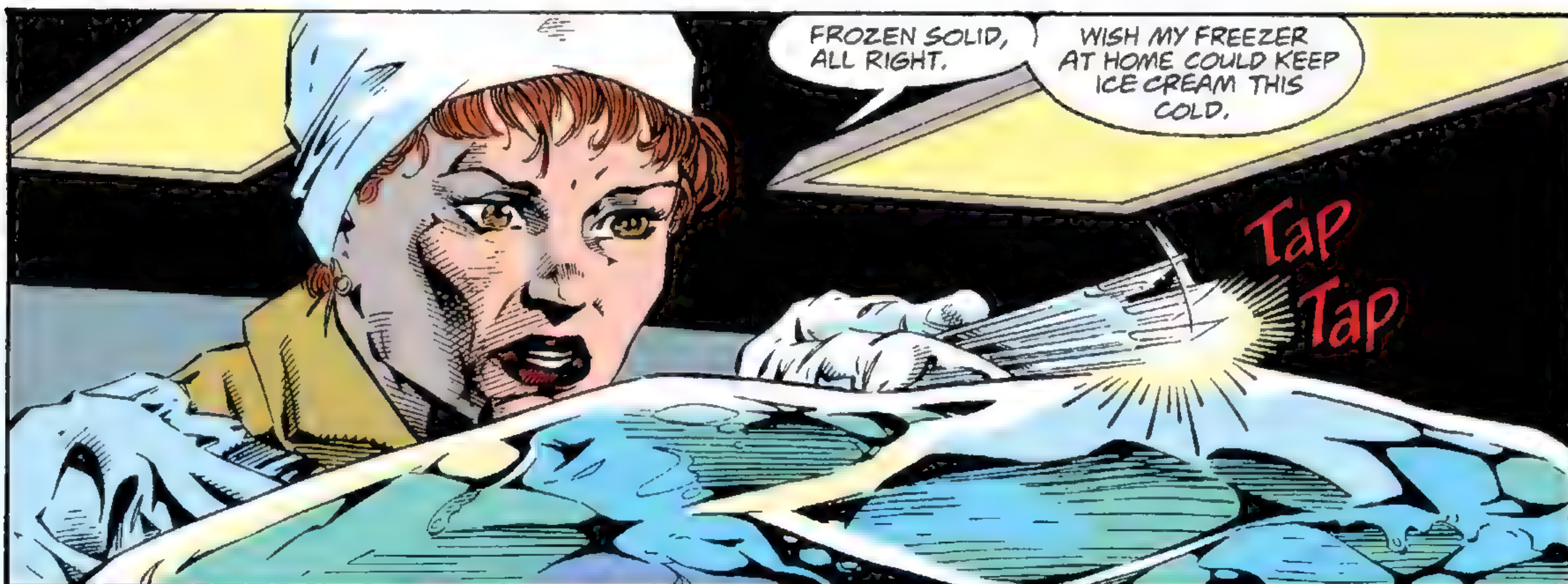
LOOKING AT FIVE-YEAR-OLD MOB HITS FOR SOMETHING THE HOMICIDE GUYS MISSED. SHEEE --

WE'RE ROLLIN', MONTOYA. GOT A STIFF JUST SURFACED OFFA DIAMOND PIER.



EVEN THAT SOUNDS LIKE A TREAT COMPARED TO THESE GOLDEN OLDIES.

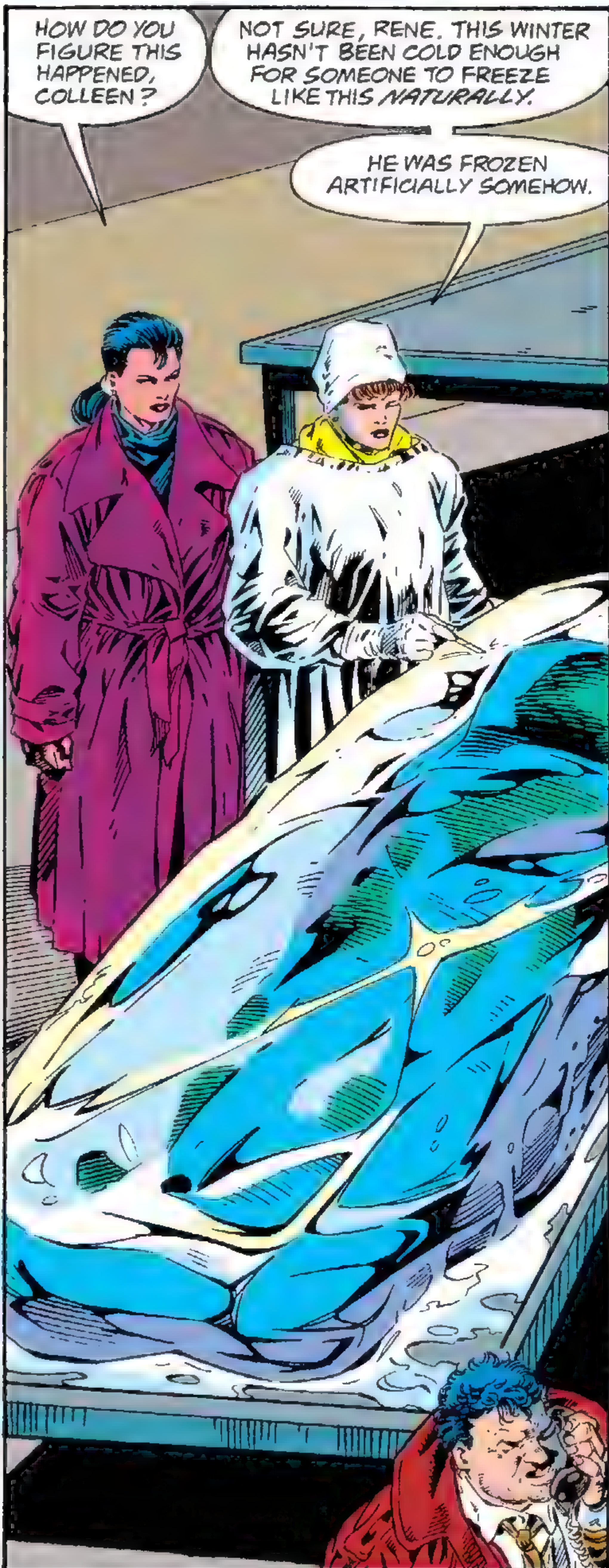




FROZEN SOLID,
ALL RIGHT.

WISH MY FREEZER
AT HOME COULD KEEP
ICE CREAM THIS
COLD.

**Tap
Tap**



HOW DO YOU
FIGURE THIS
HAPPENED,
COLLEEN?

NOT SURE, RENE. THIS WINTER
HASN'T BEEN COLD ENOUGH
FOR SOMEONE TO FREEZE
LIKE THIS *NATURALLY*.

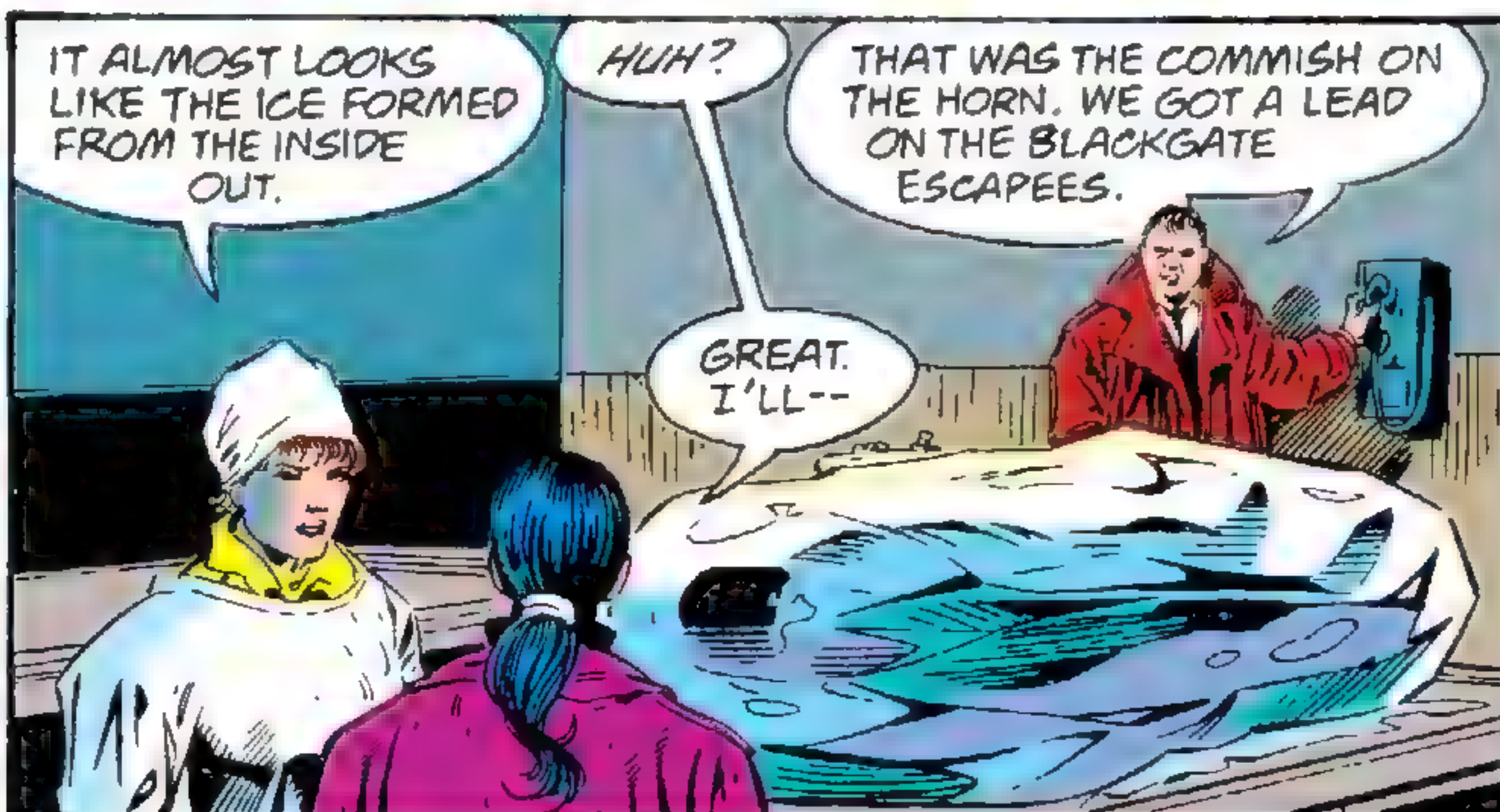
HE WAS FROZEN
ARTIFICIALLY SOMEHOW.



SO HE WAS STUCK IN A DEEP
FREEZE. THAT WOULDN'T
DESTROY A BODY. WHY
GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE?

I DON'T THINK
IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

YEAH?



IT ALMOST LOOKS
LIKE THE ICE FORMED
FROM THE INSIDE
OUT.

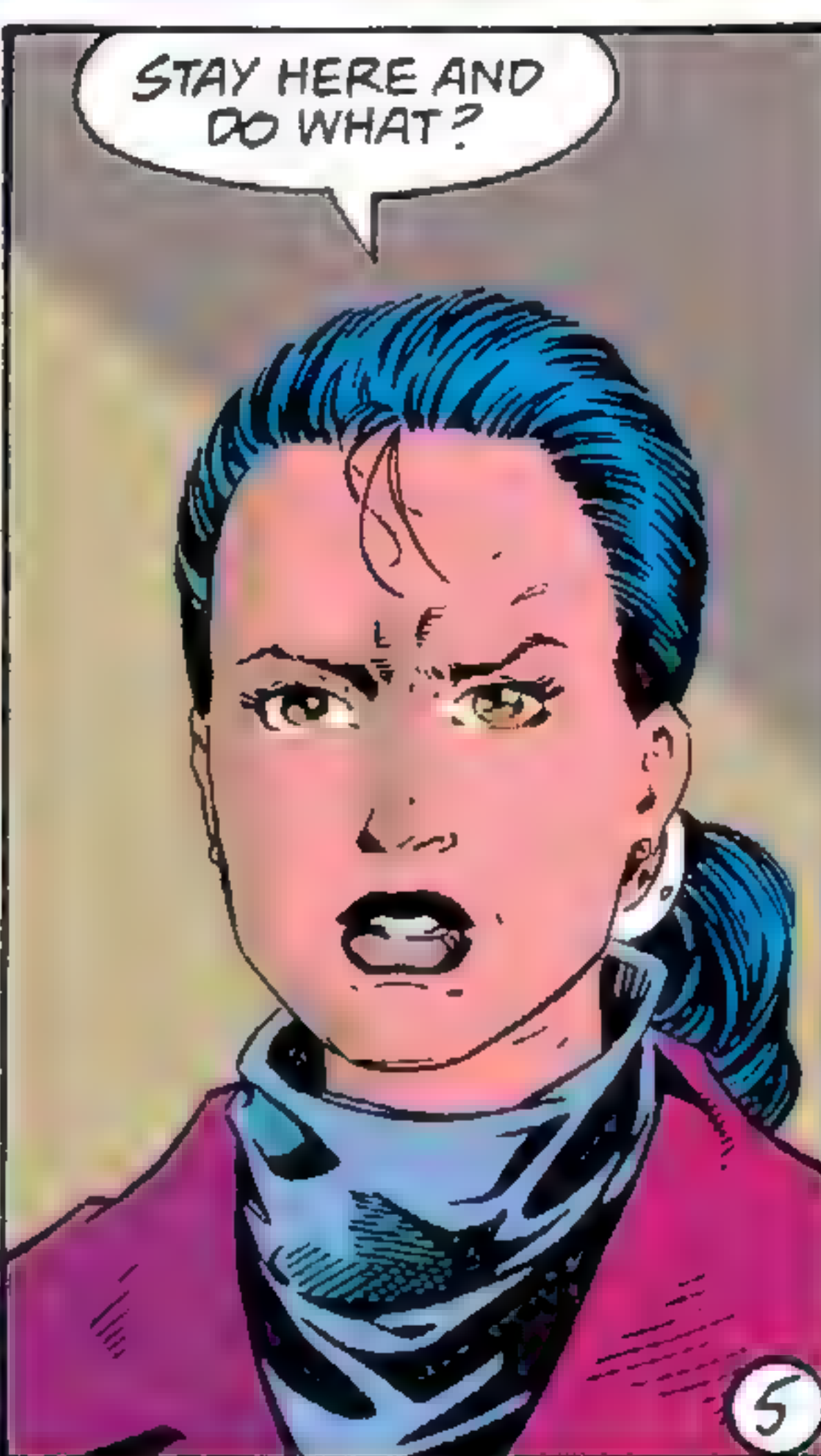
HUH?

THAT WAS THE COMMISH ON
THE HORN. WE GOT A LEAD
ON THE BLACKGATE
ESCAPEES.

GREAT.
I'LL--

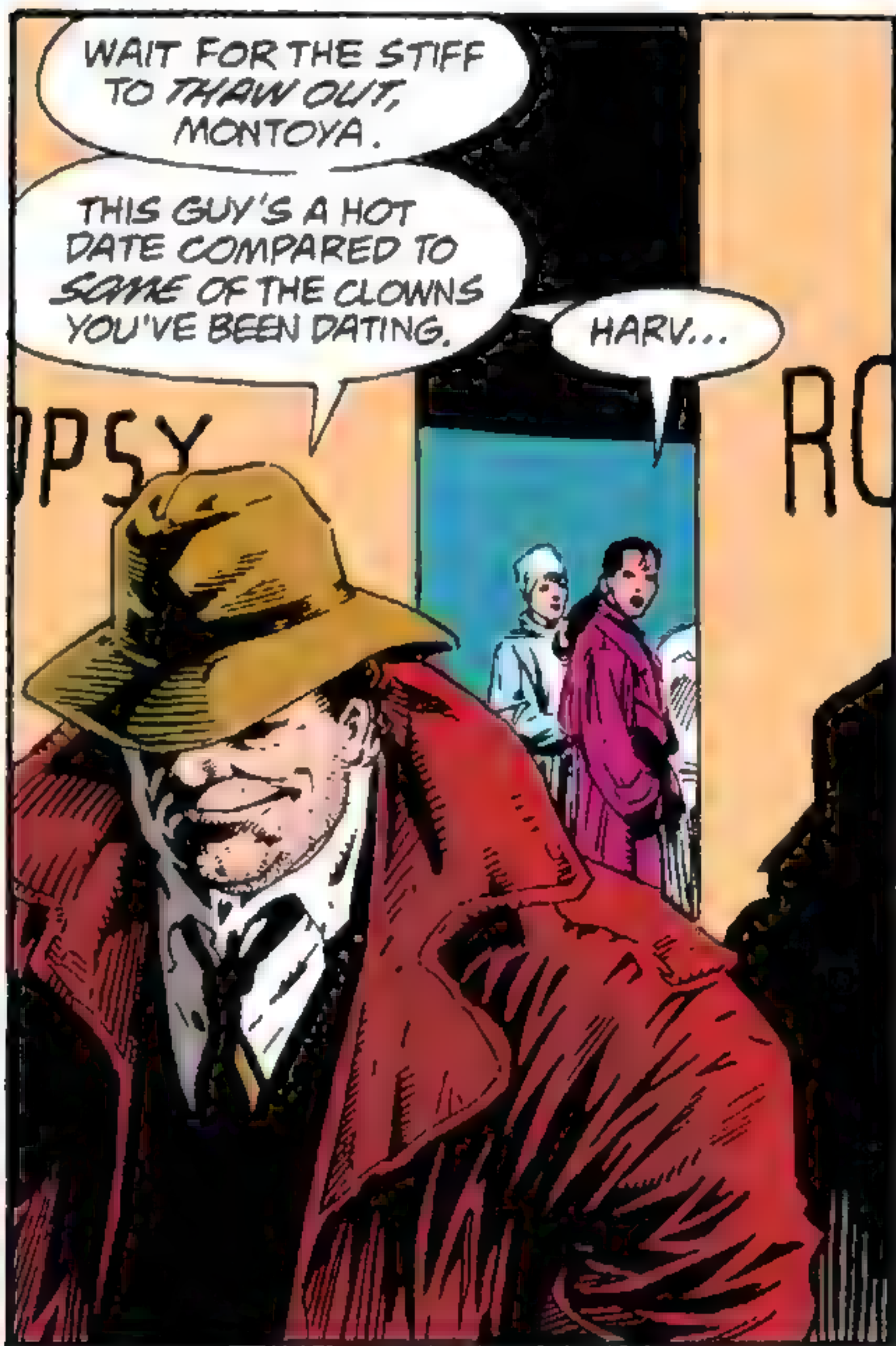


AND ESSEN WANTS A POSITIVE
EYE-DEE ON THE POPPSICLE HERE.
I'M GOIN' ON THE BLACKGATE
CALL. YOU STAY HERE.



STAY HERE AND
DO WHAT?

5



WAIT FOR THE STIFF
TO THAW OUT,
MONTOKA.

THIS GUY'S A HOT
DATE COMPARED TO
SOME OF THE CLOWNS
YOU'VE BEEN DATING.

HARV...



WHAT A WASTE
OF TIME...

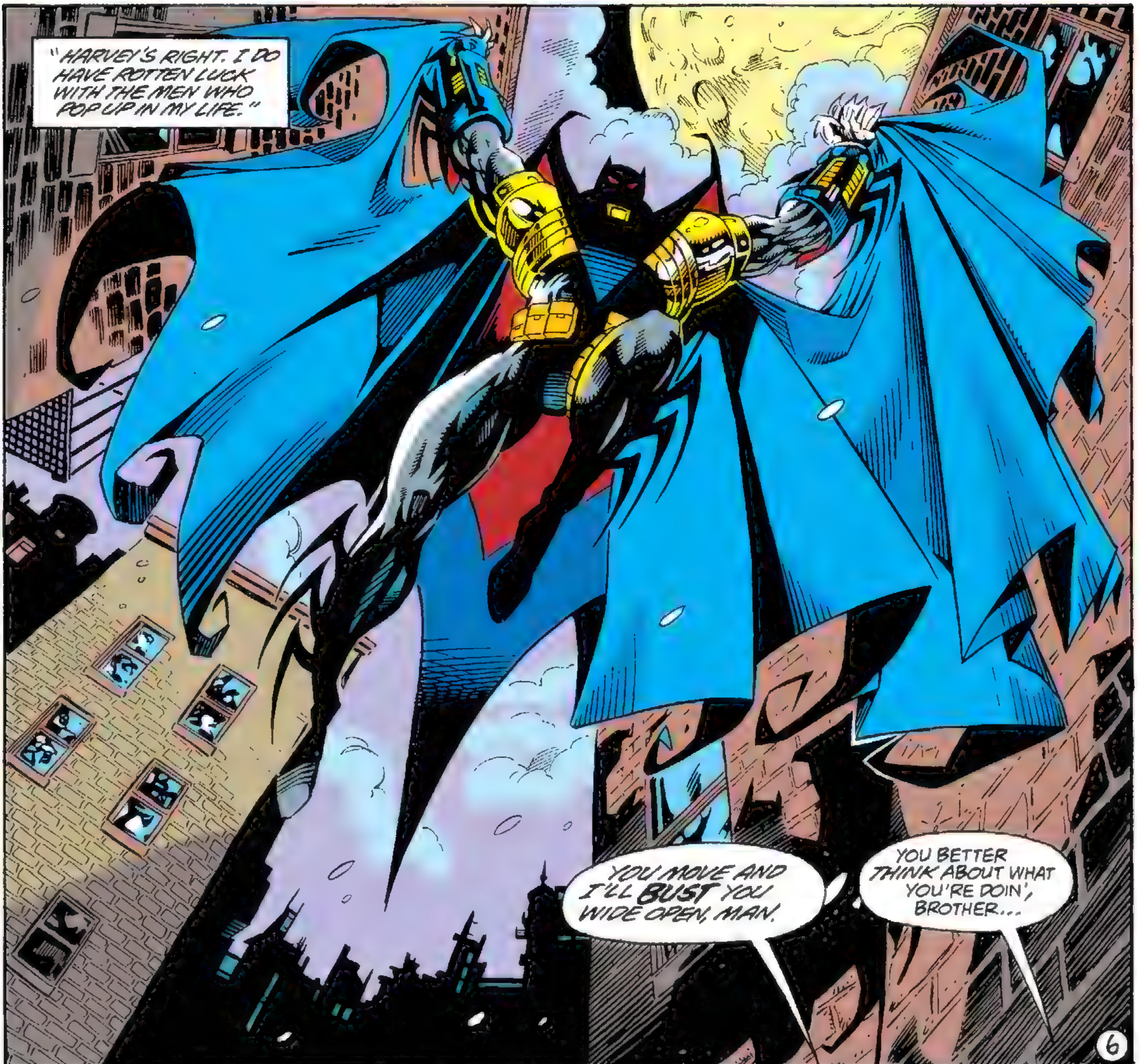
LOOK, WE'VE GOT
SIX-MONTH-OLD
MAGAZINES IN THE
WAITING LOUNGE, BUT
THE COFFEE'S FRESH.

I GOT A FEW THINGS
TO LOOK INTO, NO
PUN INTENDED.



YEAH. A CUP OF COFFEE
FOR ME AND A HOT
BLOWTORCH FOR MY
BUDDY HERE.

WHY COULDN'T
YOU HAVE SURFACED
ON DAYWATCH?



"HARVEY'S RIGHT. I DO
HAVE ROTTEN LUCK
WITH THE MEN WHO
POP UP IN MY LIFE."

YOU MOVE AND
I'LL BUST YOU
WIDE OPEN, MAN!

YOU BETTER
THINK ABOUT WHAT
YOU'RE DOIN',
BROTHER...



ANIMALS EAT ANIMALS.
THE DRUG TRADE HERE
HAS SPAWNED A TYPE
OF SECONDARY CRIME.

TOUGH YOUNG
PREDATORS PREY
ON THOSE GROWN
FAT AND CARELESS.

I'M LOOKIN'
AT YOU AND YOU
DON'T LOOK NUFFIN'
LIKE MY BROTHER.

HAND OVER
THE CASE,
MAN.

YOU
LITTLE...



... YOU'RE NOT
GONNA GET AWAY
WITH THIS. YOU'RE
GONNA PRAY
WE KILL YOU.

JUST BEING
A GOOD
CAPITALIST,
IS ALL.

TAKIN' THE BLOW FROM
YOU AND PASSIN' THE
SAVIN'S ON TO OUR
CUSTOMERS.



PUNK!

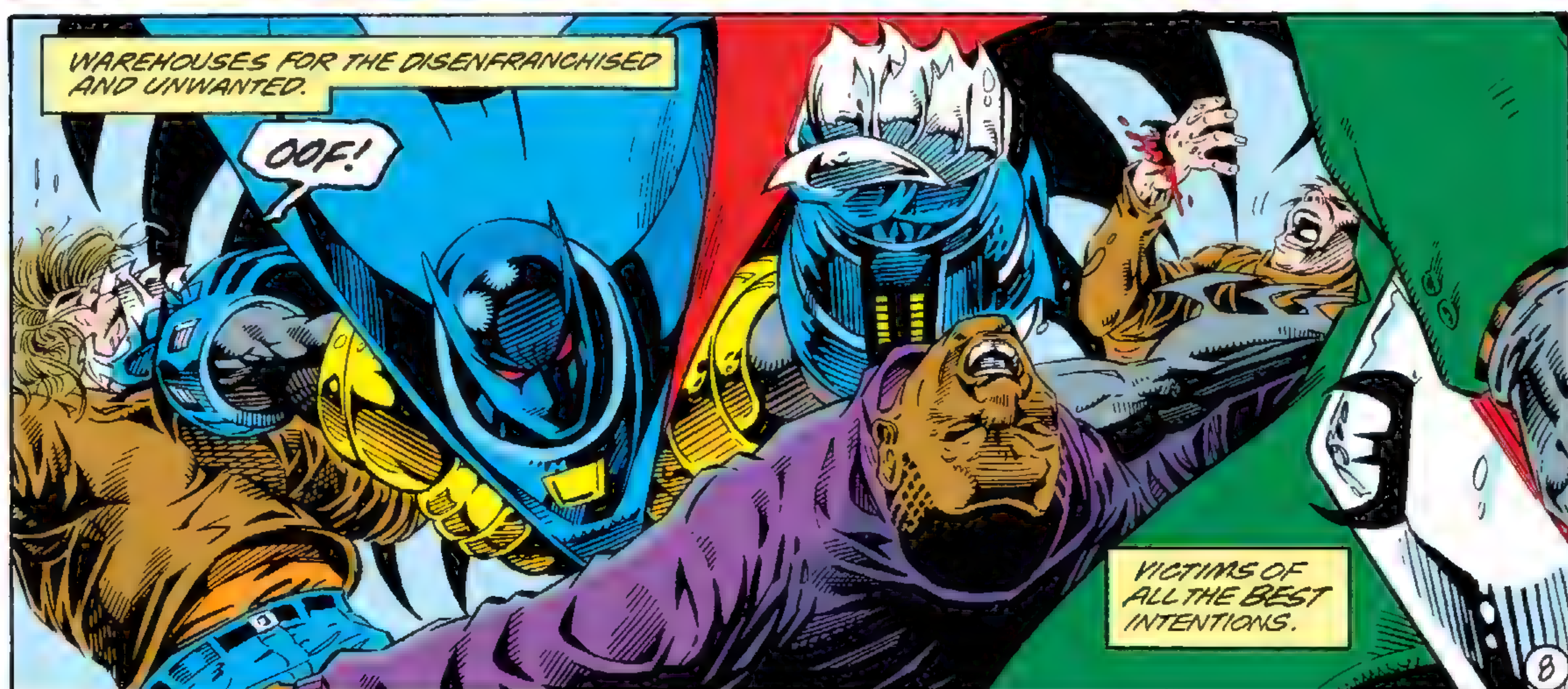
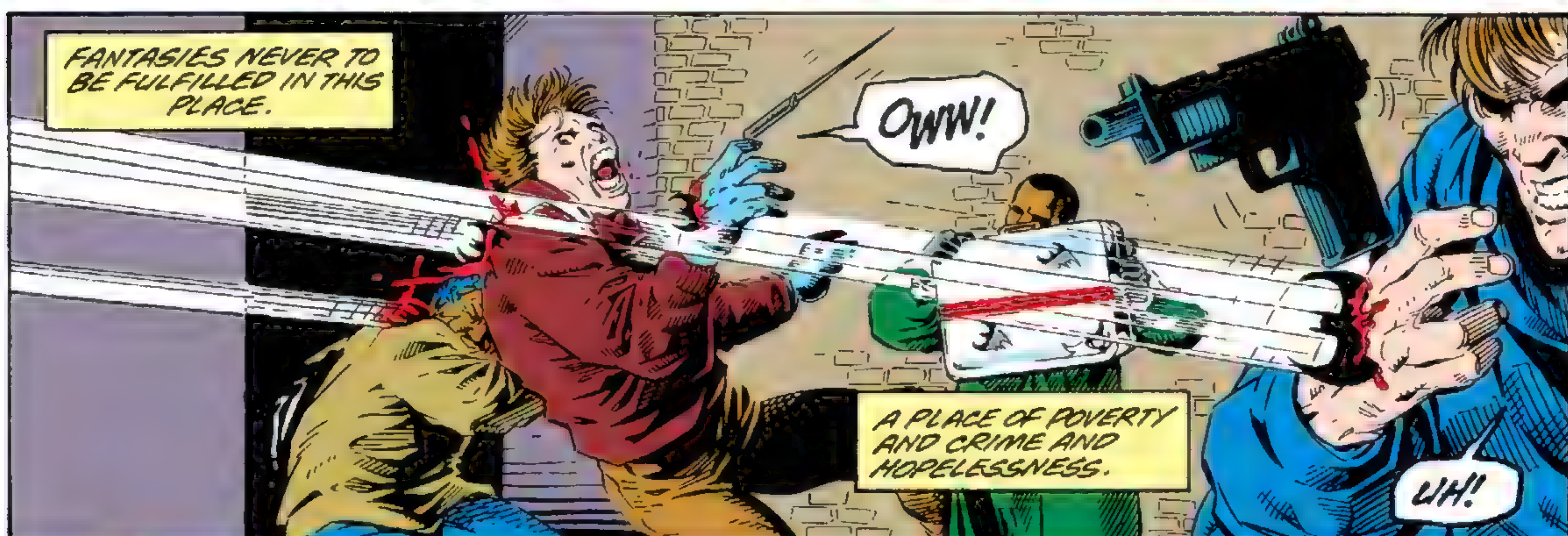
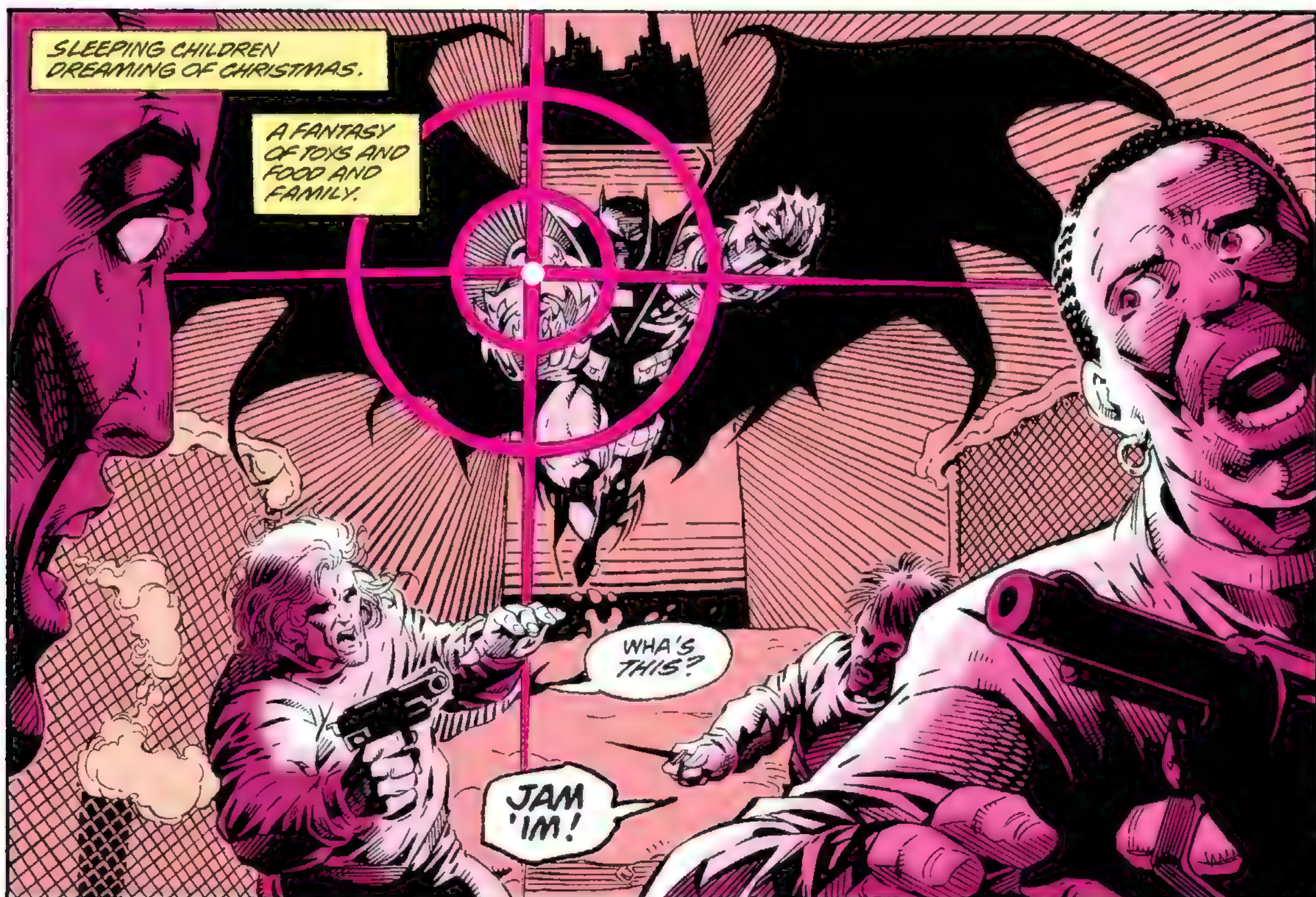
WAKE!

UH!



BUT THEY ARE
NOT THE ONLY
ONES IN THE
HUNTING
GROUNDS.

THE BUILDINGS TO
EITHER SIDE ARE
FILLED WITH
SLEEPING FAMILIES.





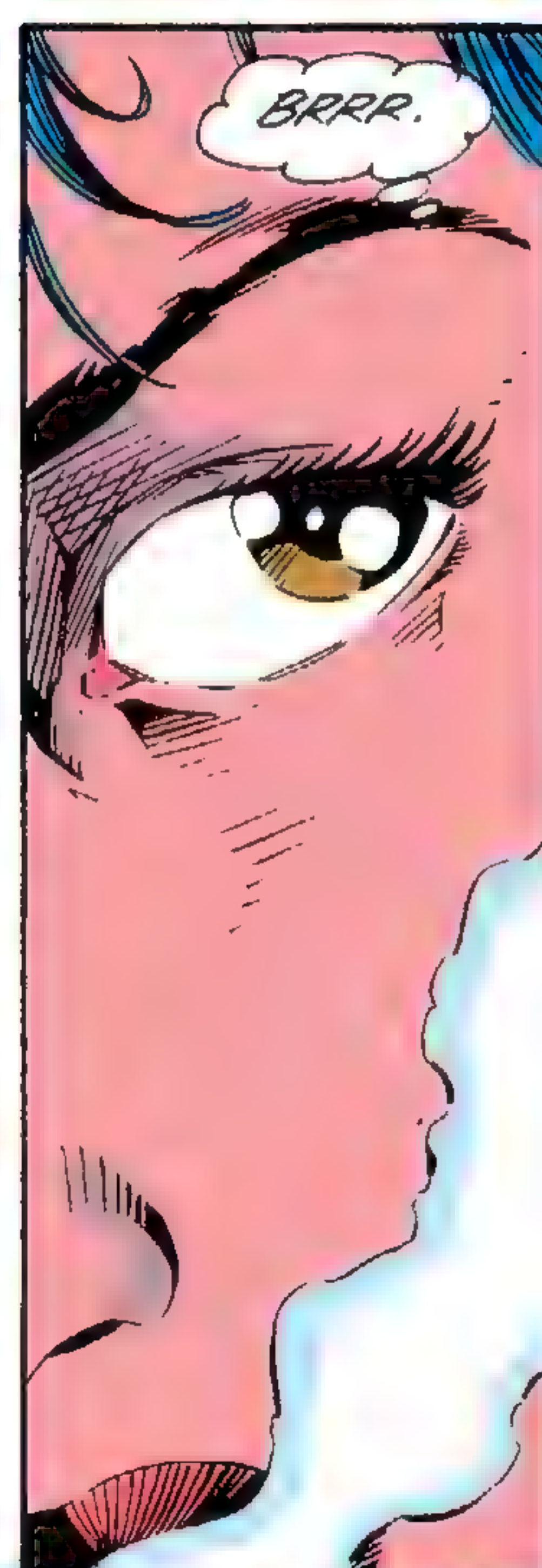
SO WHO ARE YOU?

HM. LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF ARMORED SUIT HE'S GOT ON.

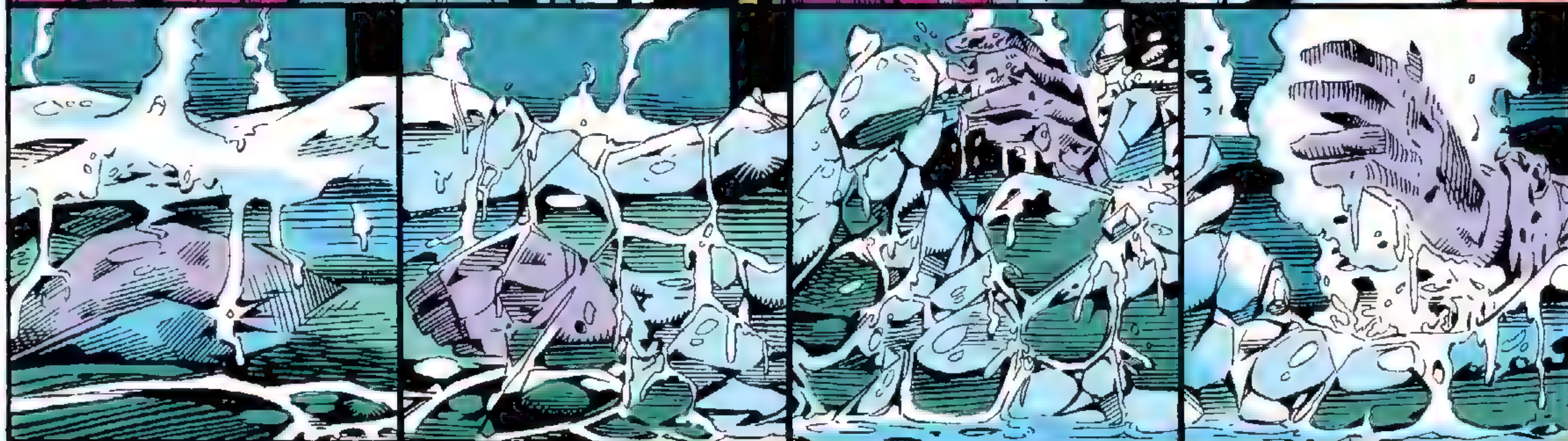


WELL, YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE AND THAT COFFEE SOUNDS GOOD ABOUT NOW.

GETTING COLDER IN HERE.

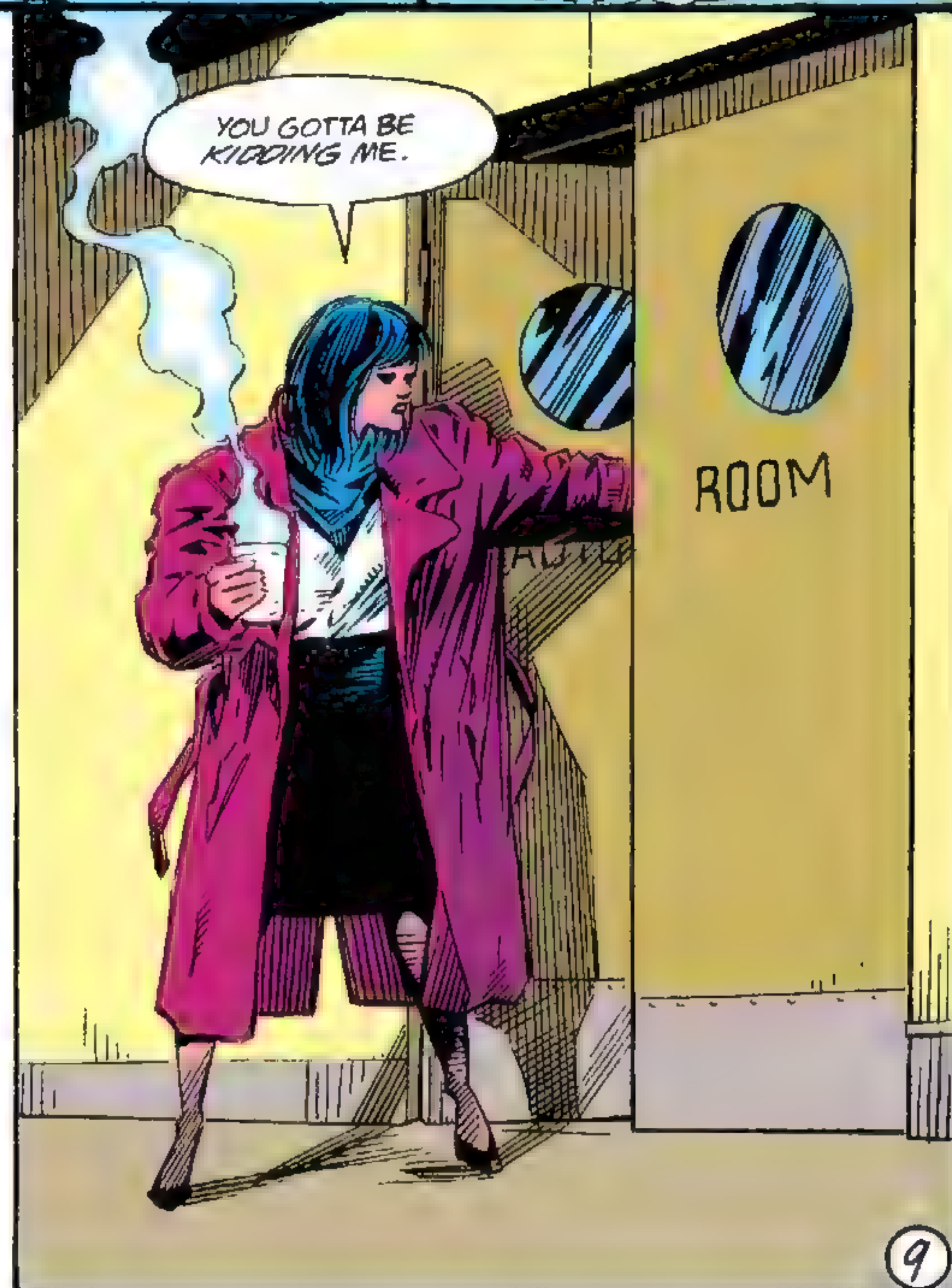


BRRR.



SMELLS GOOD. COULD DO WITHOUT THE STYROFOAM CUP, THOUGH.

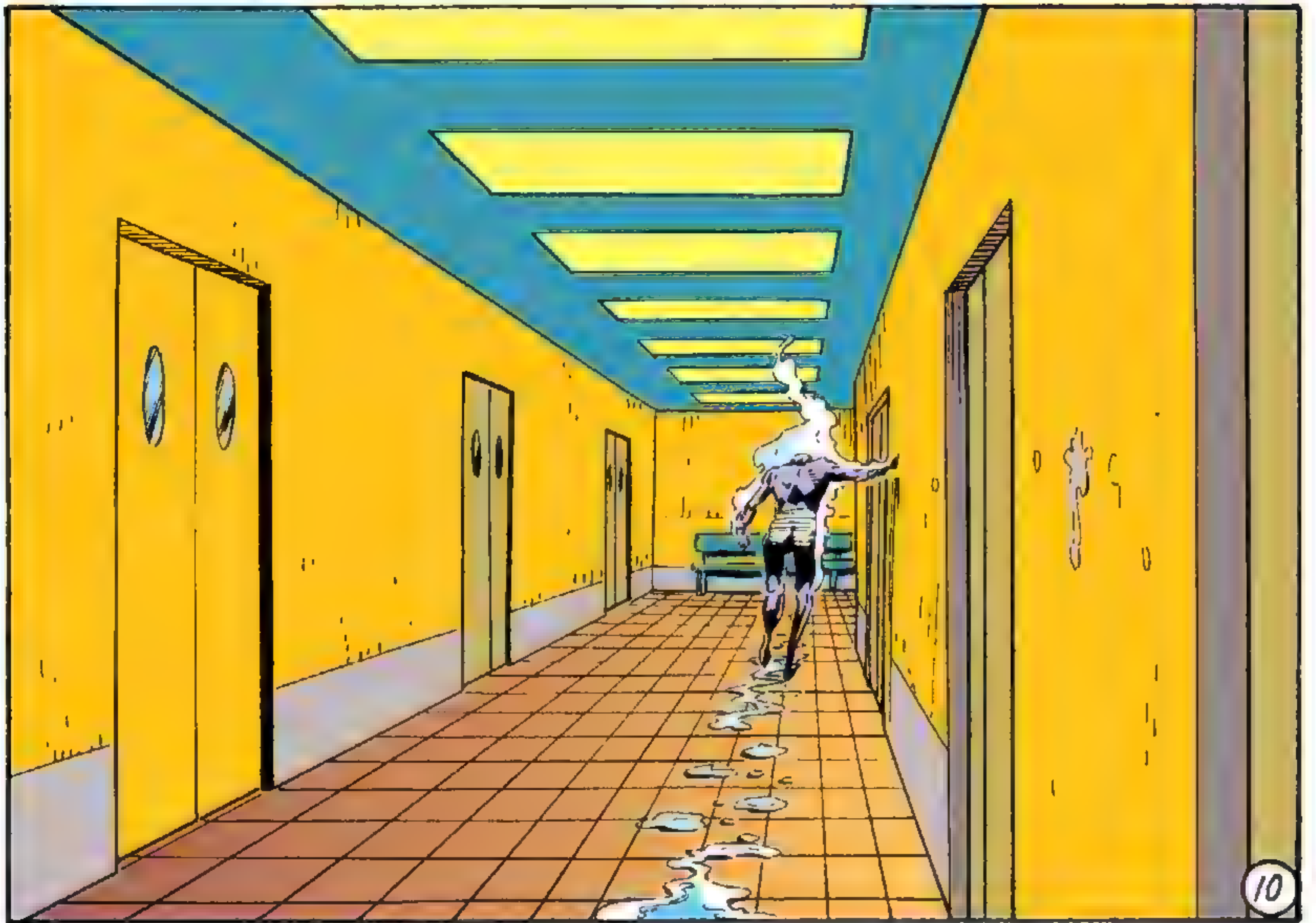
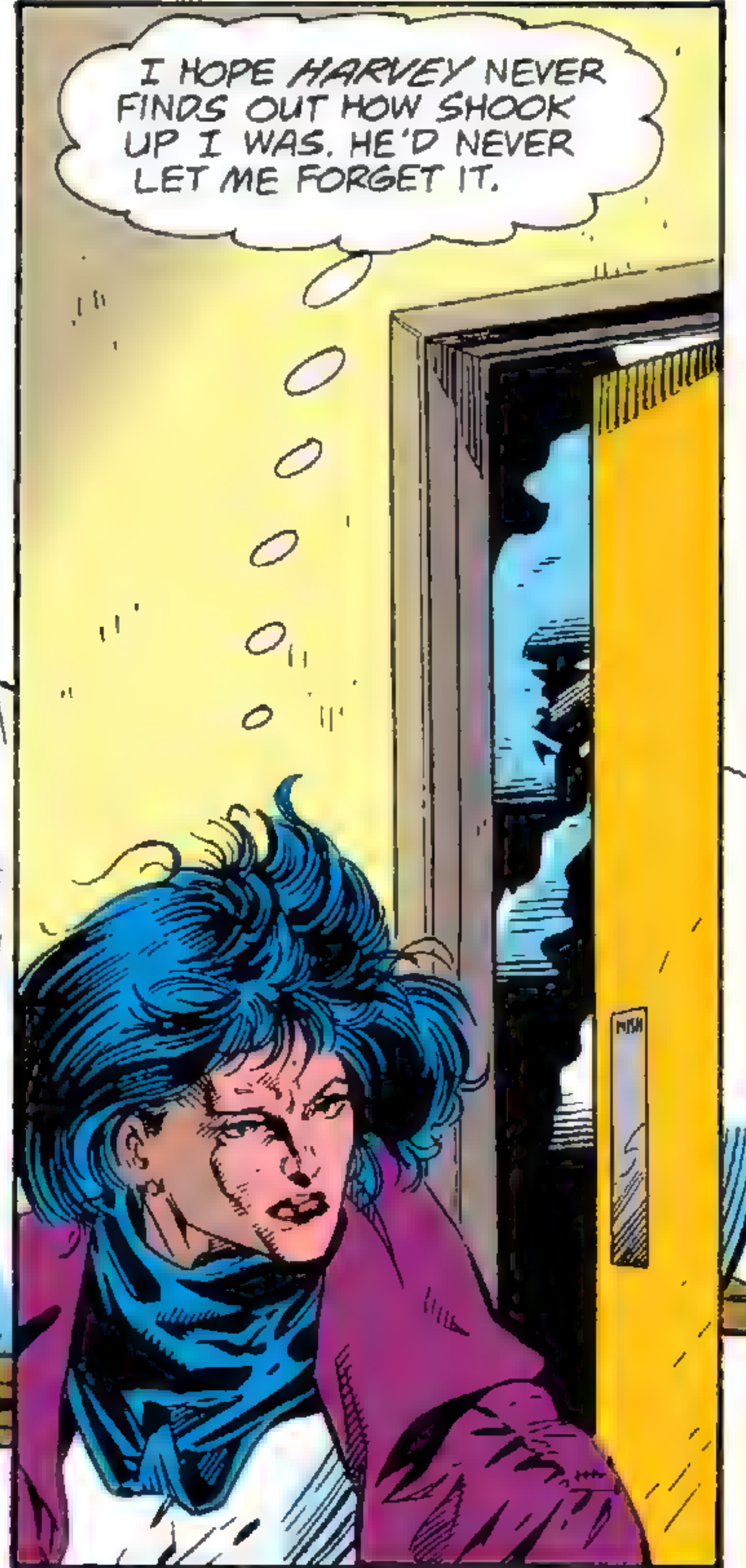
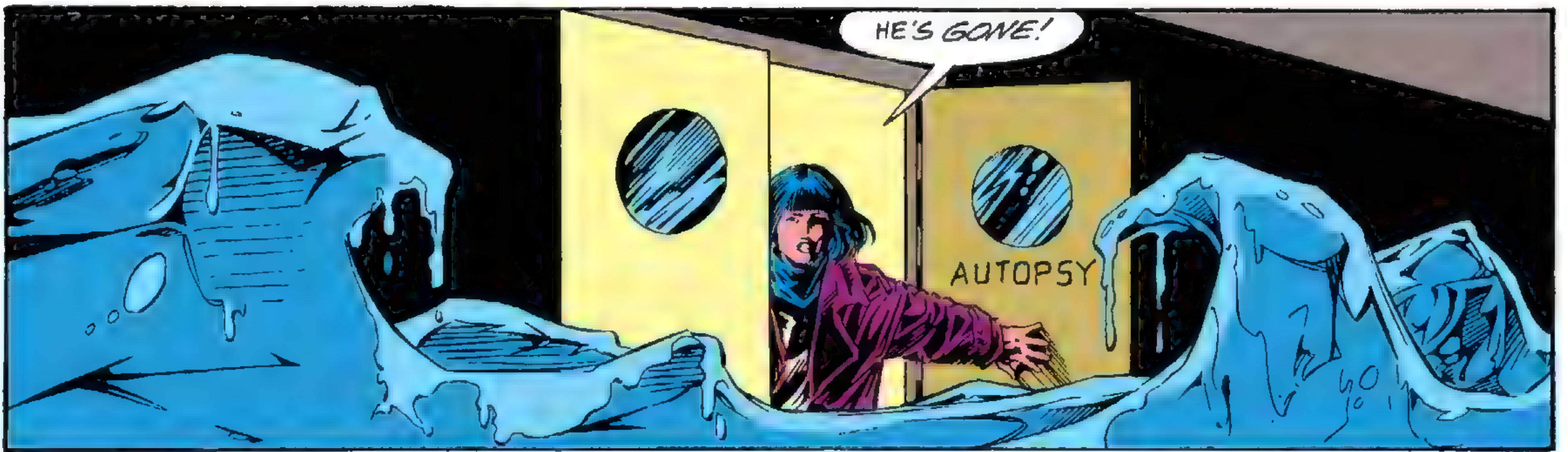
I'LL CHECK IN ON FROSTY AND SEE IF I CAN FIND A REAL CUP AROUND HERE.

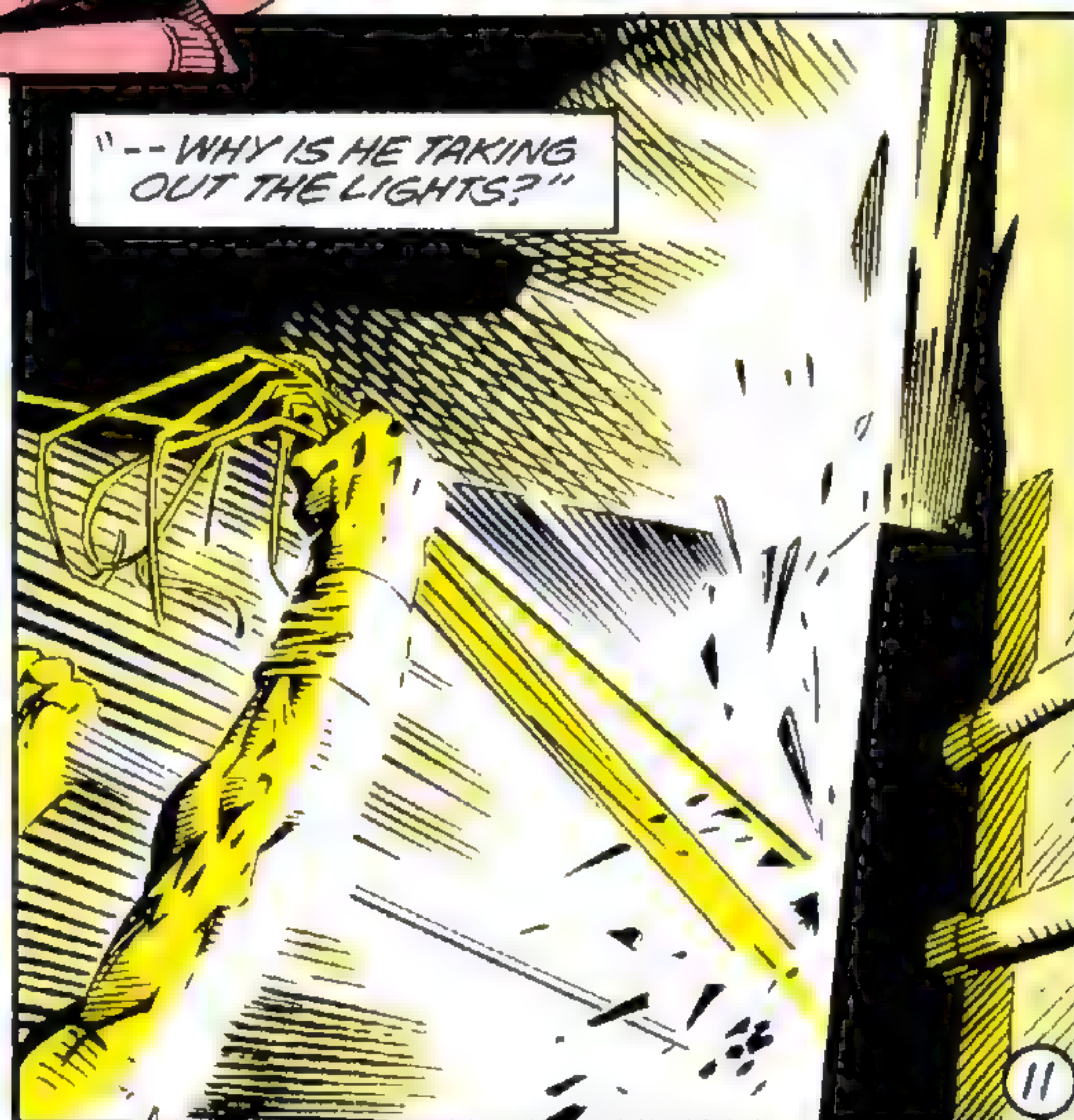


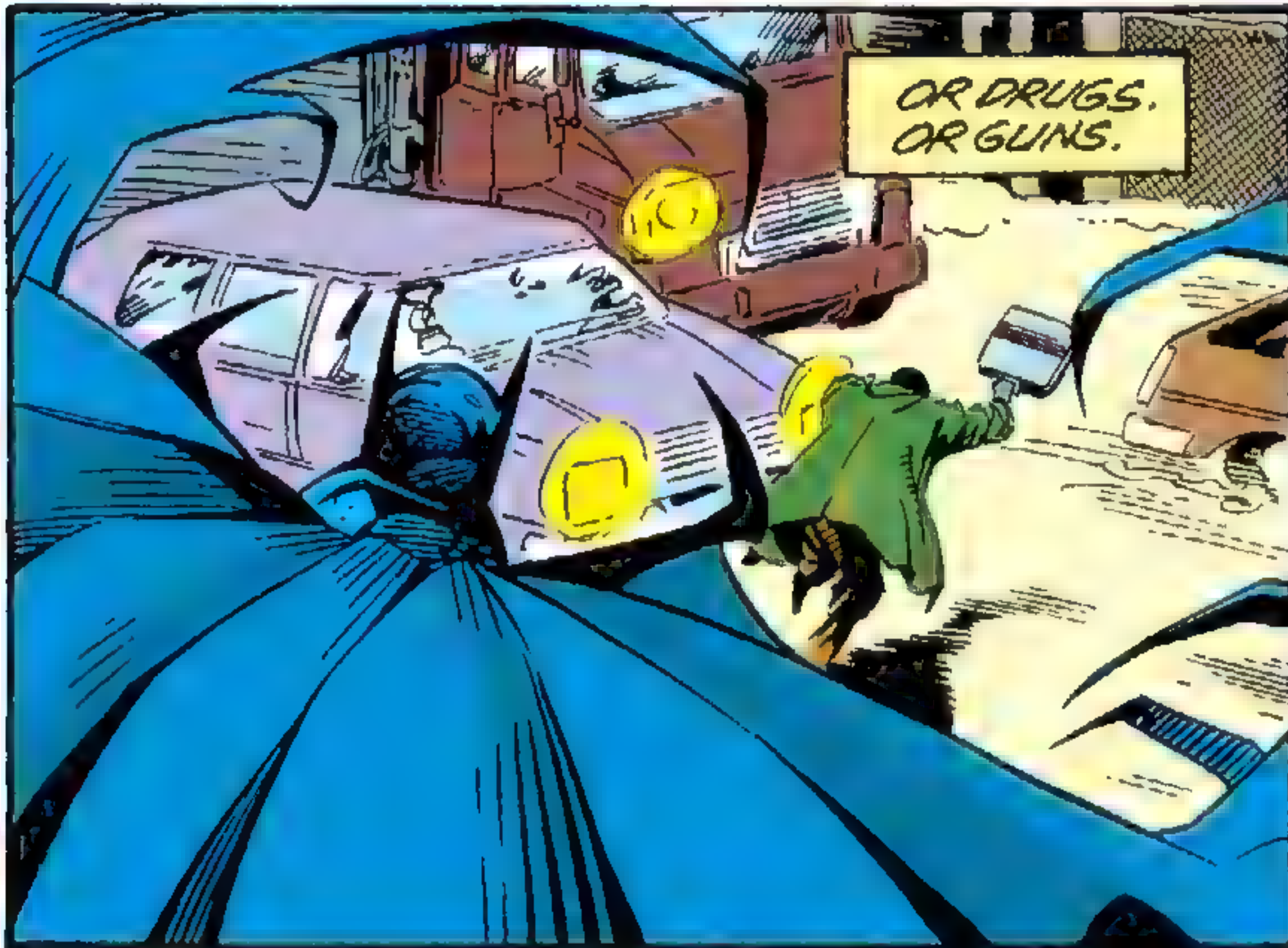
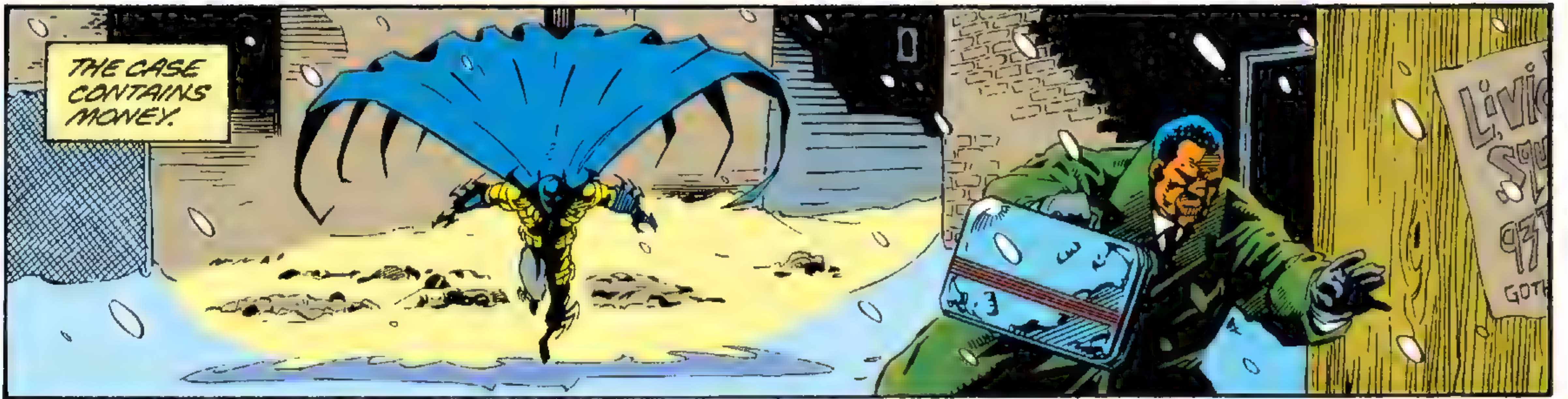
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME.

ROOM

9









WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU SHOOTING AT?

SOMETHING MOVED AT THE END OF THE HALL.



GET A GRIP, MONTOKA! THAT COULD HAVE BEEN A STAFFER HERE.

I FIGURE MOST OF YOUR STAFFERS WEAR CLOTHES, RIGHT?



THIS GUY'S NAKED?

TAKE THIS PENLIGHT BEFORE YOU BURN YOUR FINGERS.



THE GUY'S NUDE. HOW DANGEROUS CAN HE BE?

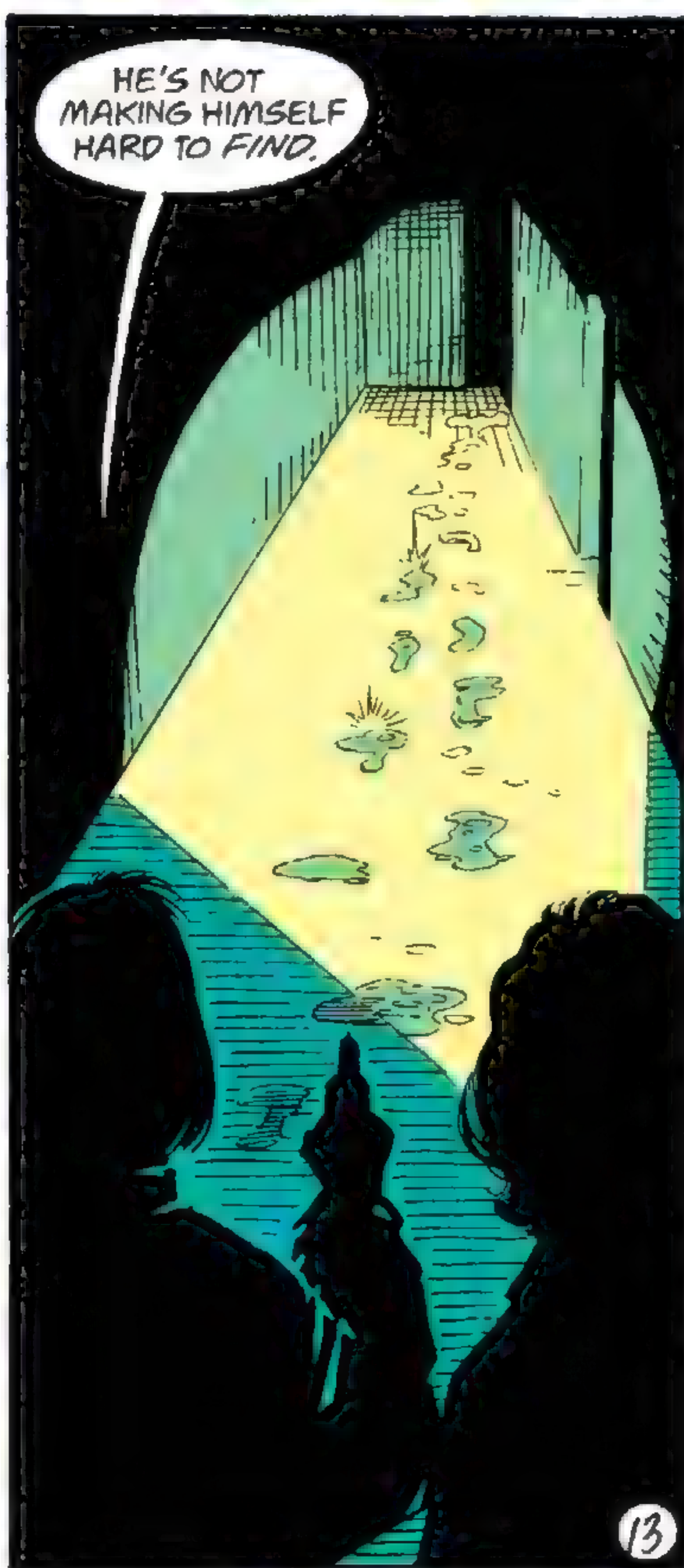
HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR PLENTY OF "PATIENTS" SENT HERE, COLLEEN.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME ALONG.

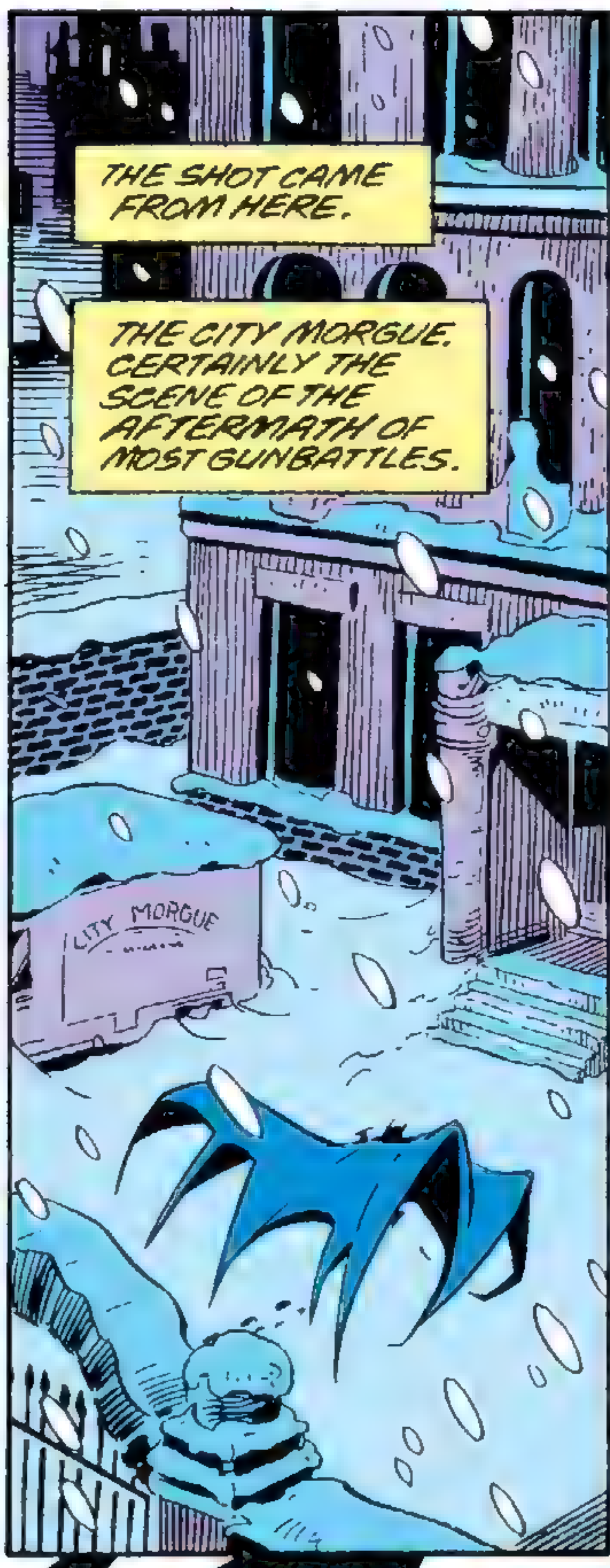


AFTER THE BUILD-UP YOU GAVE THIS CREEP? I'M STICKIN' WITH YOU, SHERIFF.

WELL, THEN MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL AND THROW SOME LIGHT ON THE FLOOR.



HE'S NOT MAKING HIMSELF HARD TO FIND.



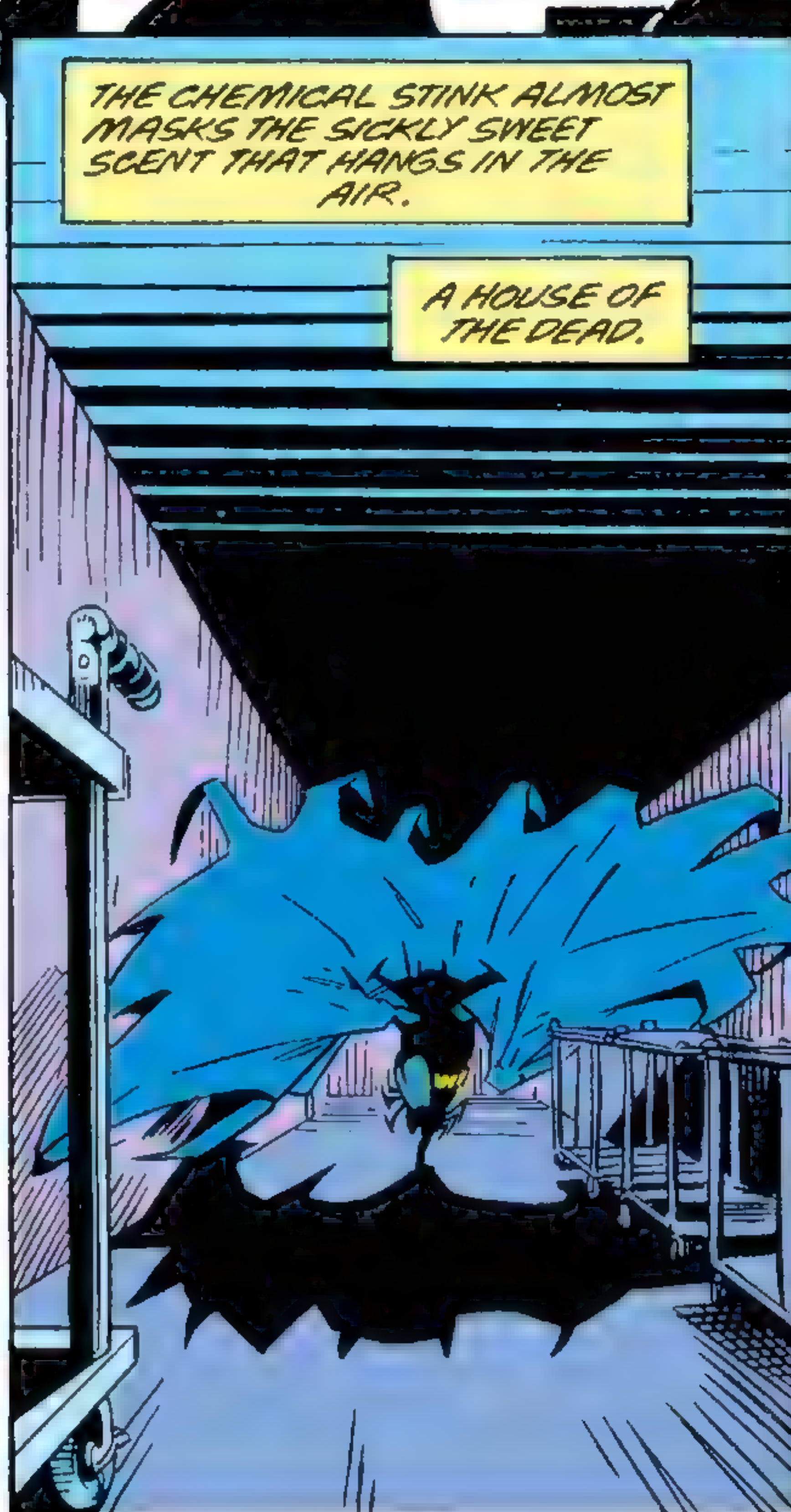
THE SHOT CAME FROM HERE.

THE CITY MORGUE. CERTAINLY THE SCENE OF THE AFTERMATH OF MOST GUNBATTLES.



NO LIGHTS.

BUT EVEN THE HOLIDAYS DON'T CLOSE THIS CITY SERVICE.



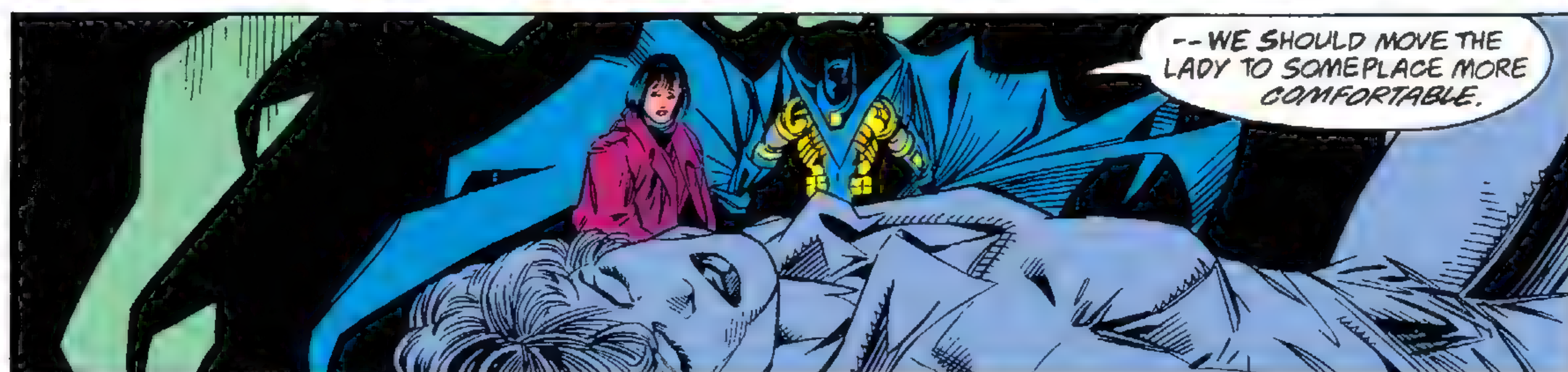
THE CHEMICAL STINK ALMOST MASKS THE SICKLY SWEET SCENT THAT HANGS IN THE AIR.

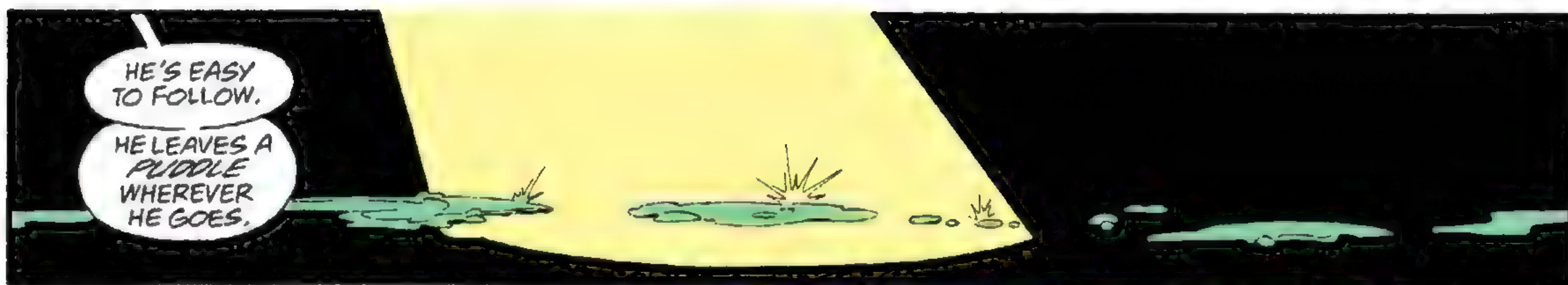
A HOUSE OF THE DEAD.



ALL HERE DIED AT THE HANDS OF OTHERS.

A PLACE OF UNAVENGED SOULS.





HE'S EASY
TO FOLLOW.
HE LEAVES A
PUDDLE
WHEREVER
HE GOES.



THE HARD PART
IS WHEN WE
FIND HIM.

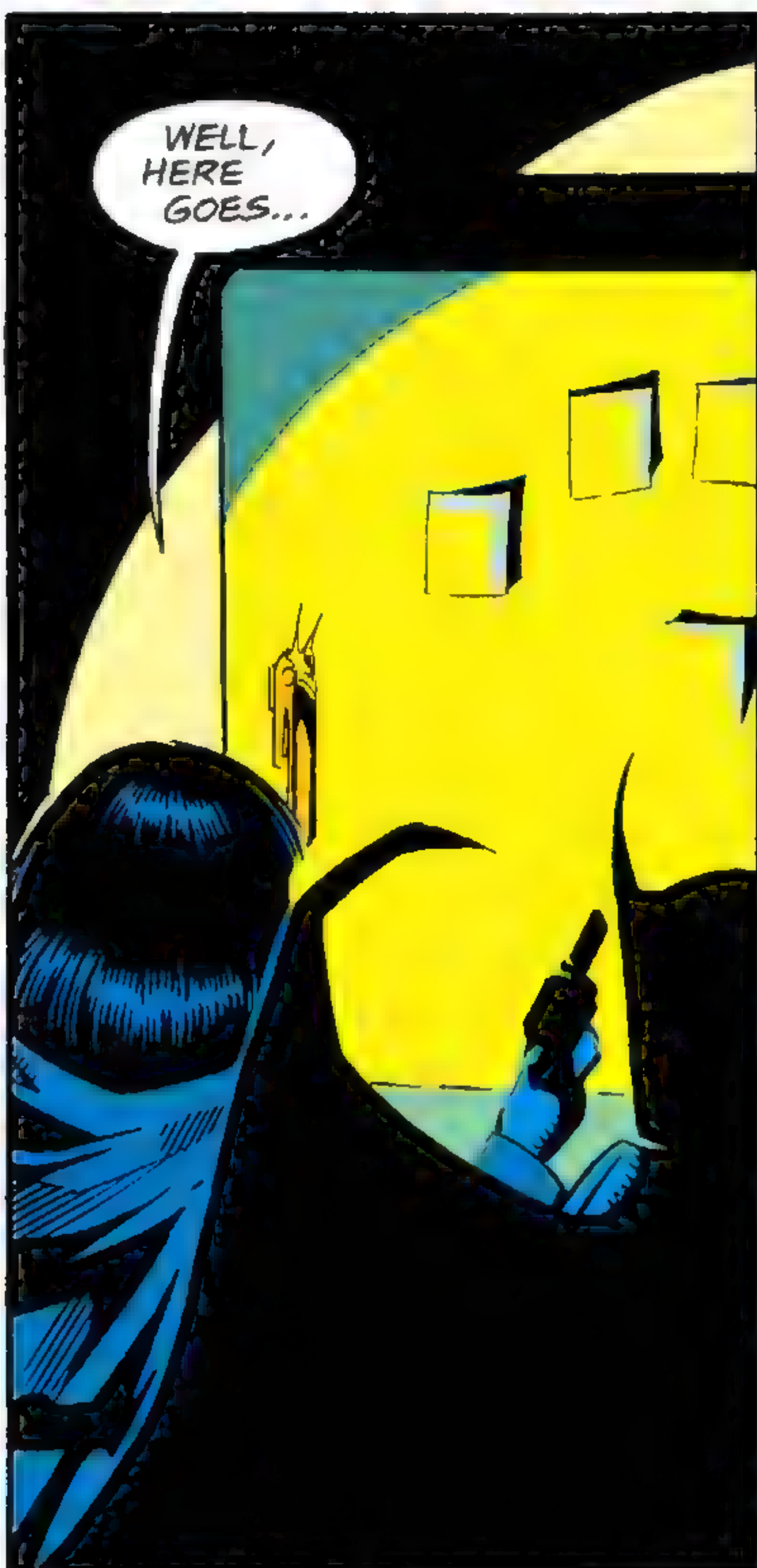
AND YOU'RE
CERTAIN HE'S
ALIVE?

JUST AS
CERTAIN AS
I AM THAT
HE'S IN
HERE.



BUT I'M NOT
SURE WHAT KIND
OF CONDITION
HE'S IN.

BRR. I'D LIKE TO THINK
I'M SHAKING BECAUSE
OF THE COLD. THIS PLACE
IS CREE-PEE.

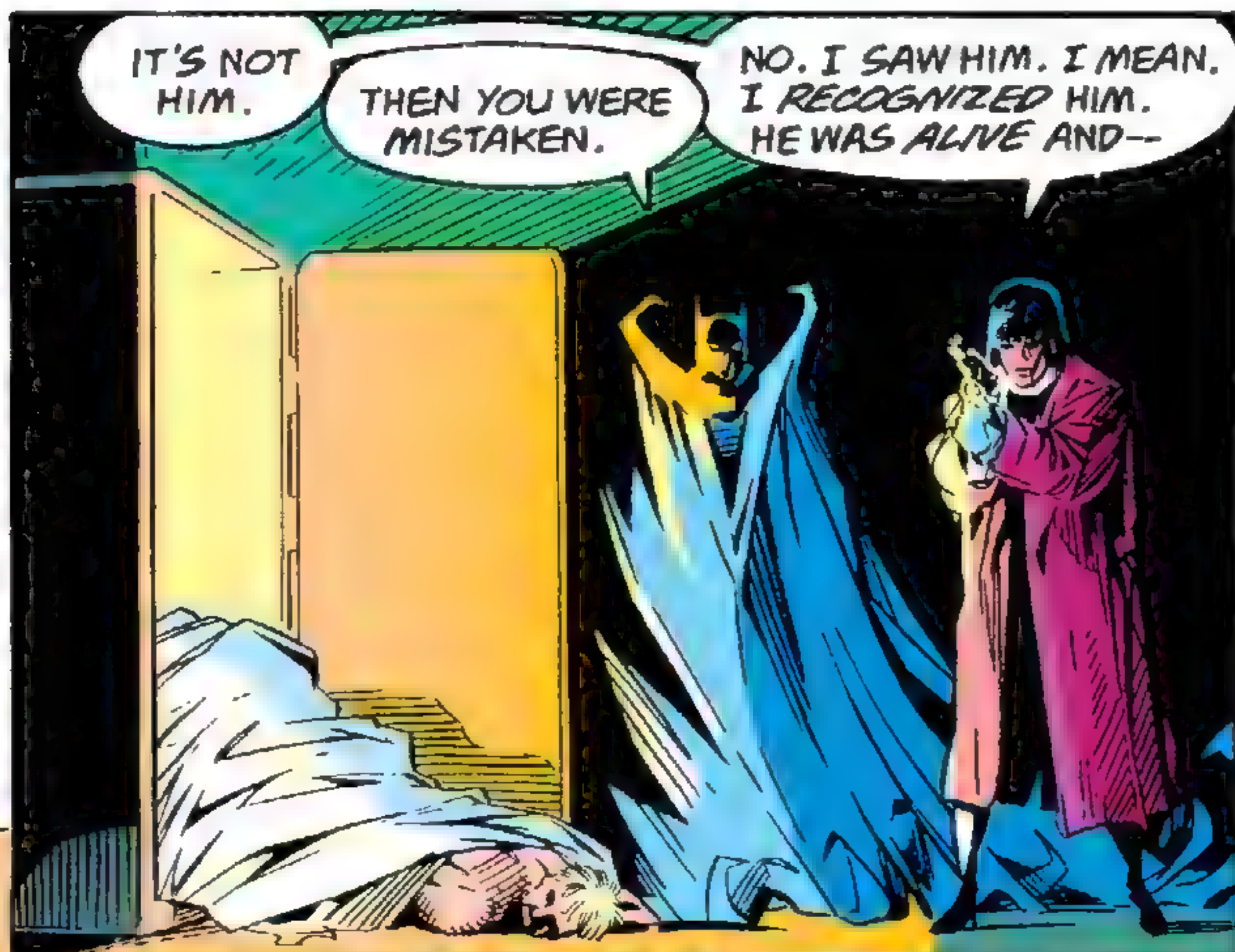


WELL,
HERE
GOES...



FREEZE, YOU...

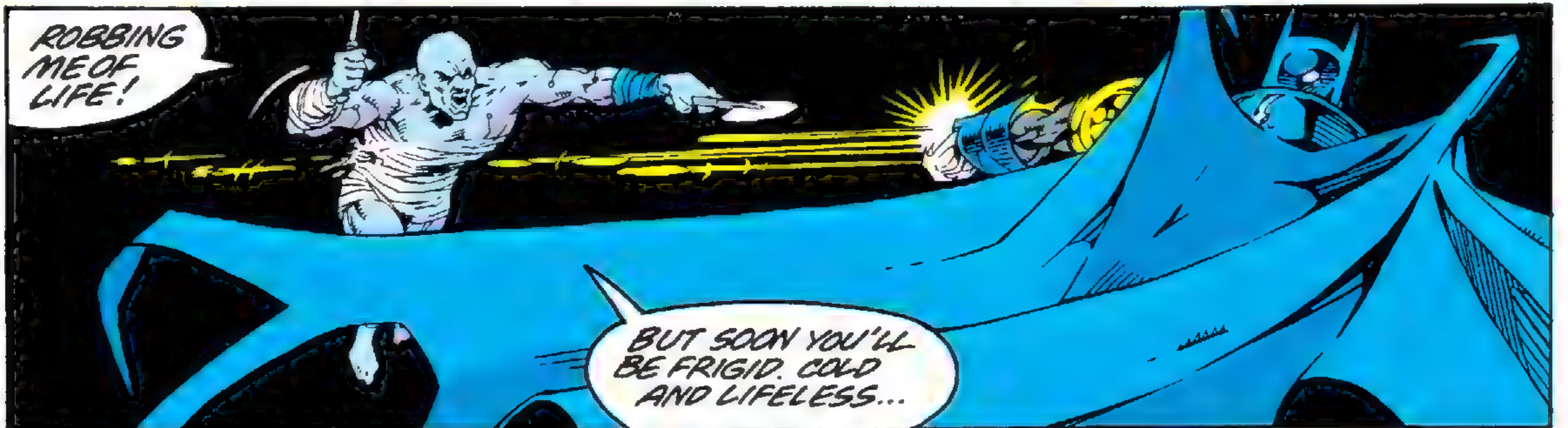
DAMN.





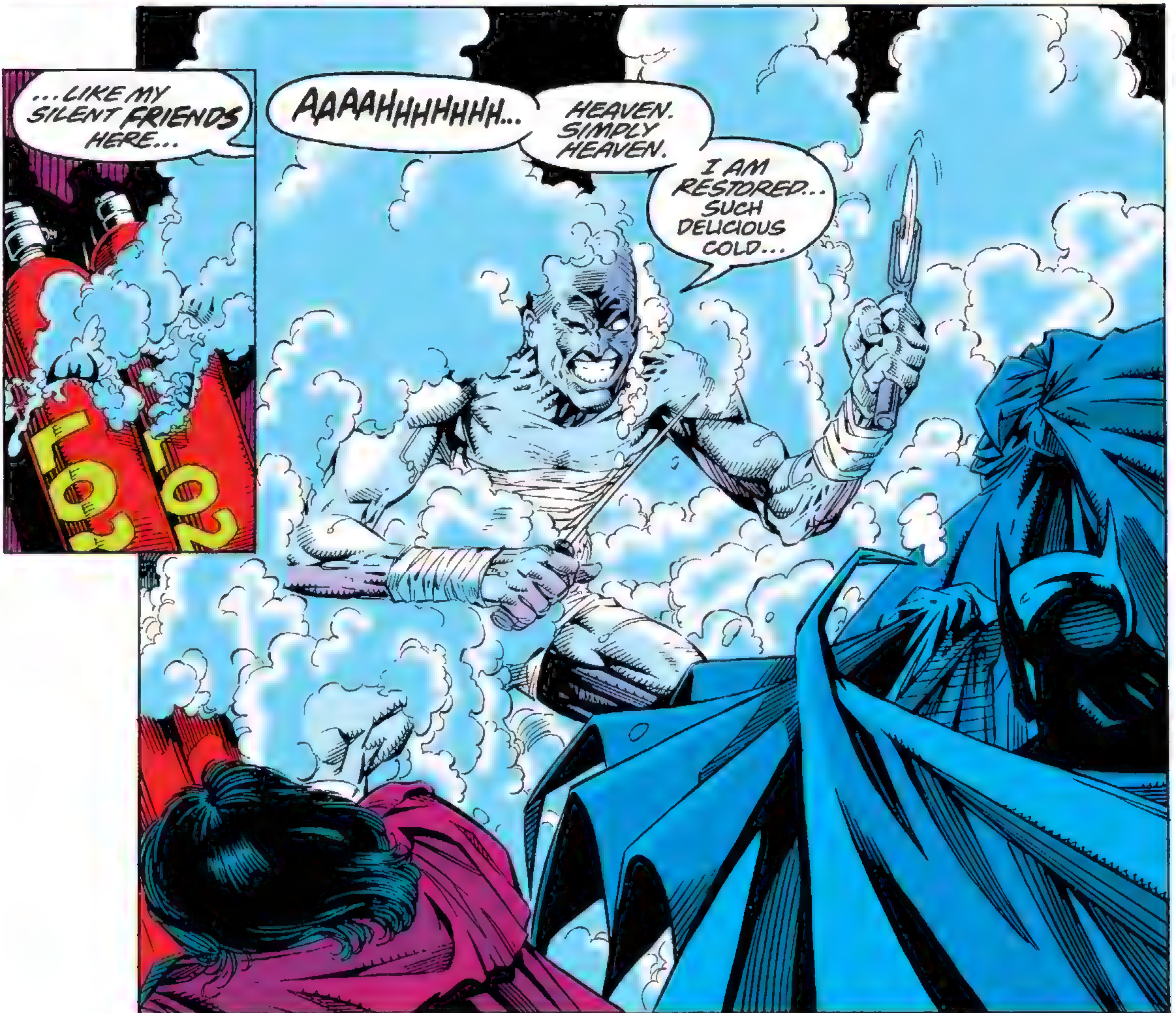
WARM BODIES!
STEALING THE COLD!

RAISING THE
TEMPERATURE!



ROBBING
ME OF
LIFE!

BUT SOON YOU'LL
BE FRIGID, COLD
AND LIFELESS...

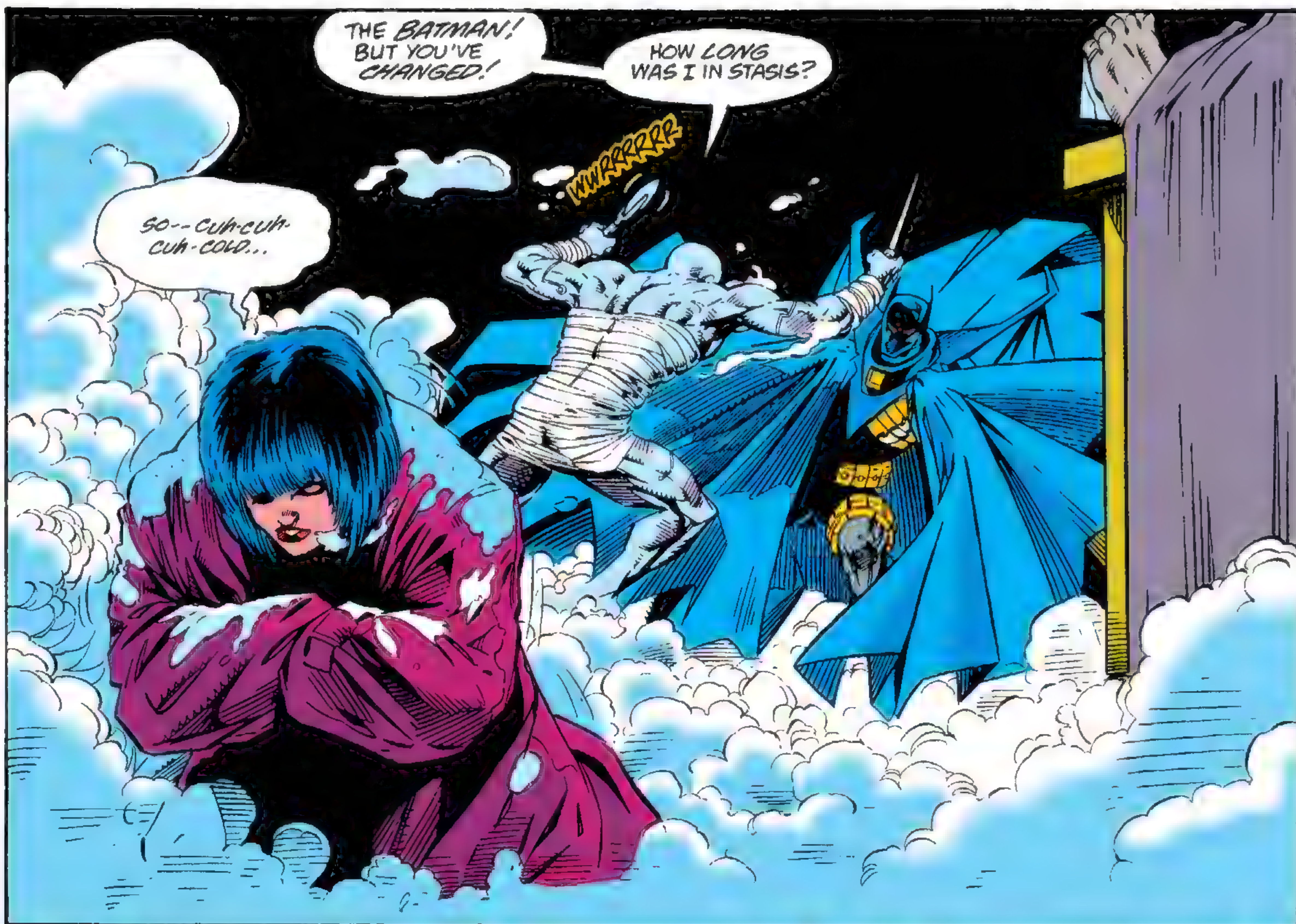


...LIKE MY
SILENT FRIENDS
HERE...

AAAAHHHHHHH...

HEAVEN.
SIMPLY
HEAVEN.

I AM
RESTORED...
SUCH
DELICIOUS
COLD...



THE BATMAN!
BUT YOU'VE
CHANGED!

HOW LONG
WAS I IN STASIS?

SO-- CUH-CUH-
CUH-COLD...

WRRRRRR



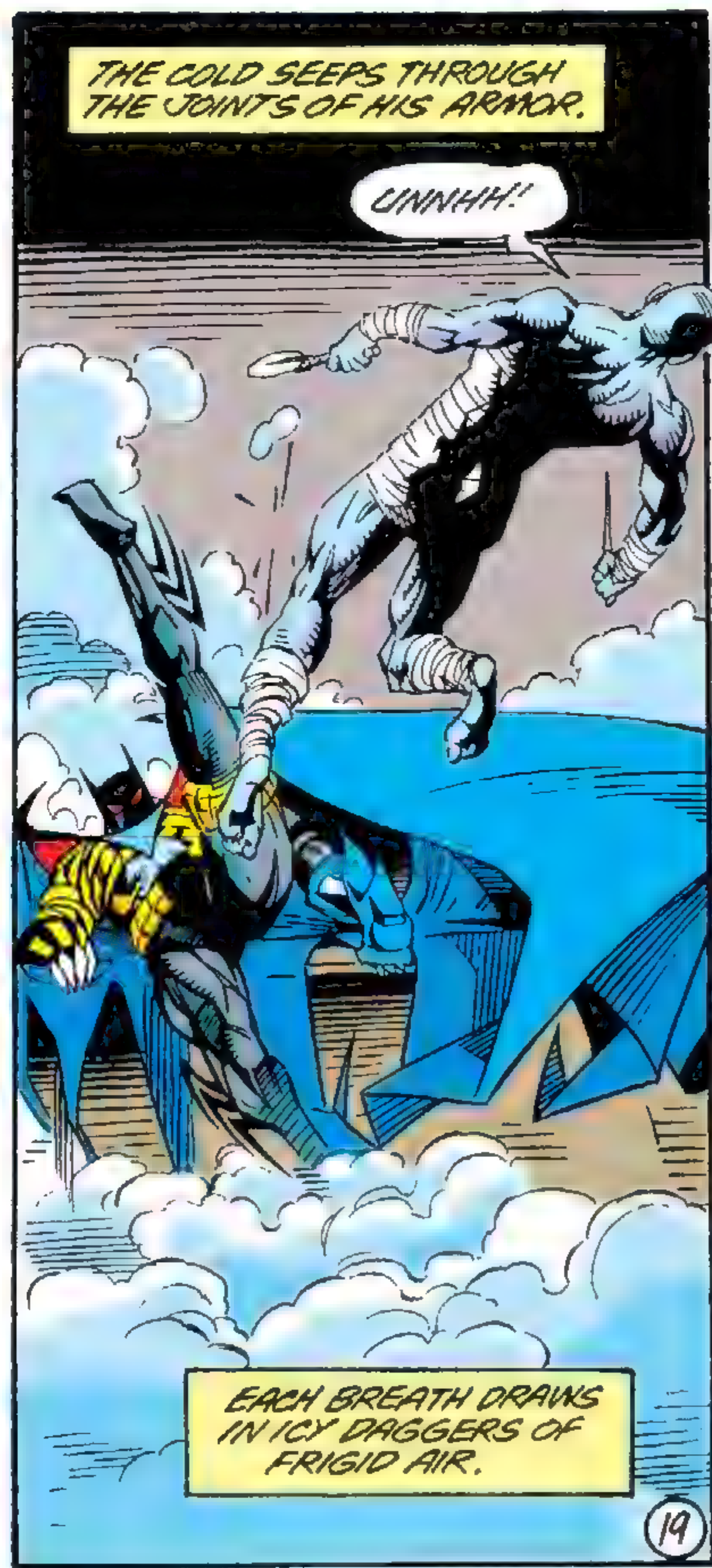
THE LAST I REMEMBER
WAS THE FACE OF THAT
GRINNING IDIOT THE
JOKER.

MY FAIL-SAFE
UNITS MUST HAVE
KICKED IN, FROZE
ME SOLID.



BUT FOR HOW MANY
YEARS?

WHAT KIND OF WORLD
HAVE I AWAKENED IN?



THE COLD SEEPS THROUGH
THE JOINTS OF HIS ARMOR.

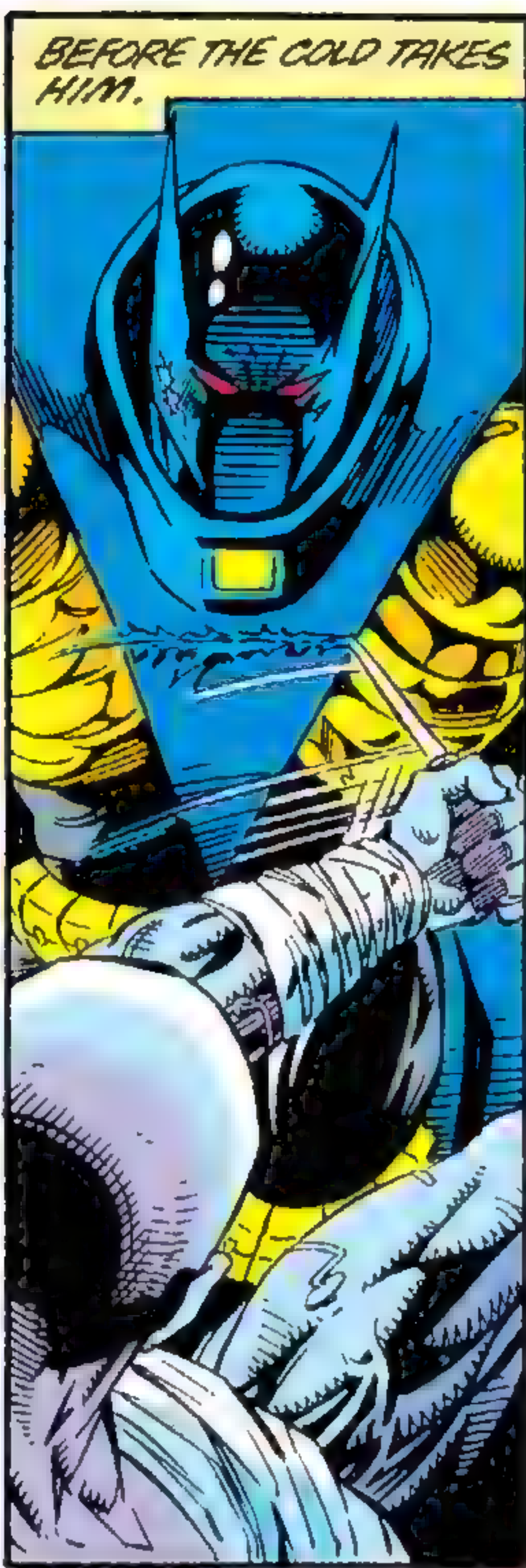
UINHHH!

EACH BREATH DRAWS
IN ICY DAGGERS OF
FRIGID AIR.

19



HE HAS TO BRING
THE MANIAC DOWN
NOW.



BEFORE THE COLD TAKES
HIM.



HE WEIGHS THE OPTIONS
MEASURES THE DANGERS.

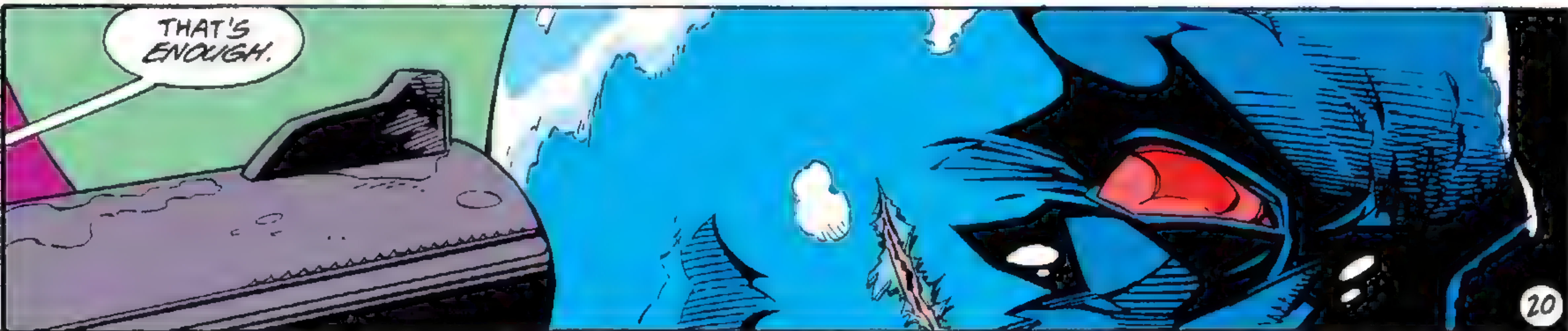


AND TAKES THE
APPROPRIATE
MEASURES.



THE SYSTEM DICTATES
ONLY ONE OUTCOME.

REMOVE THE THREAT.



THAT'S
ENOUGH.



YOU TOOK HIM
OUT, ALL
RIGHT?

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO KILL
HIM.

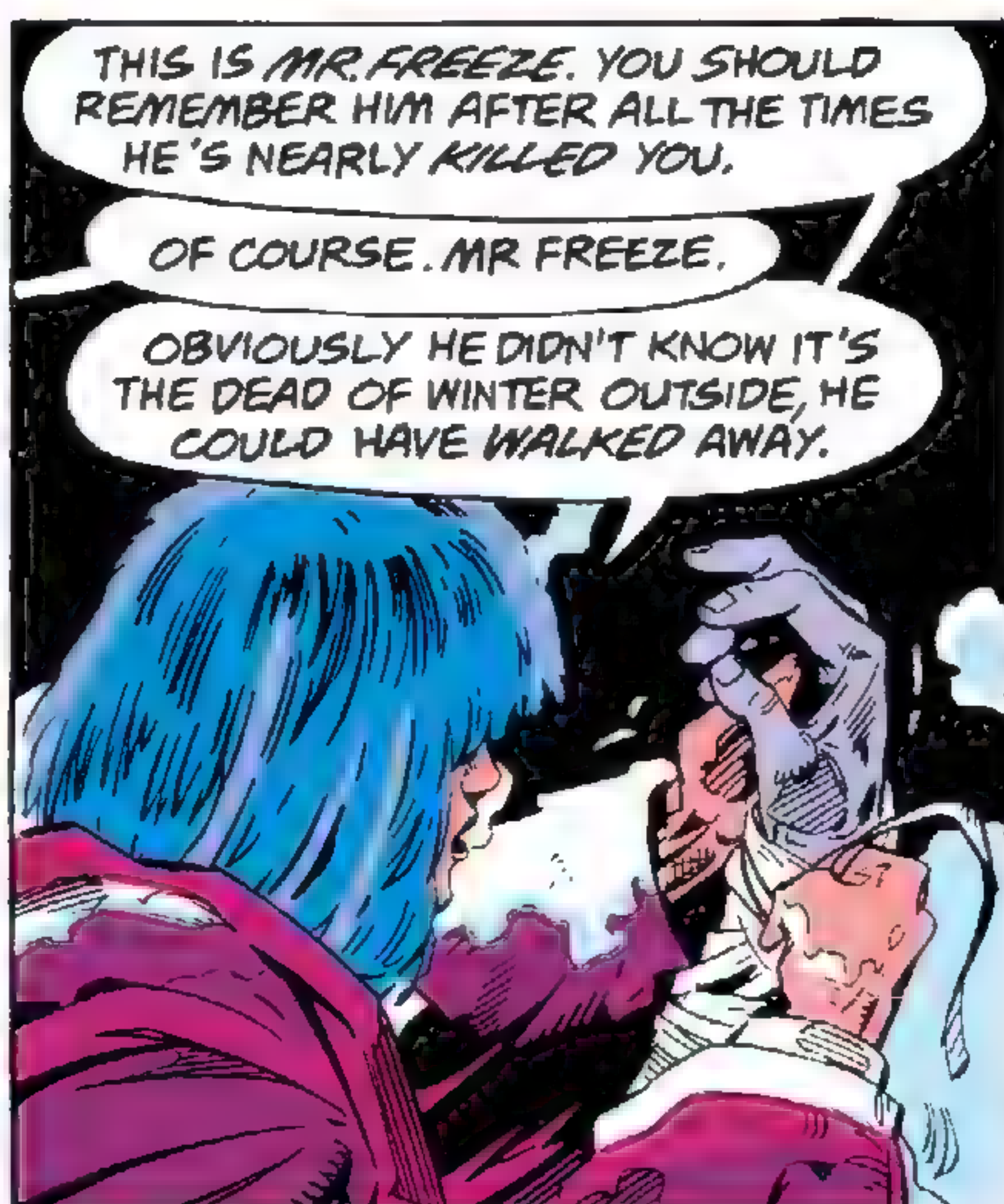
I...



HIS PULSE IS SO SLOW. BUT
HE'S ALIVE. YOU MAY HAVE
FRACTURED HIS SKULL.

THE COLD PRESERVES HIM.
HE CAME HERE TO THE COLDEST
PLACE HE COULD FIND... TO
SURVIVE.

YOU
SOUND LIKE
THAT SURPRISES
YOU.



THIS IS MR. FREEZE. YOU SHOULD
REMEMBER HIM AFTER ALL THE TIMES
HE'S NEARLY KILLED YOU.

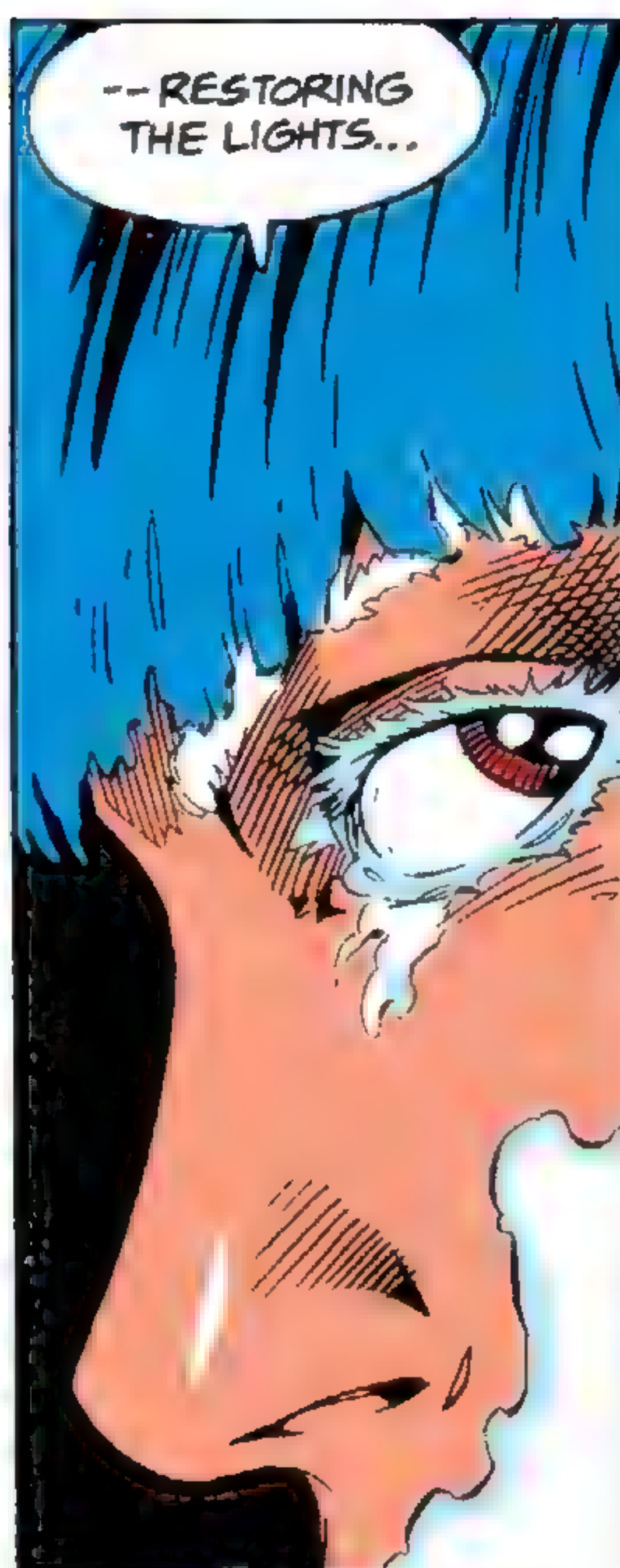
OF COURSE. MR. FREEZE.

OBTAINLY HE DIDN'T KNOW IT'S
THE DEAD OF WINTER OUTSIDE, HE
COULD HAVE WALKED AWAY.

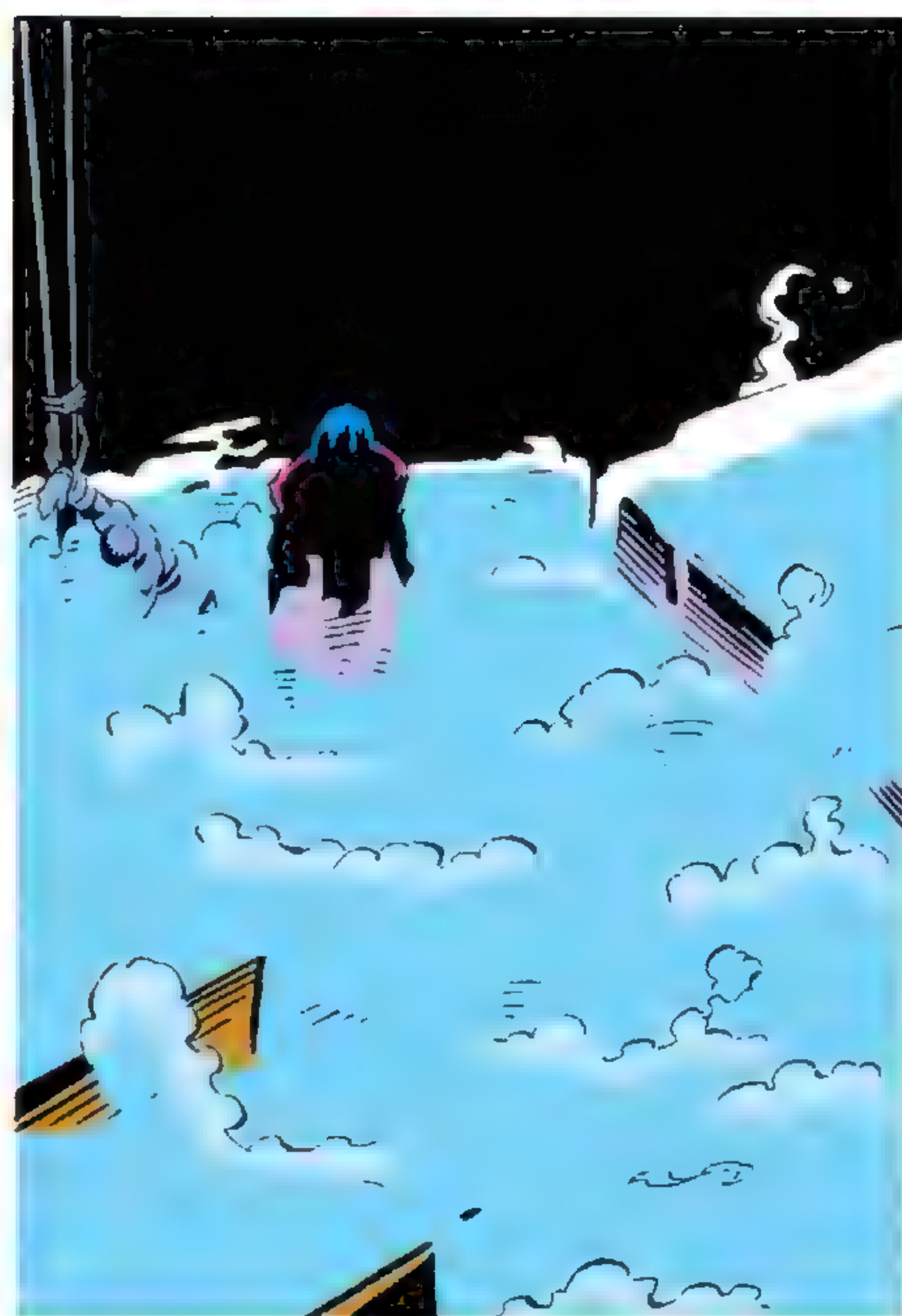


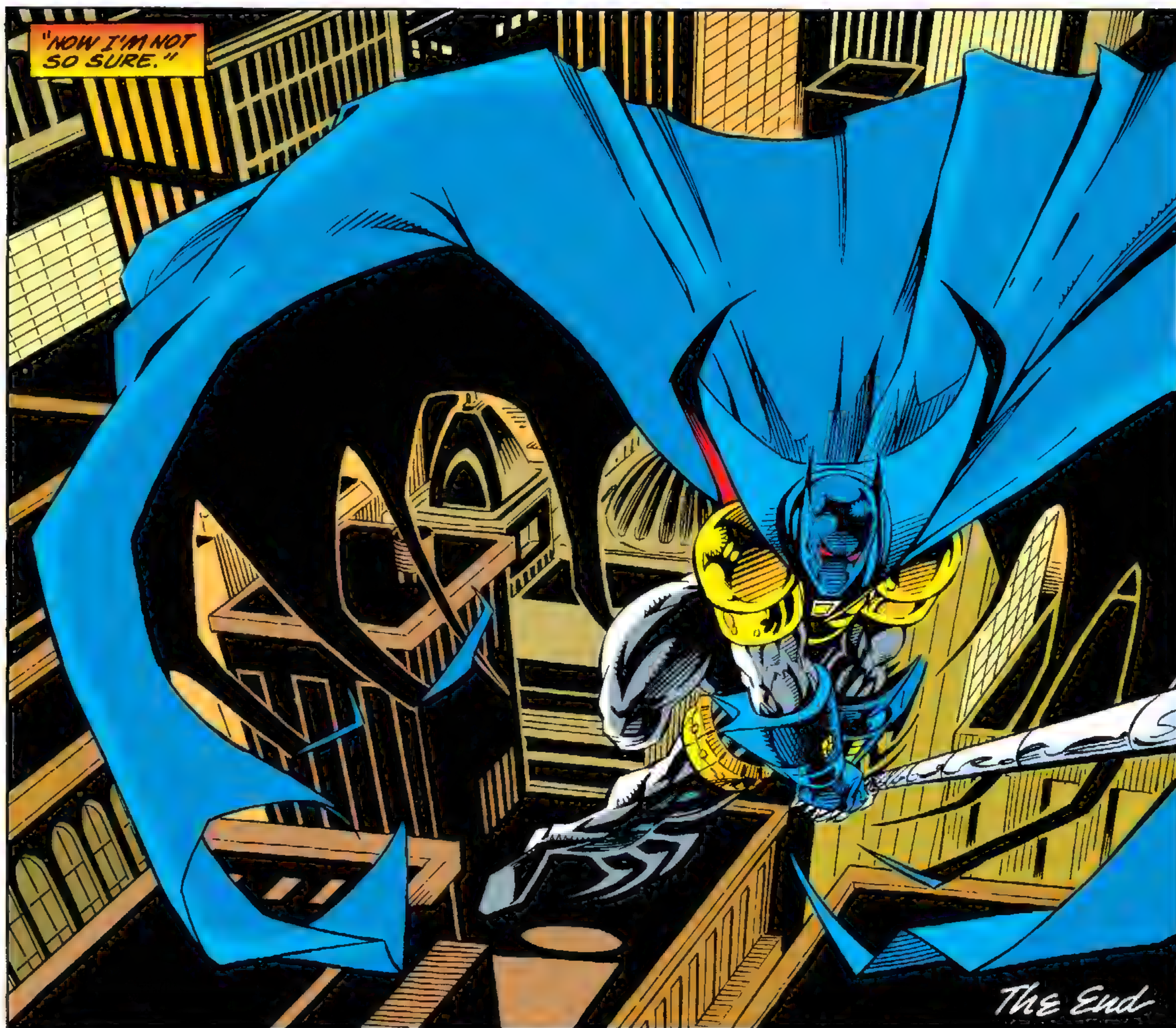
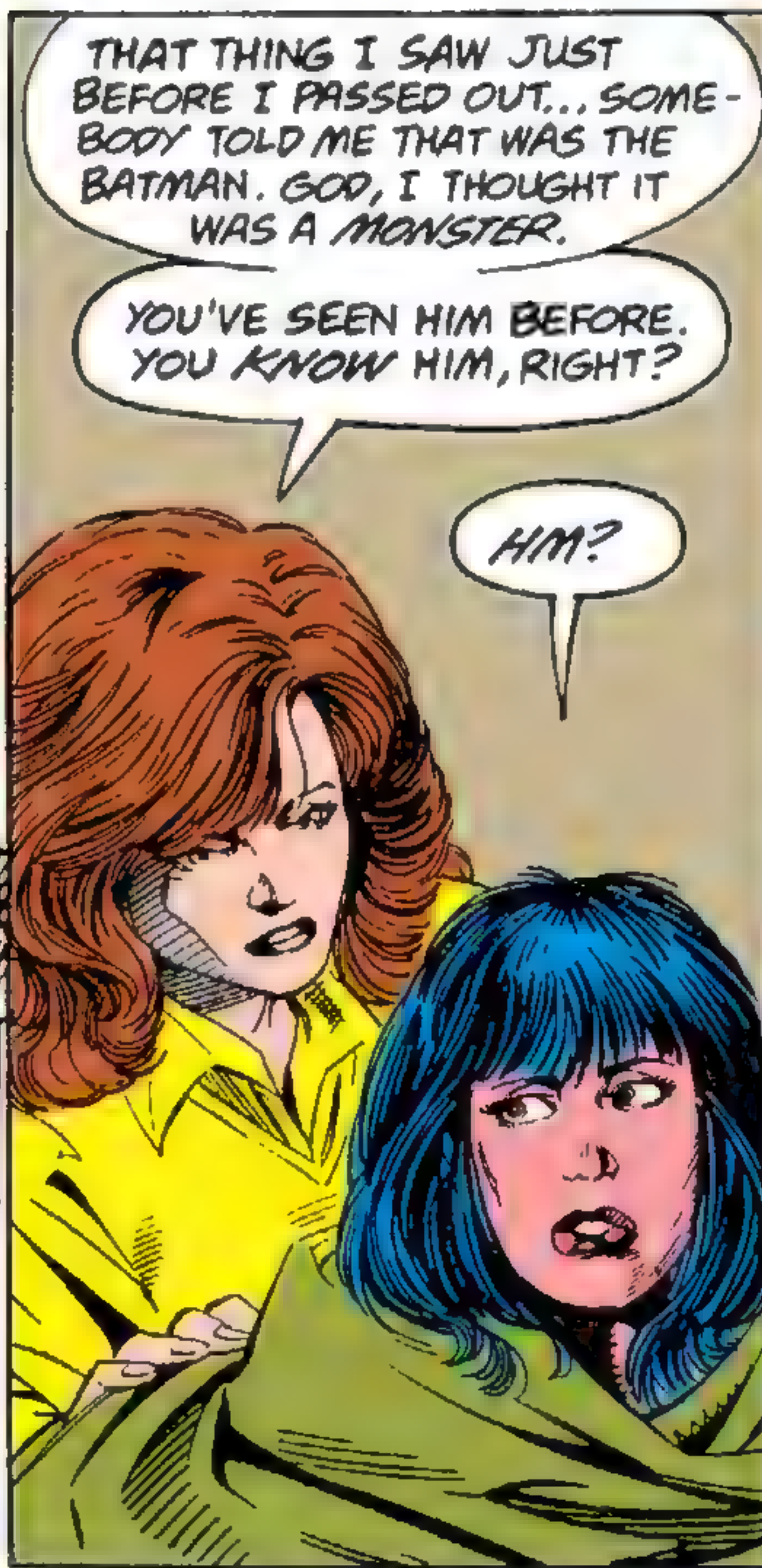
I'LL LEAVE
HIM HERE UNTIL
I CAN GET
BACKUP.

AND A REFRIGERATOR
TRUCK. YOU COULD
HELP BY--

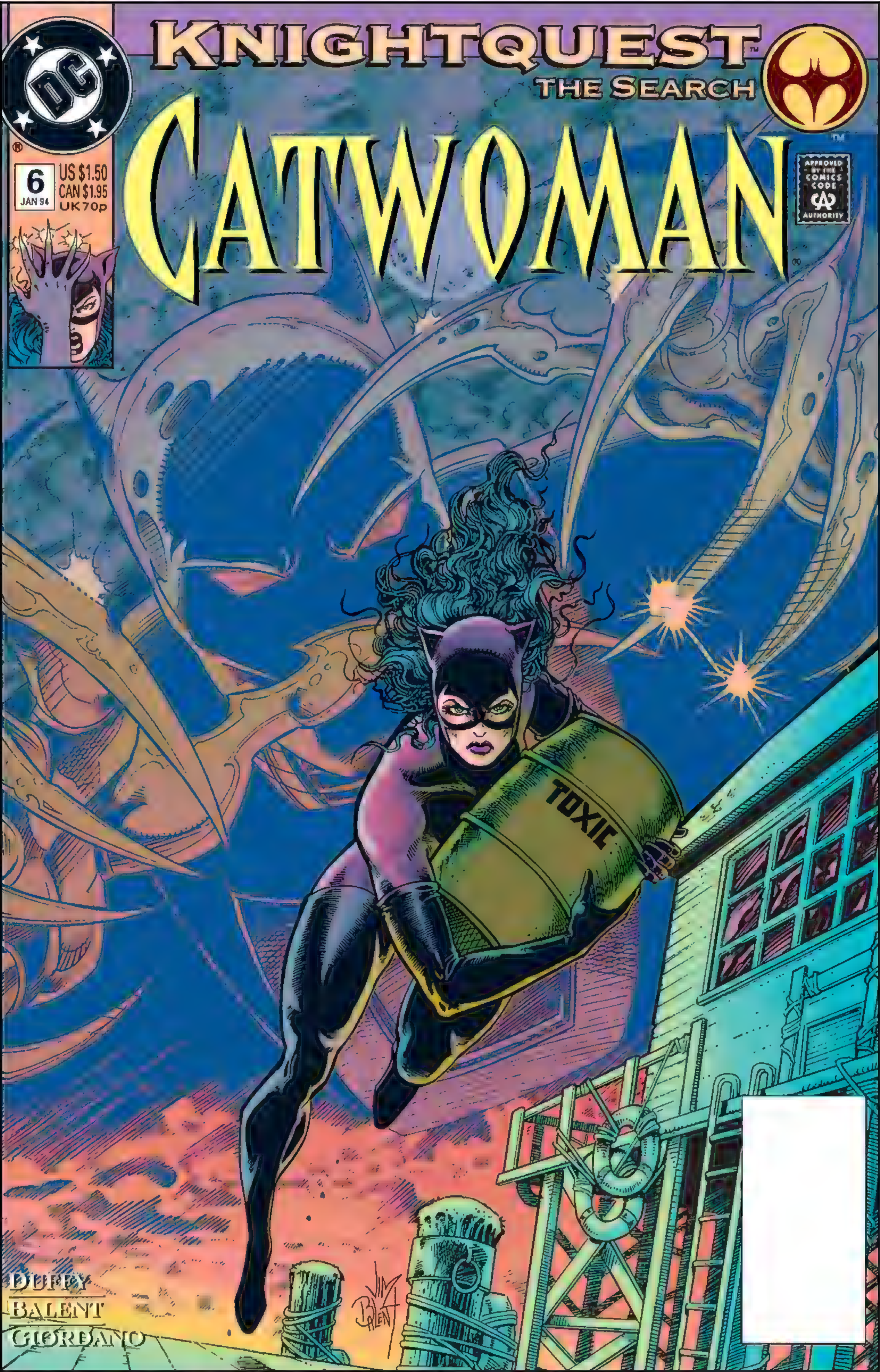


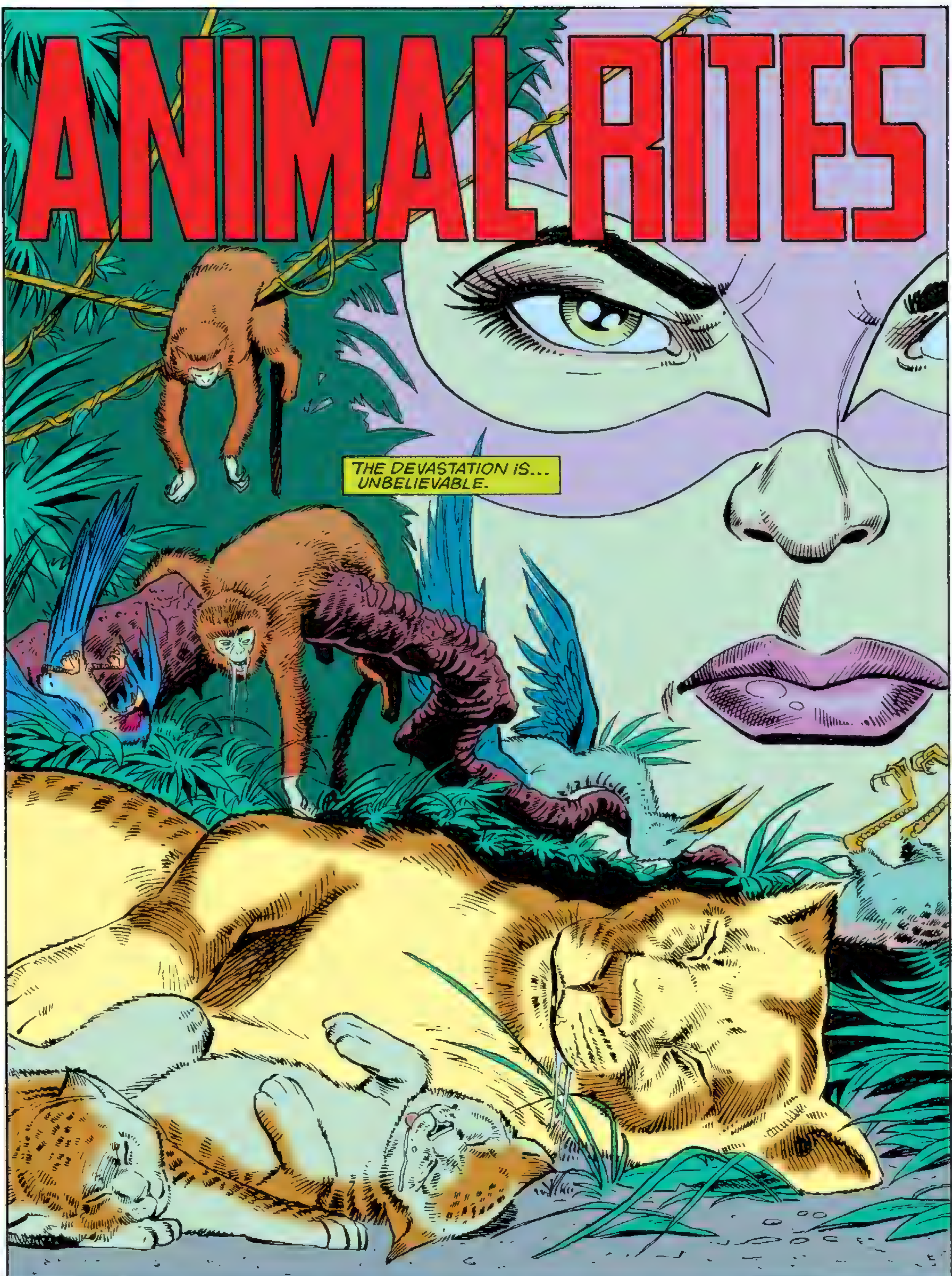
--RESTORING
THE LIGHTS...





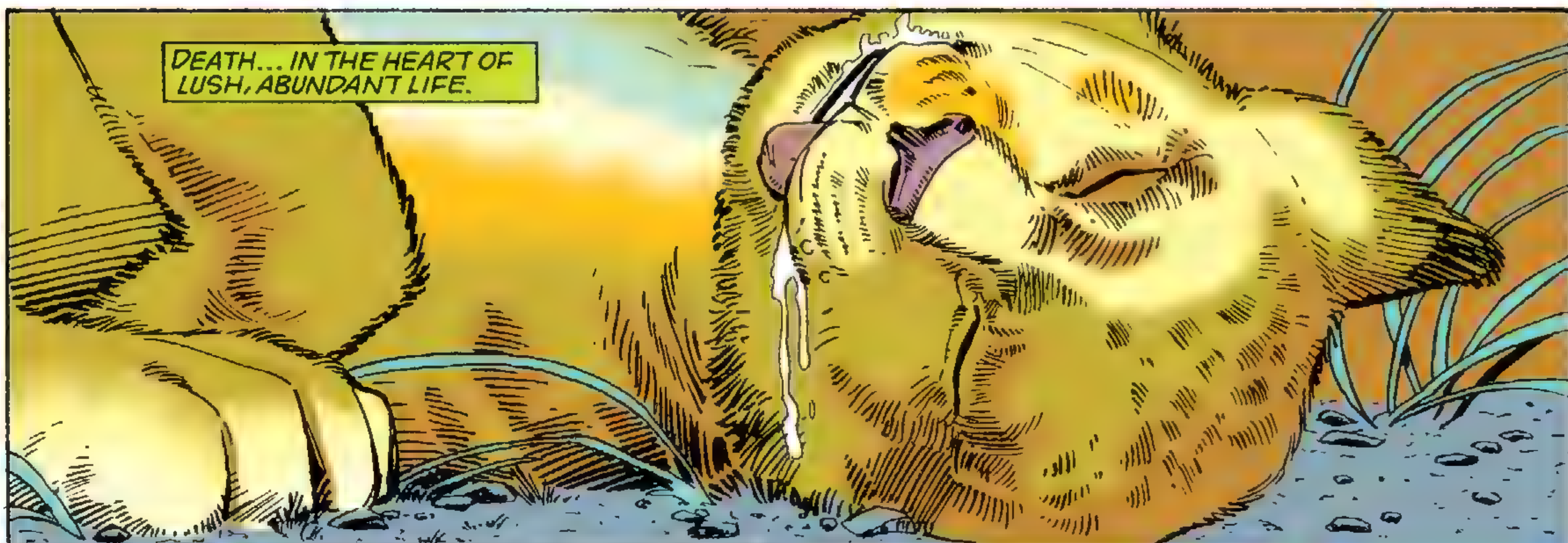
Cover art by JIM BALENT



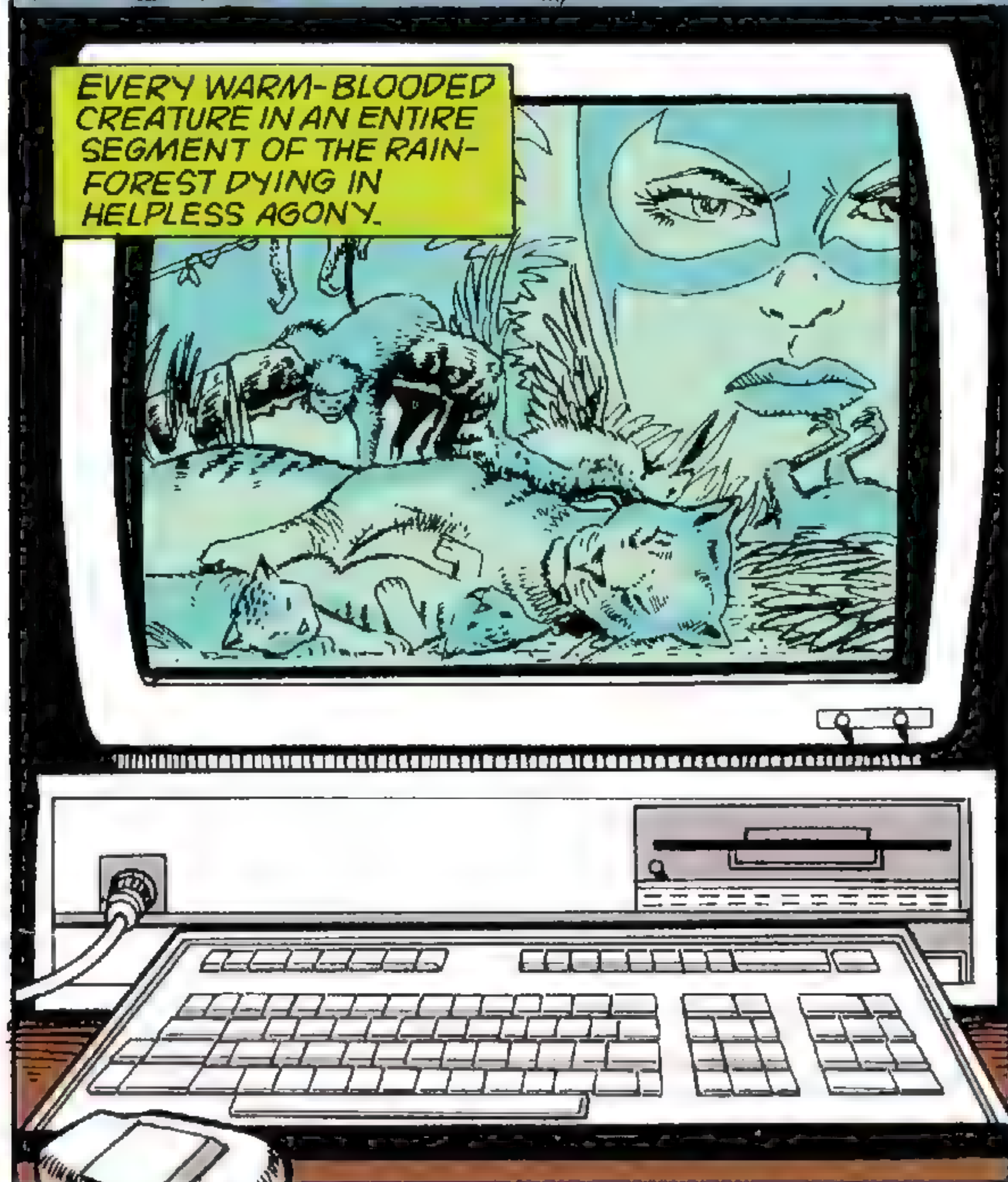


THE DEVASTATION IS...
UNBELIEVABLE.

JO DUFFY, WRITER JIM BALENT, PENCILLER DICK GIORDANO, INKER BUZZ SETZER, COLORIST
BOB PINAHA, LETTERER JORDAN B. GORFINKEL, ASSISTANT EDITOR DENNIS O'NEIL, EDITOR



DEATH... IN THE HEART OF LUSH, ABUNDANT LIFE.



EVERY WARM-BLOODED CREATURE IN AN ENTIRE SEGMENT OF THE RAIN-FOREST DYING IN HELPLESS AGONY.

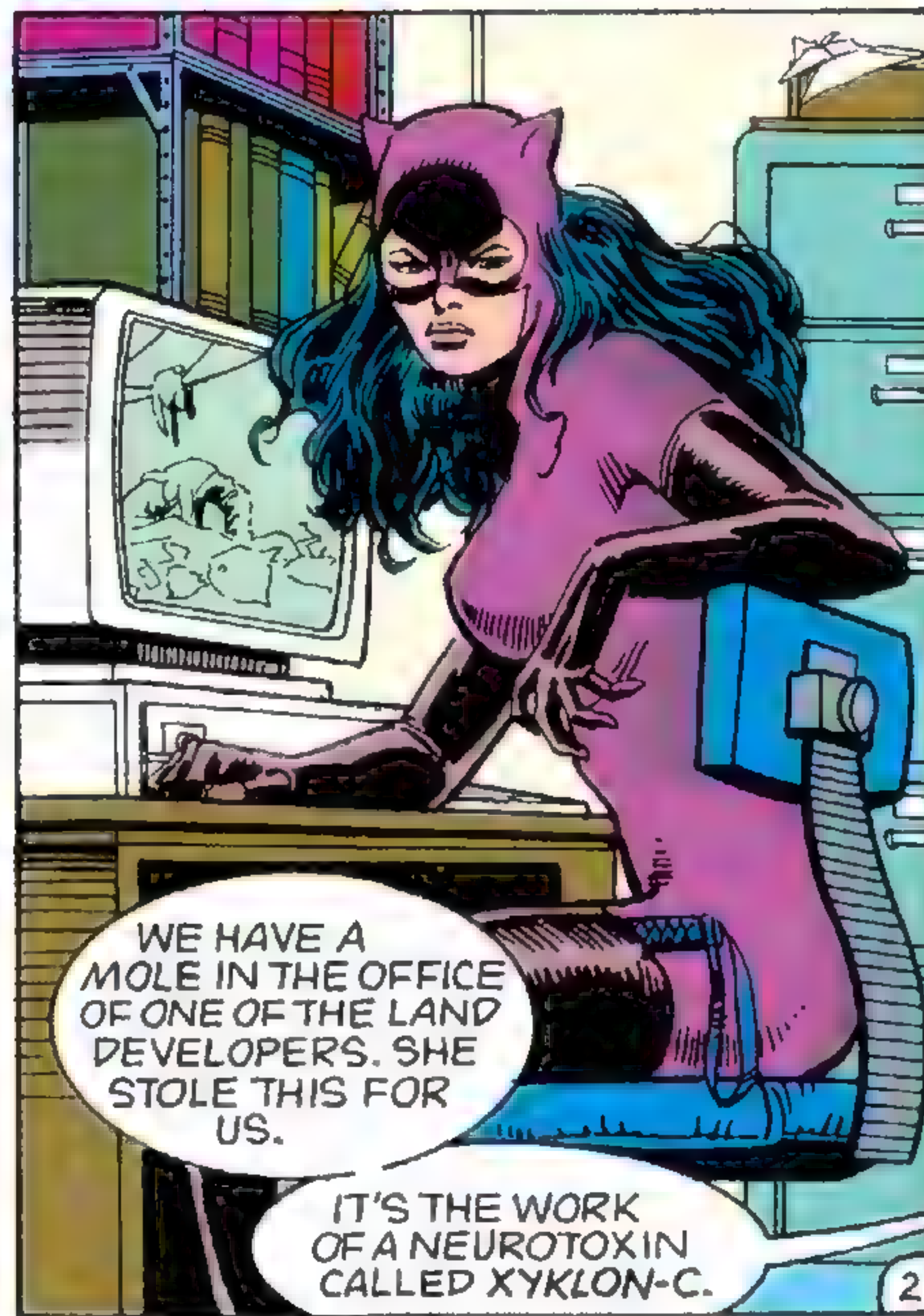


THE FOOTAGE IS TOP SECRET, ONLY FOUR DAYS OLD.



YOU WERE RIGHT TO SHOW ME.

HOW'D YOU GET THE PICTURES?



WE HAVE A MOLE IN THE OFFICE OF ONE OF THE LAND DEVELOPERS. SHE STOLE THIS FOR US.

IT'S THE WORK OF A NEUROTOXIN CALLED XYKLON-C.



NONE OF THEM HAS EVER TWIGGED TO THE FACT THAT I'M ALSO ONE OF THEIR PART-TIME MEMBERS.

WE'RE NOT ALL HERE TONIGHT, ARE WE? I DON'T SEE PROFESSOR UNDERHILL ANYWHERE...

...OR THAT DRIPPY LITTLE DIE-AWAY... WHAT'S HER NAME...?

SERENA?



SELINA. AND STOP PICKING ON HER, CATWOMAN.

SHE'S SHY, BUT SHE'S NEVER HURT ANYONE.



WORD, CAT-LADY. SELINA'S GOT A HEART AS BIG AS BIG SUR.

NOT NEARLY AS BIG AS WHAT THE CAT-BABE'S GOT!

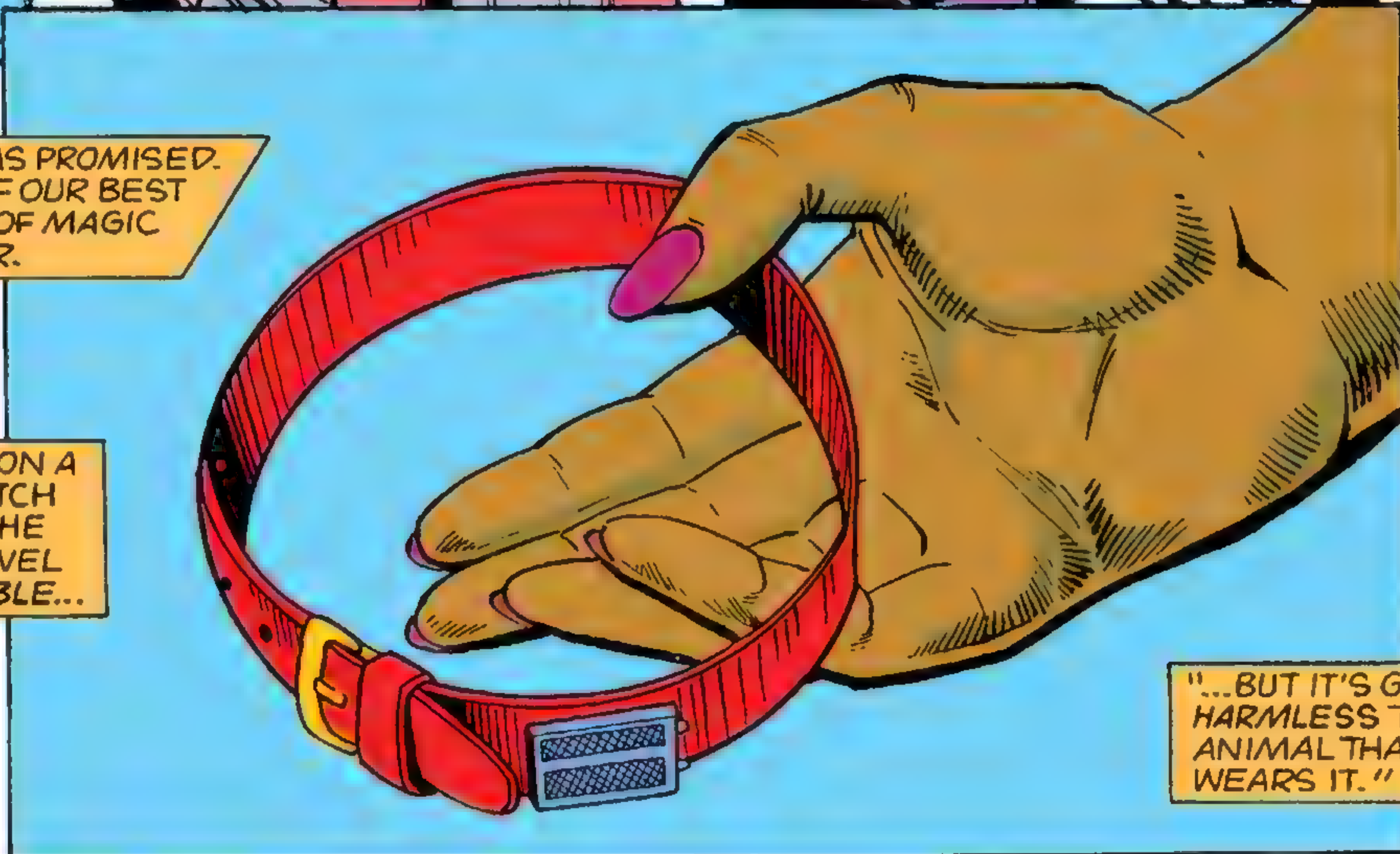
HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE!



KNOCK IT OFF, YOU TWO!

BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, LET'S REMEMBER WHAT I CAME FOR.

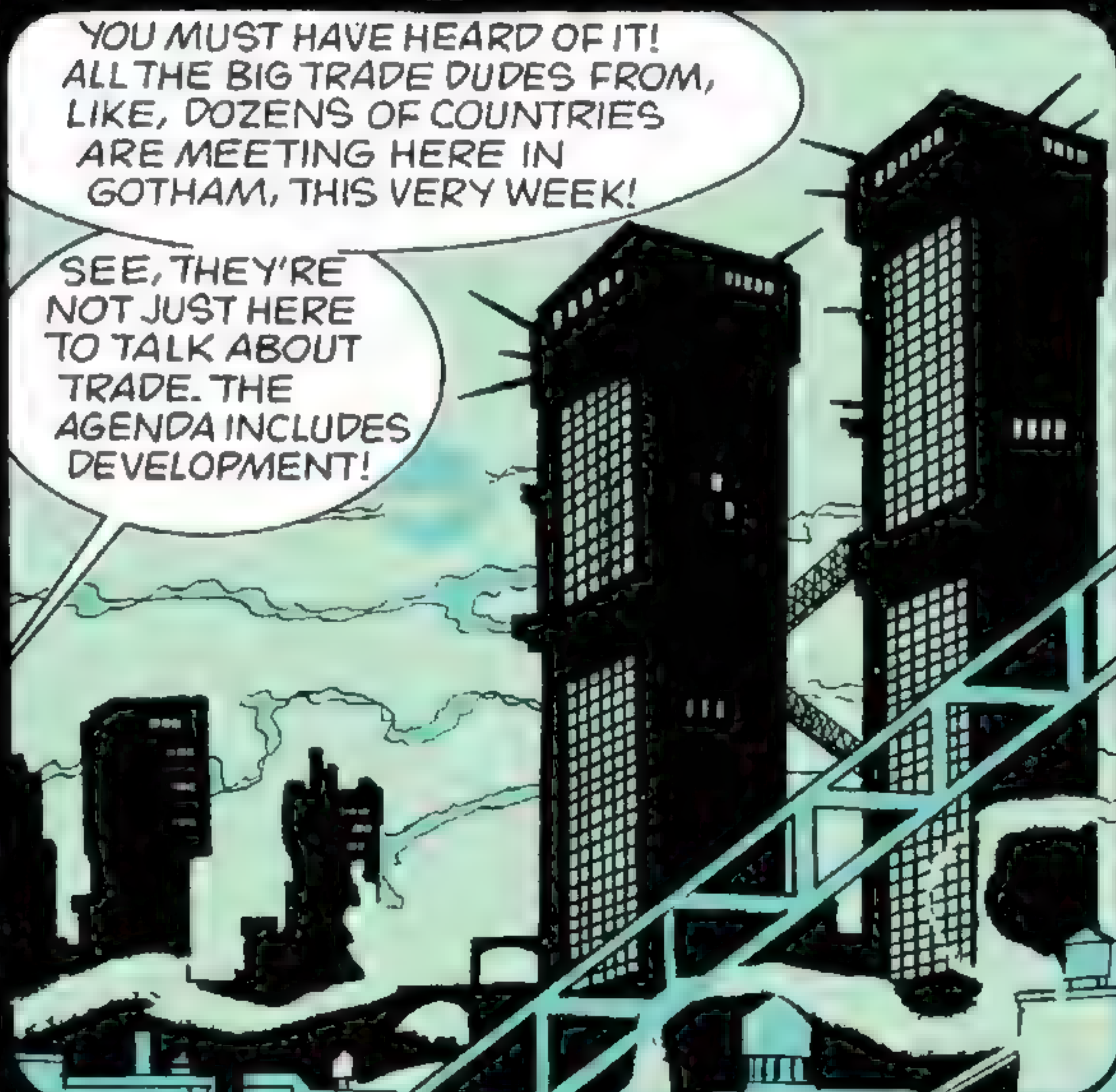
WERE YOU ABLE TO DO IT?



"YUP. AS PROMISED. ONE OF OUR BEST BITS OF MAGIC EVER.

"OPERATES ON A SIMPLE WATCH BATTERY. THE VOLUME LEVEL IS INCREDIBLE...

"...BUT IT'S GUARANTEED HARMLESS TO THE ANIMAL THAT WEARS IT."





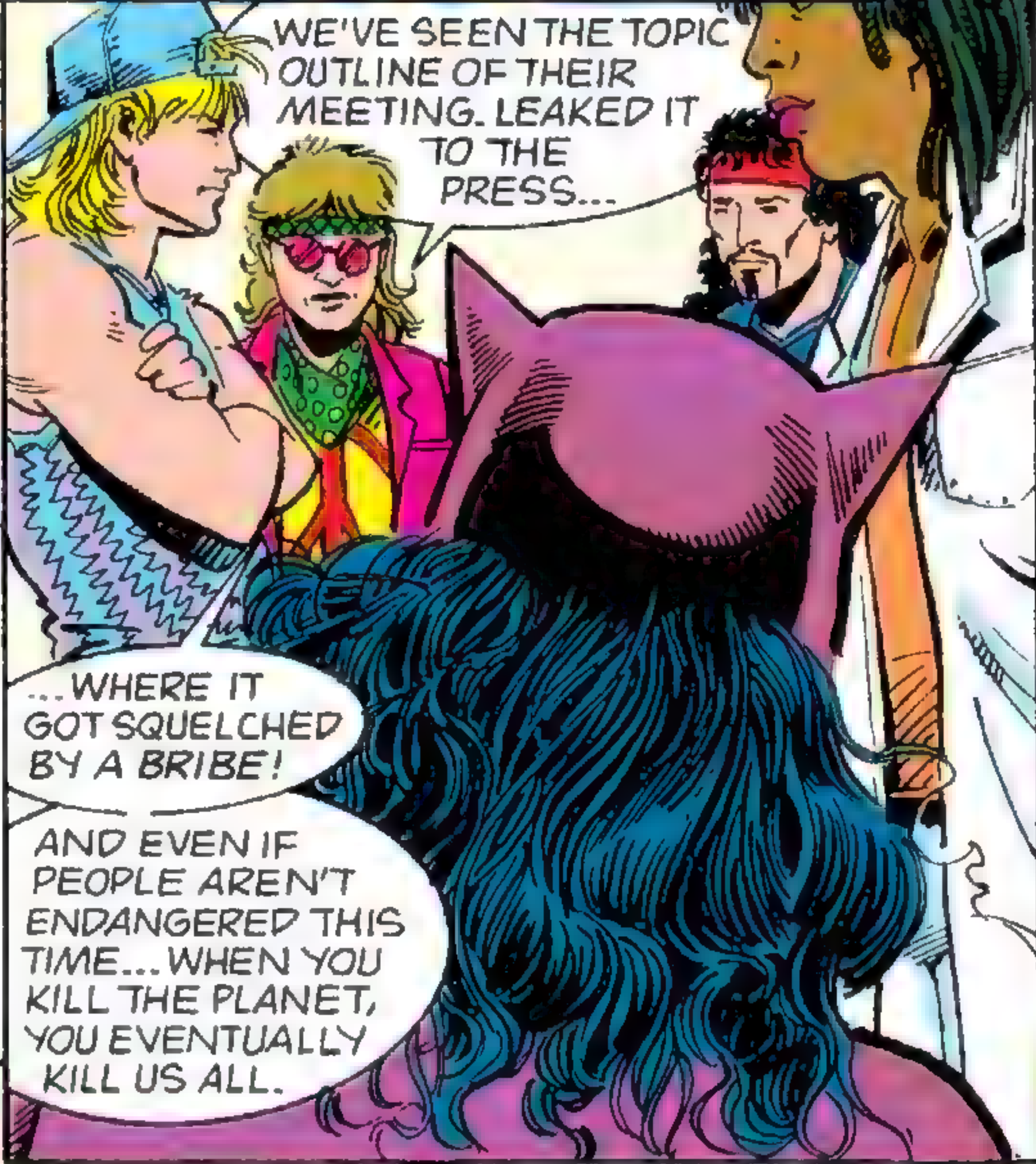
I ASSUME THE TOXINS WOULD ALSO KILL ANY HUMANS WHO WANDERED THEIR WAY...?

IN SECONDS... BUT THE CONFERENCE MEMBERS WILL KEEP THEIR OWN AFFLUENT BUTTS SAFELY IN THE CITIES...

... AND WHAT'RE A FEW INDIGENOUS HUMAN LIVES MORE OR LESS?



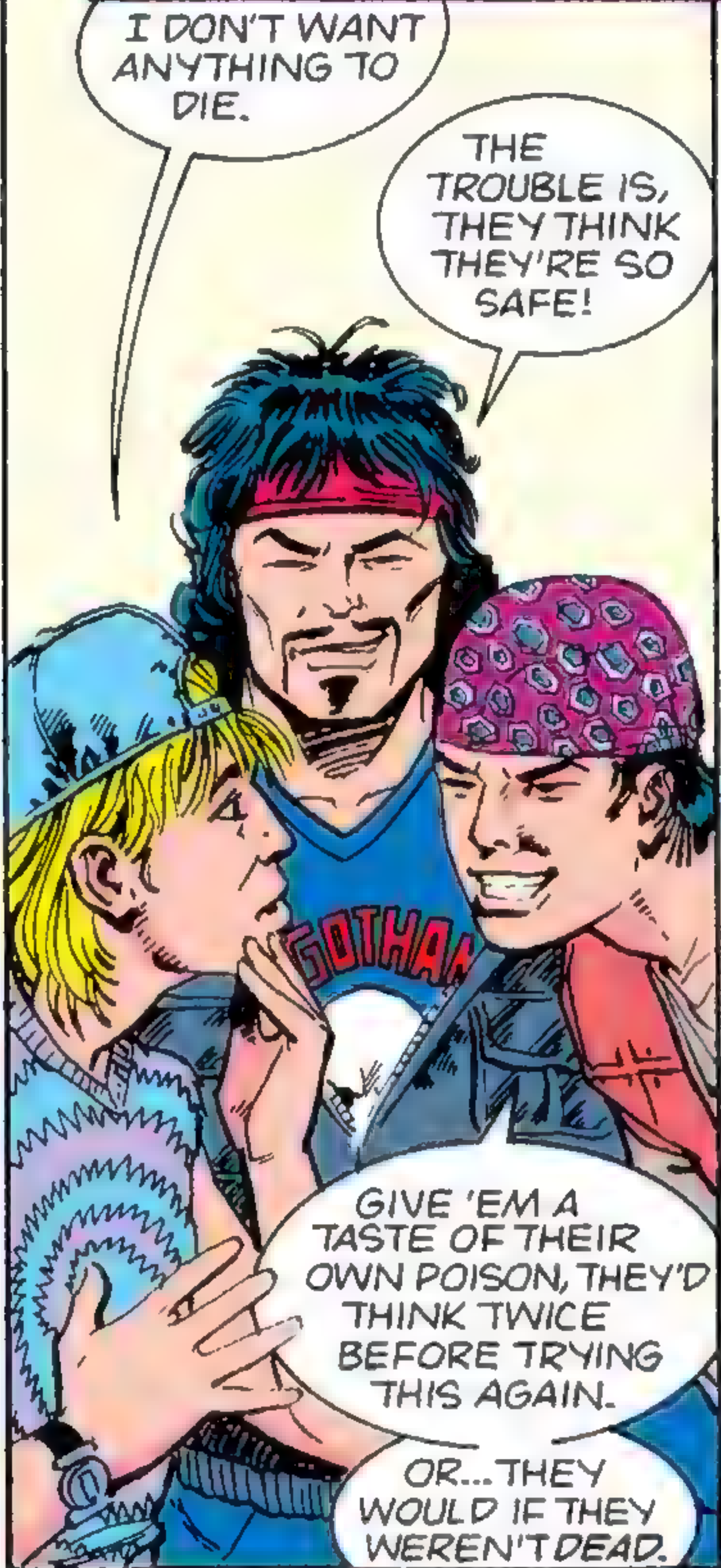
YOU REALLY THINK THEY'D TAKE THAT CHANCE?



WE'VE SEEN THE TOPIC OUTLINE OF THEIR MEETING. LEAKED IT TO THE PRESS...

... WHERE IT GOT SQUELCHED BY A BRIBE!

AND EVEN IF PEOPLE AREN'T ENDANGERED THIS TIME... WHEN YOU KILL THE PLANET, YOU EVENTUALLY KILL US ALL.



I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DIE.

THE TROUBLE IS, THEY THINK THEY'RE SO SAFE!

GIVE 'EM A TASTE OF THEIR OWN POISON, THEY'D THINK TWICE BEFORE TRYING THIS AGAIN.

OR... THEY WOULD IF THEY WEREN'T DEAD.



ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATES FANTASIZING ABOUT KILLING. MAKES ABOUT AS MUCH SENSE AS "RIGHT TO LIFE" MURDERERS.

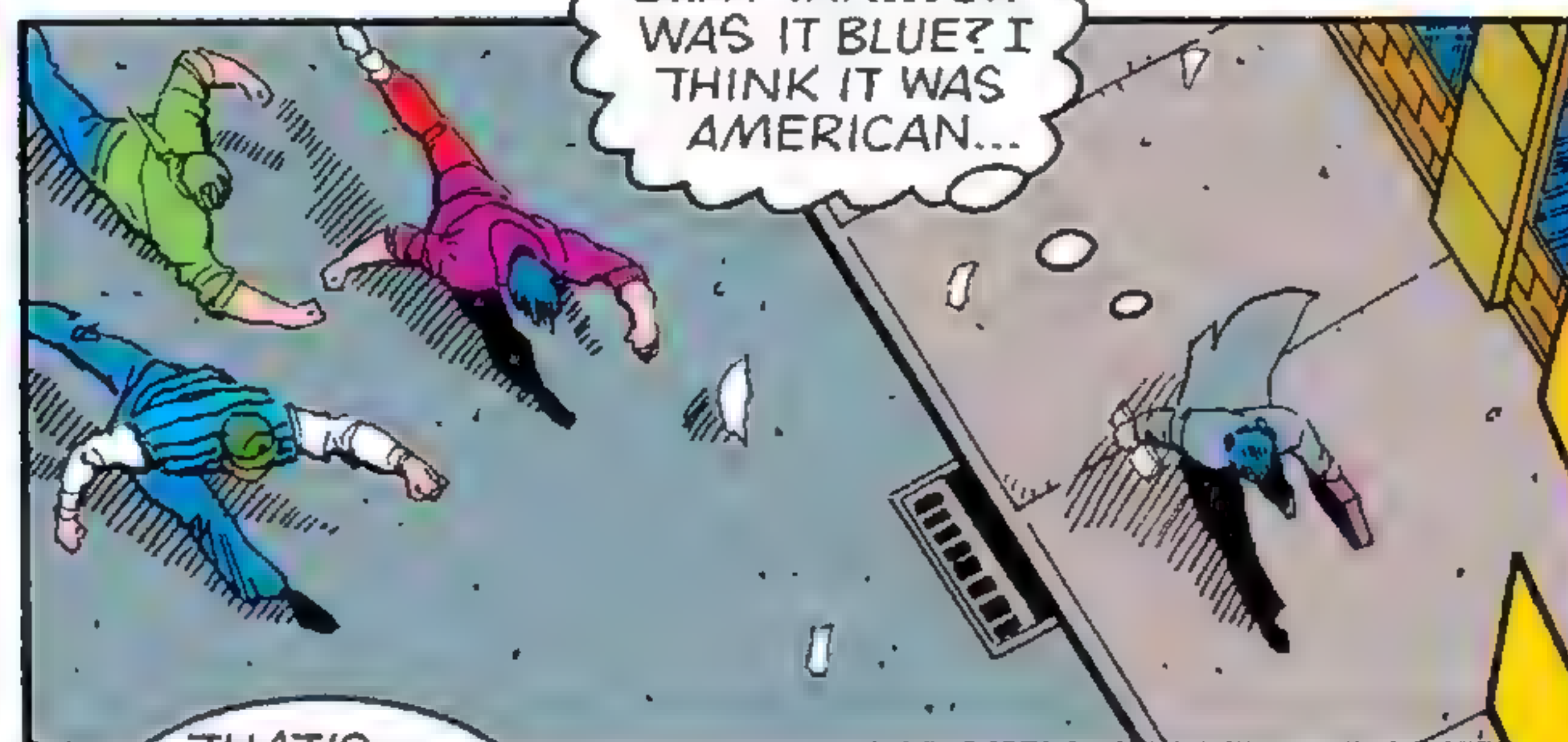
HOW DO YOU ALL KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS "XYKLON-C"? I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF IT!

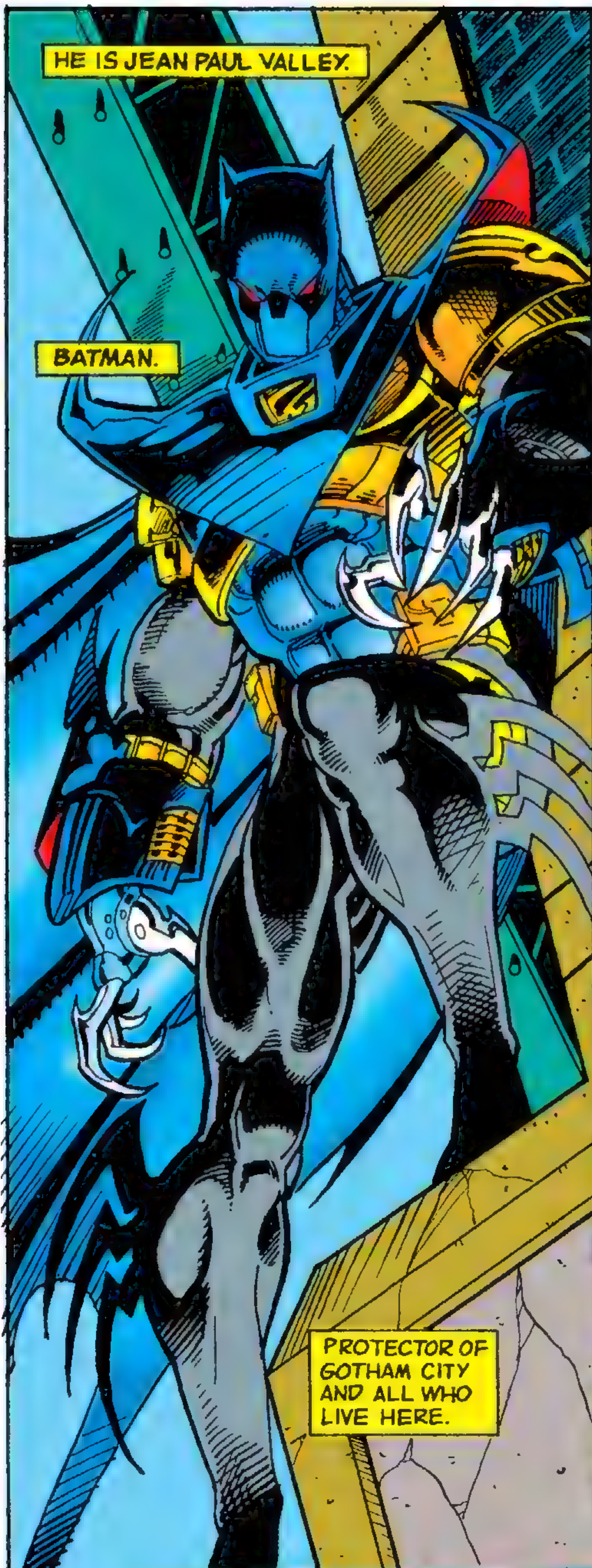


HE... I DON'T THINK HE KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED, CATWOMAN...

... PROF... PROFESSOR UNDERHILL DEVELOPED IT.

OH, JOB!

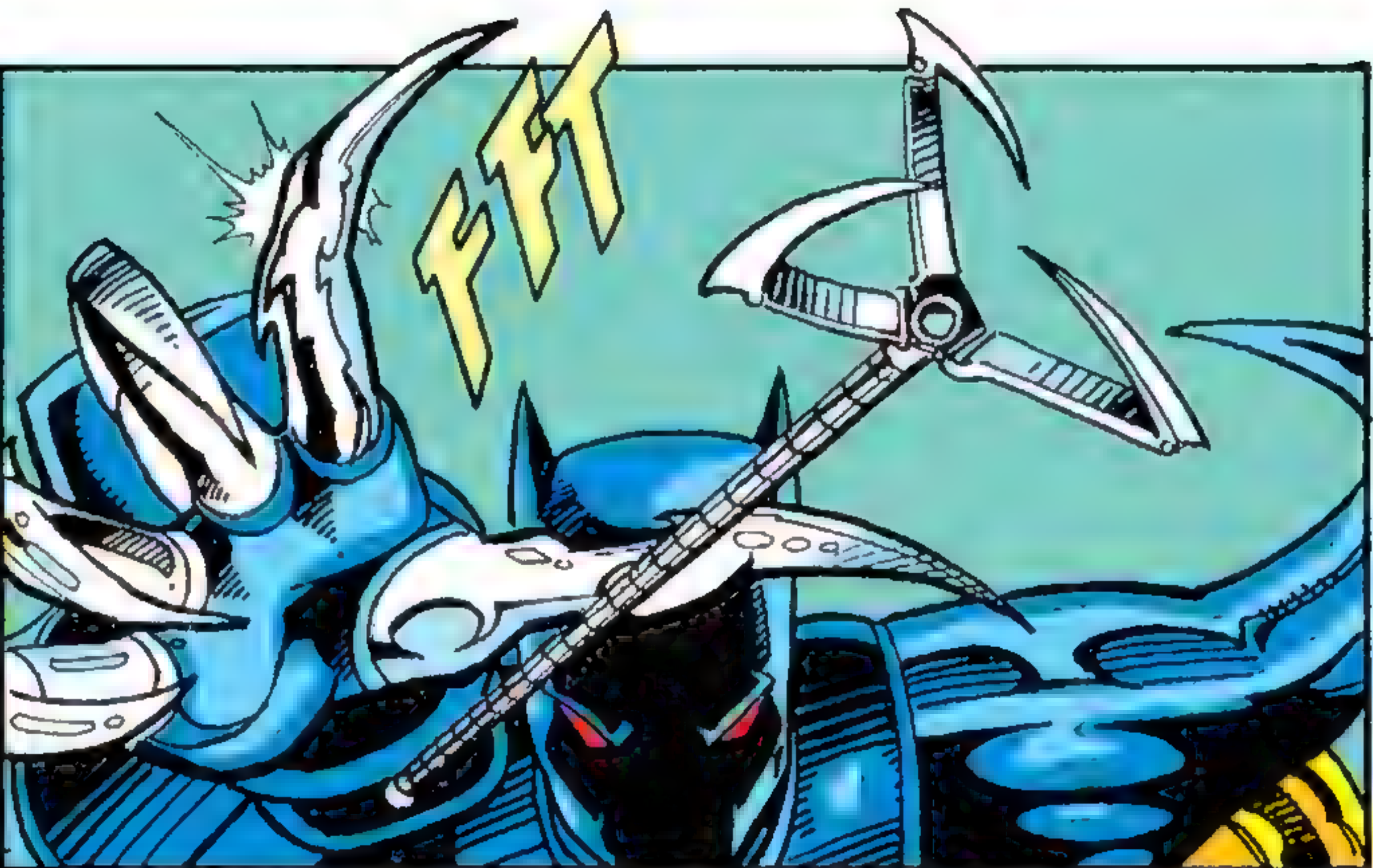




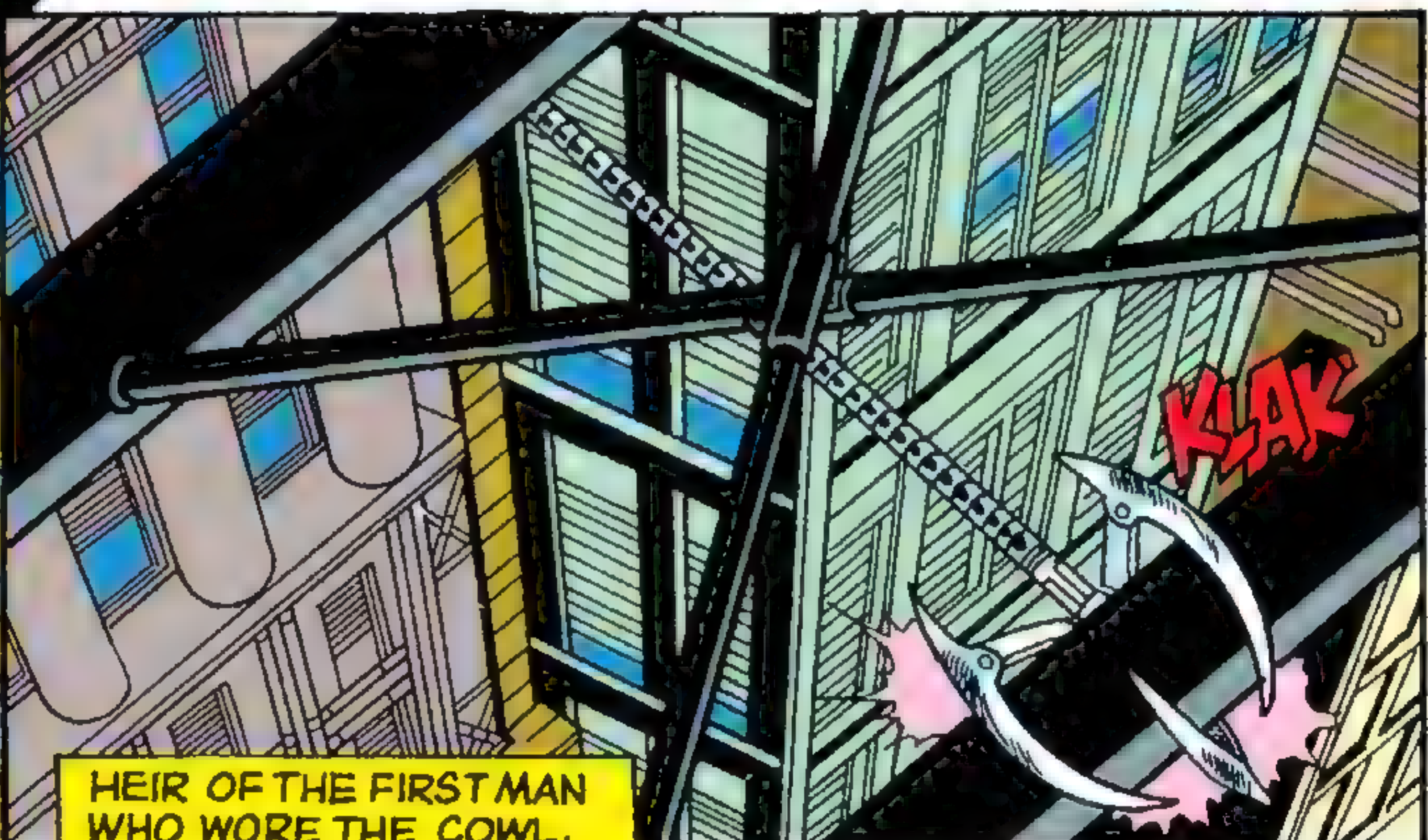
HE IS JEAN PAUL VALLEY.

BATMAN.

PROTECTOR OF
GOTHAM CITY
AND ALL WHO
LIVE HERE.

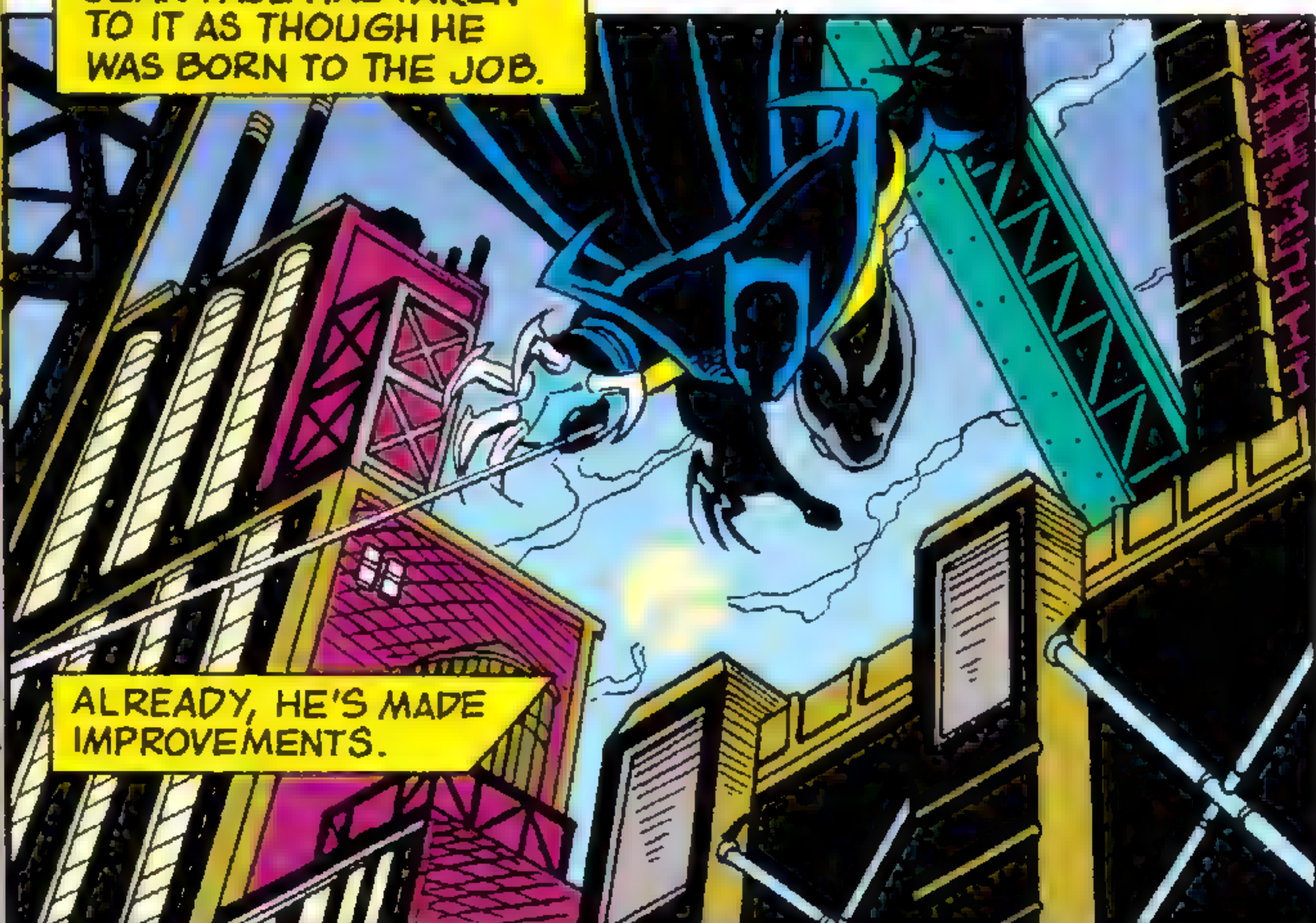


FFF

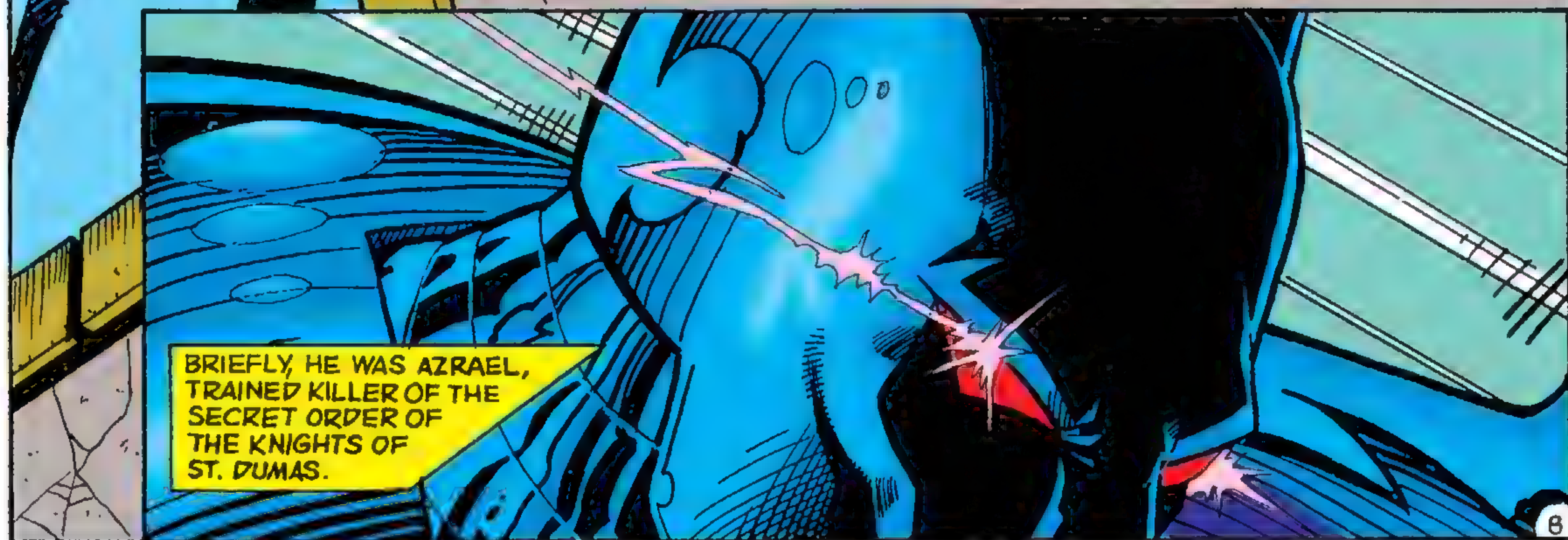


KLAK

HEIR OF THE FIRST MAN
WHO WORE THE COWL,
JEAN PAUL HAS TAKEN
TO IT AS THOUGH HE
WAS BORN TO THE JOB.



ALREADY, HE'S MADE
IMPROVEMENTS.



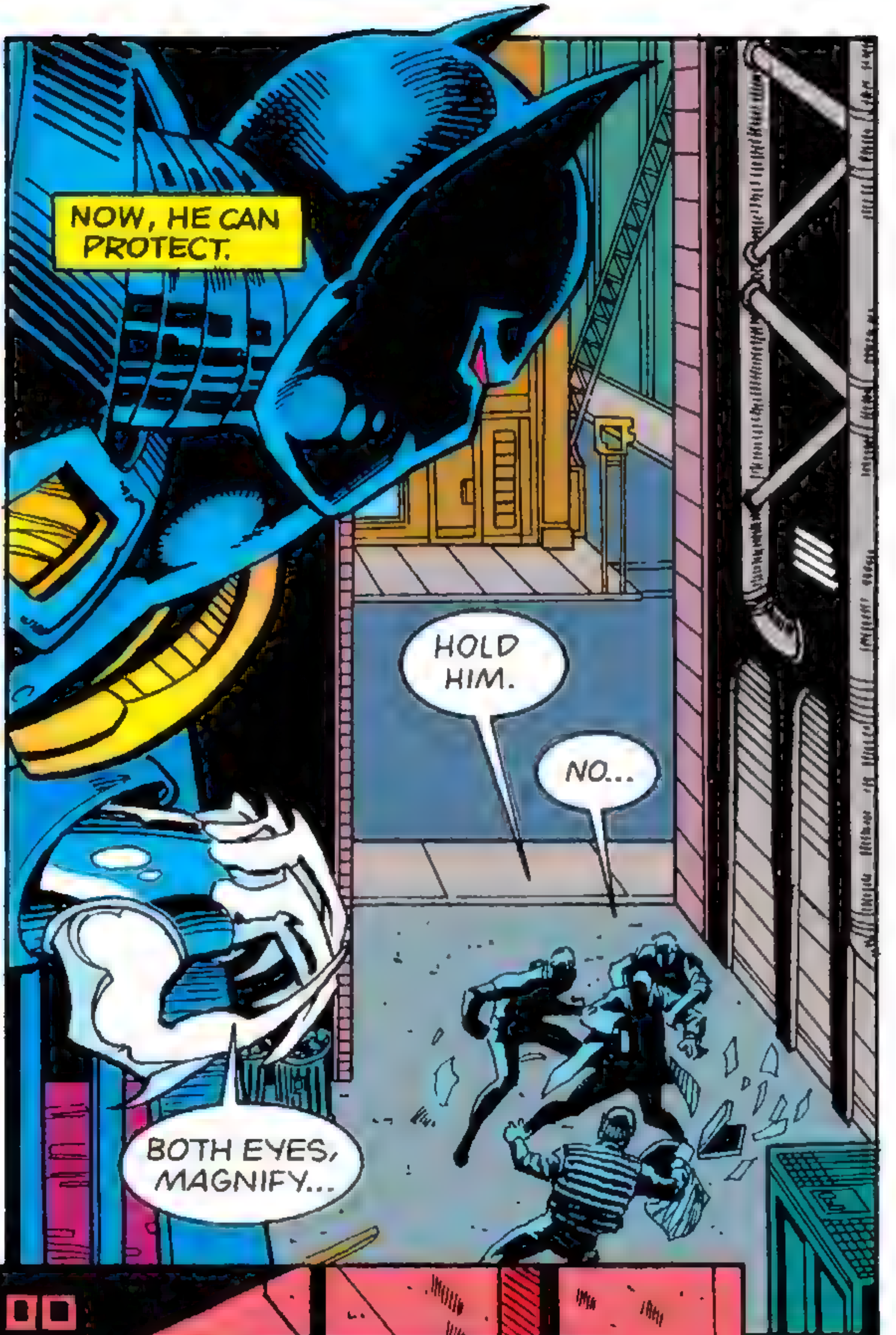
BRIEFLY, HE WAS AZRAEL,
TRAINED KILLER OF THE
SECRET ORDER OF
THE KNIGHTS OF
ST. DUMAS.



THIS LIFE IS BETTER.
BEFORE, HE COULD
ONLY AVENGE.

NOW HE IS
A HERO.

WHAT
DO YOU--?

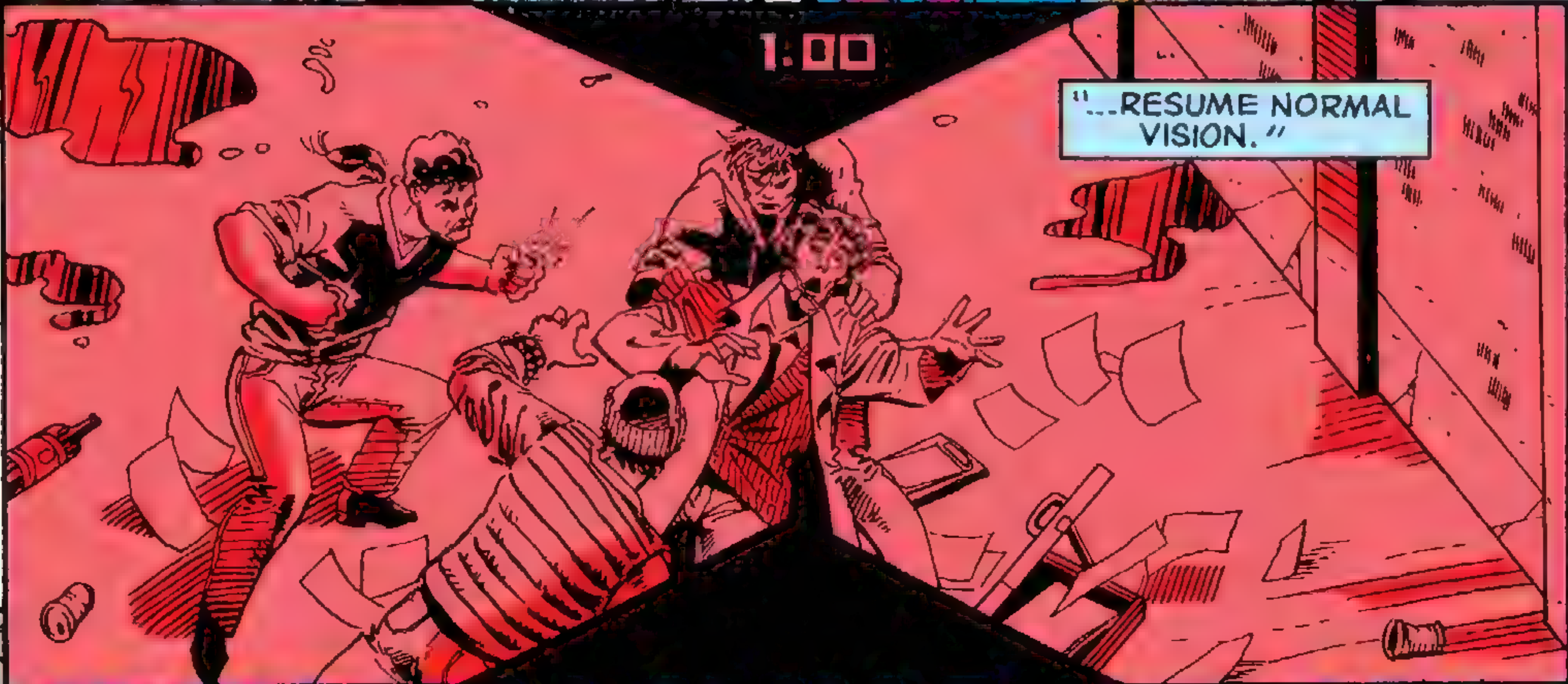


NOW, HE CAN
PROTECT.

HOLD
HIM.

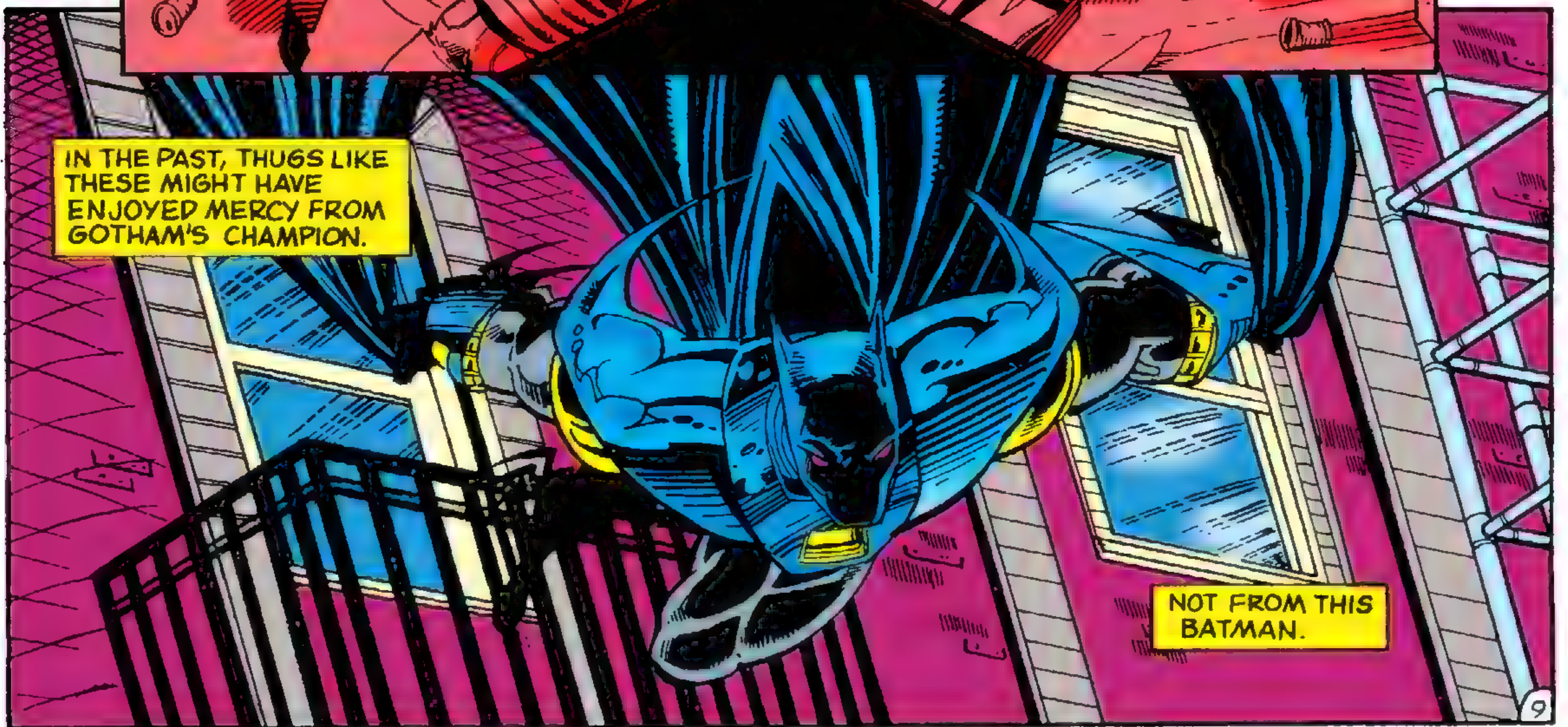
NO...

BOTH EYES,
MAGNIFY...



1.00

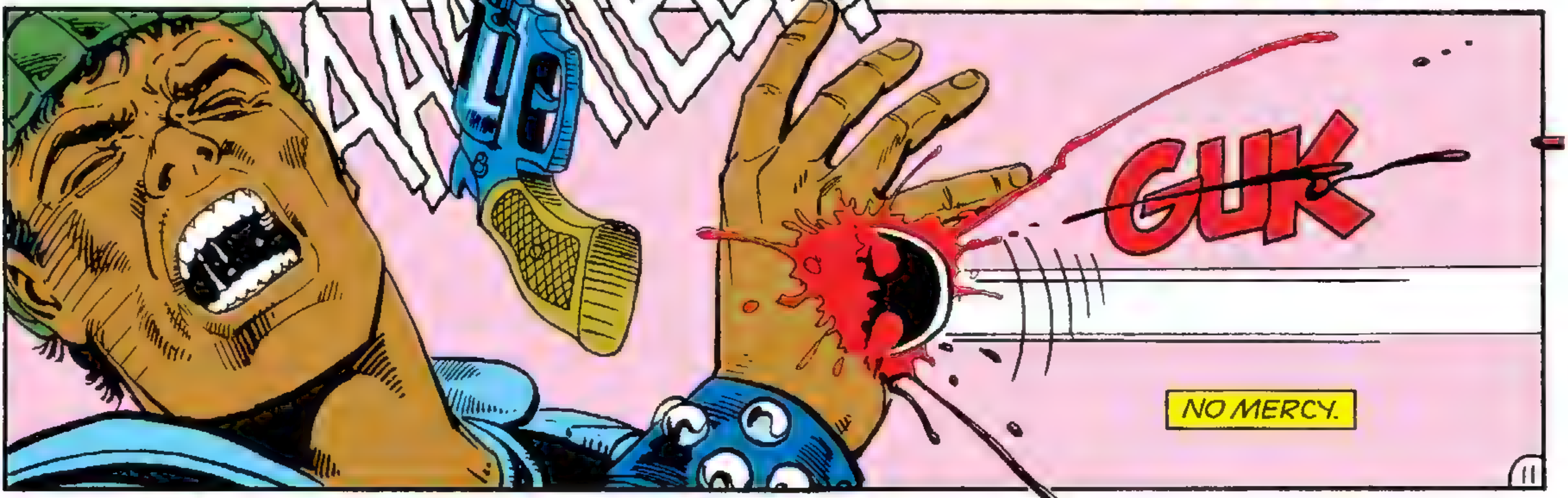
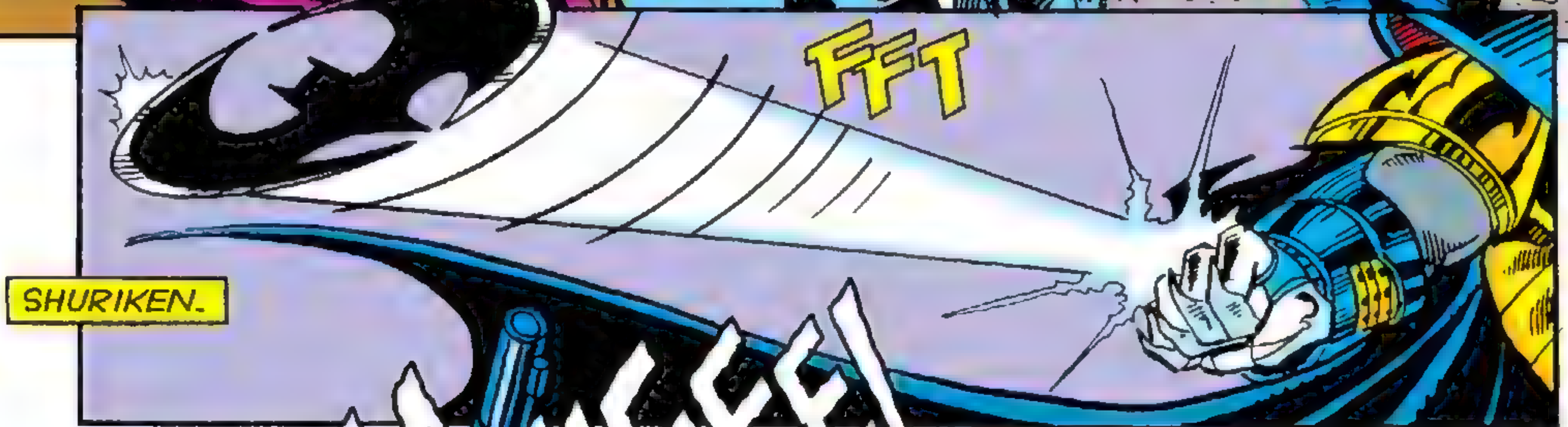
"...RESUME NORMAL
VISION."

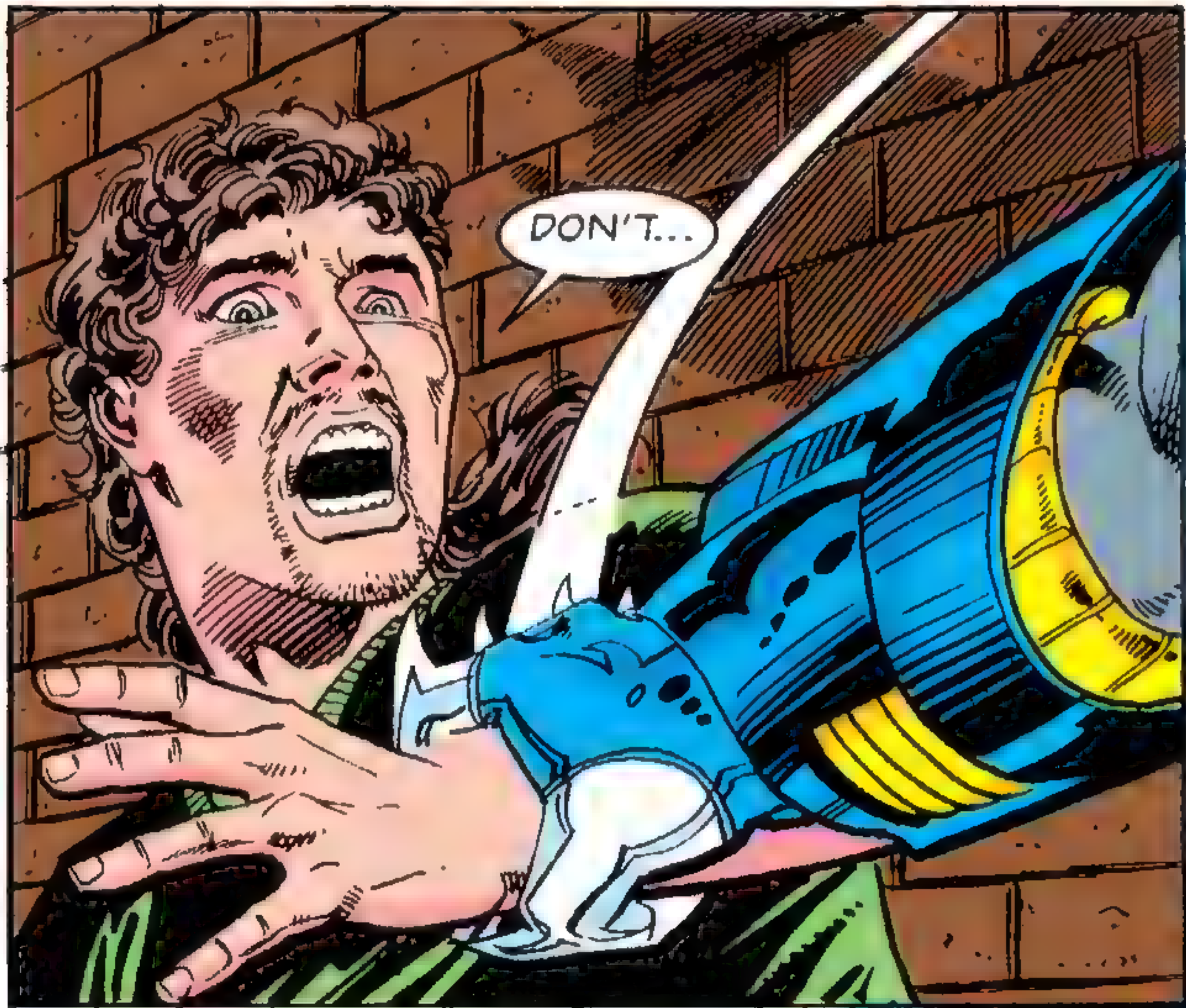


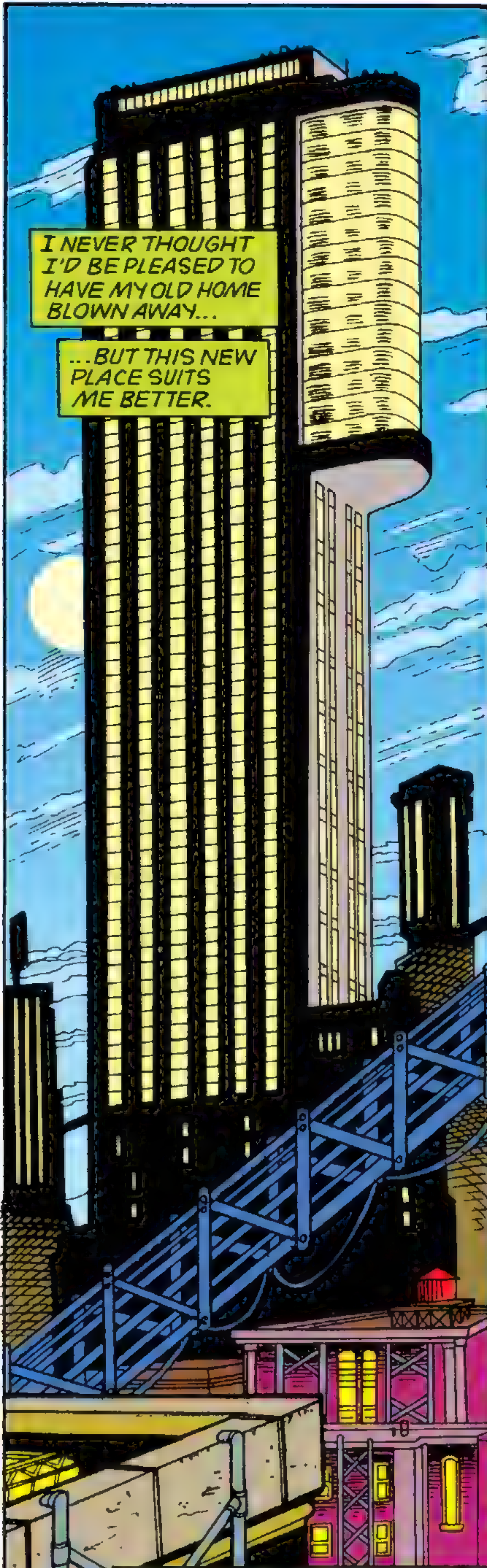
IN THE PAST, THUGS LIKE
THESE MIGHT HAVE
ENJOYED MERCY FROM
GOTHAM'S CHAMPION.

NOT FROM THIS
BATMAN.









I NEVER THOUGHT
I'D BE PLEASED TO
HAVE MY OLD HOME
BLOWN AWAY...

...BUT THIS NEW
PLACE SUITS
ME BETTER.



I'M
HO-OOOME!

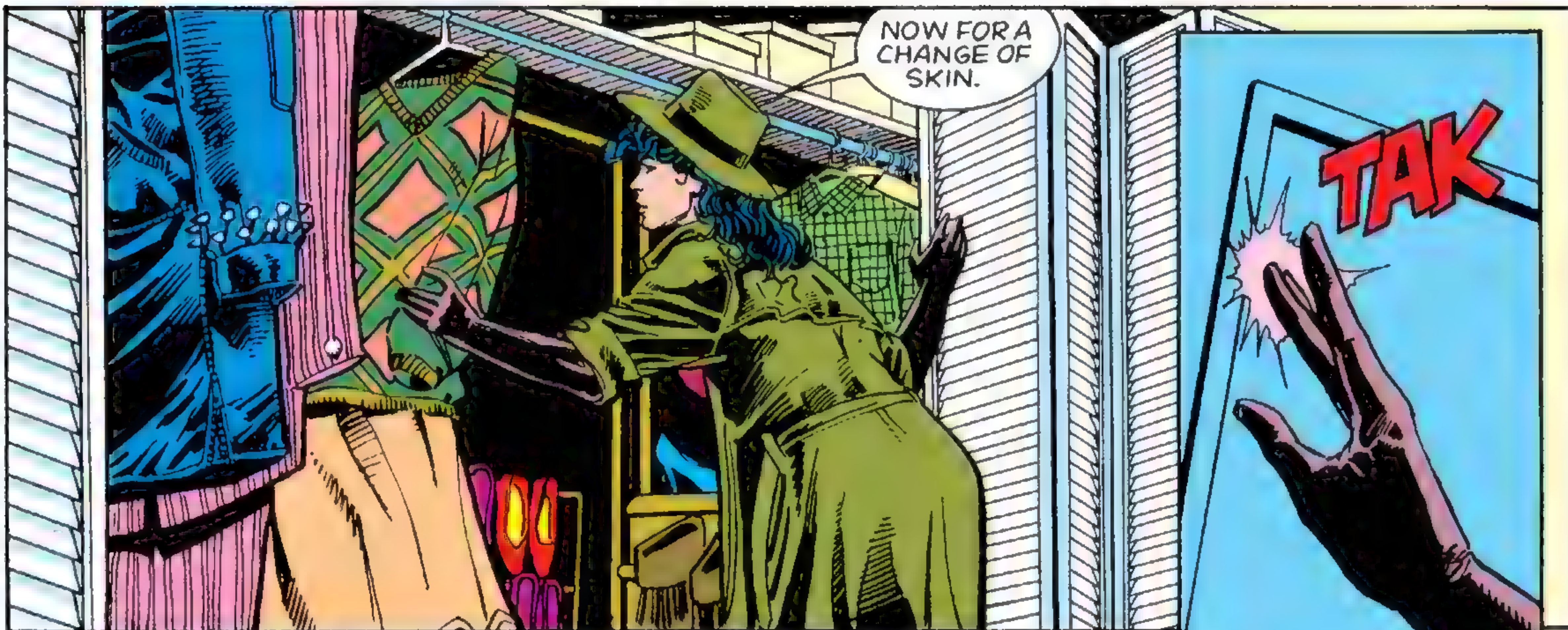


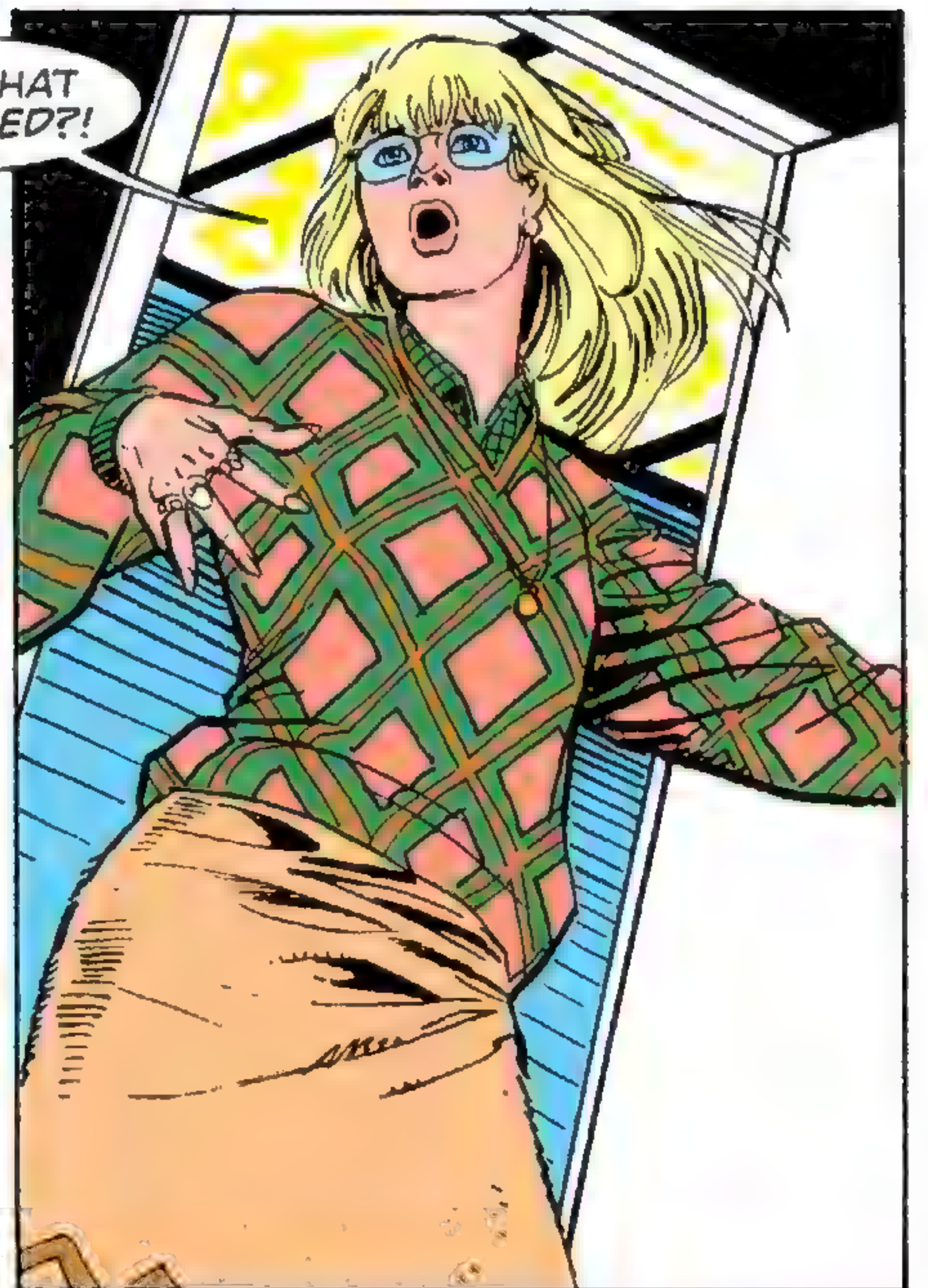
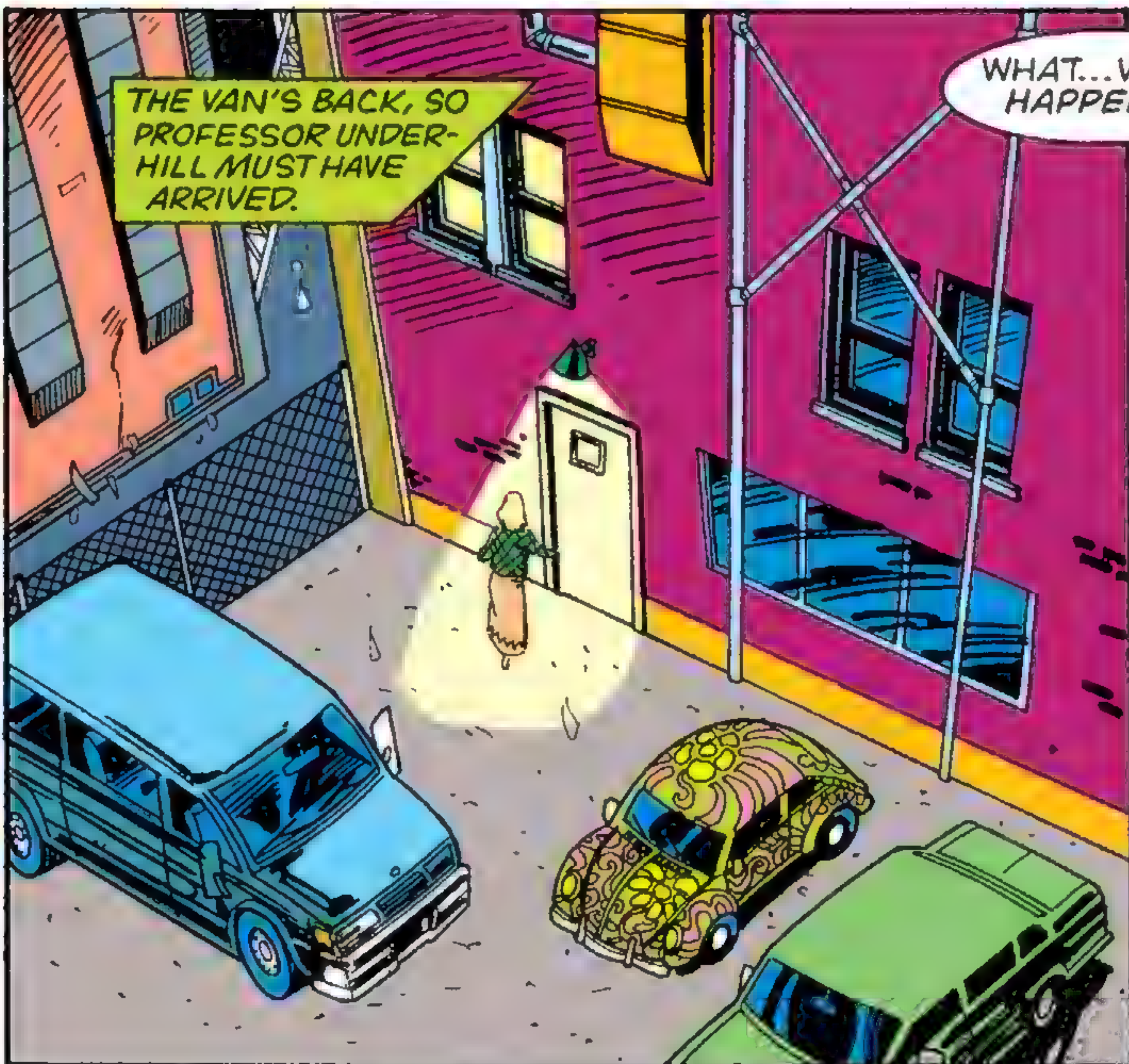
I KNOW!
I KNOW! I'M
SORRY!

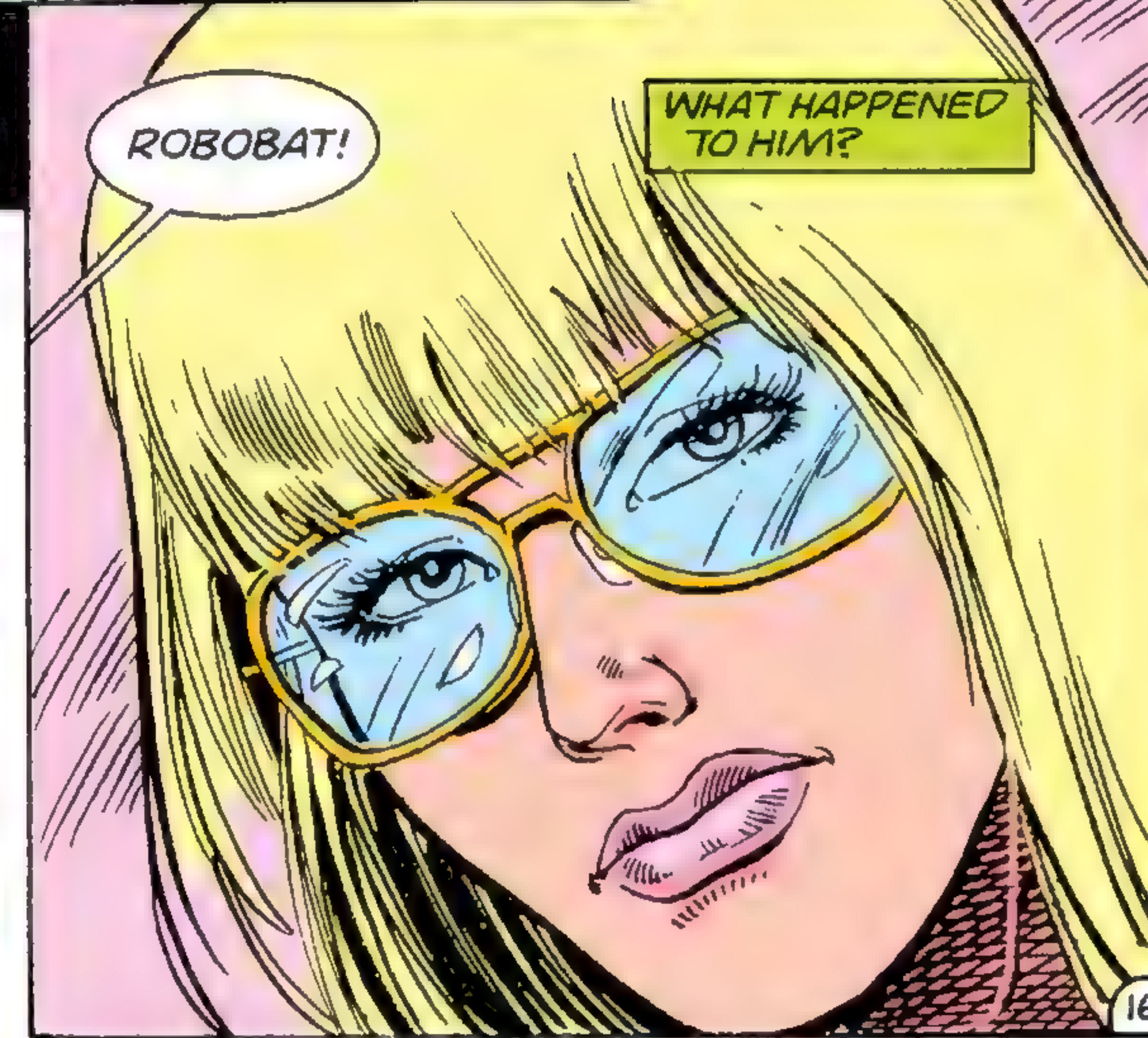
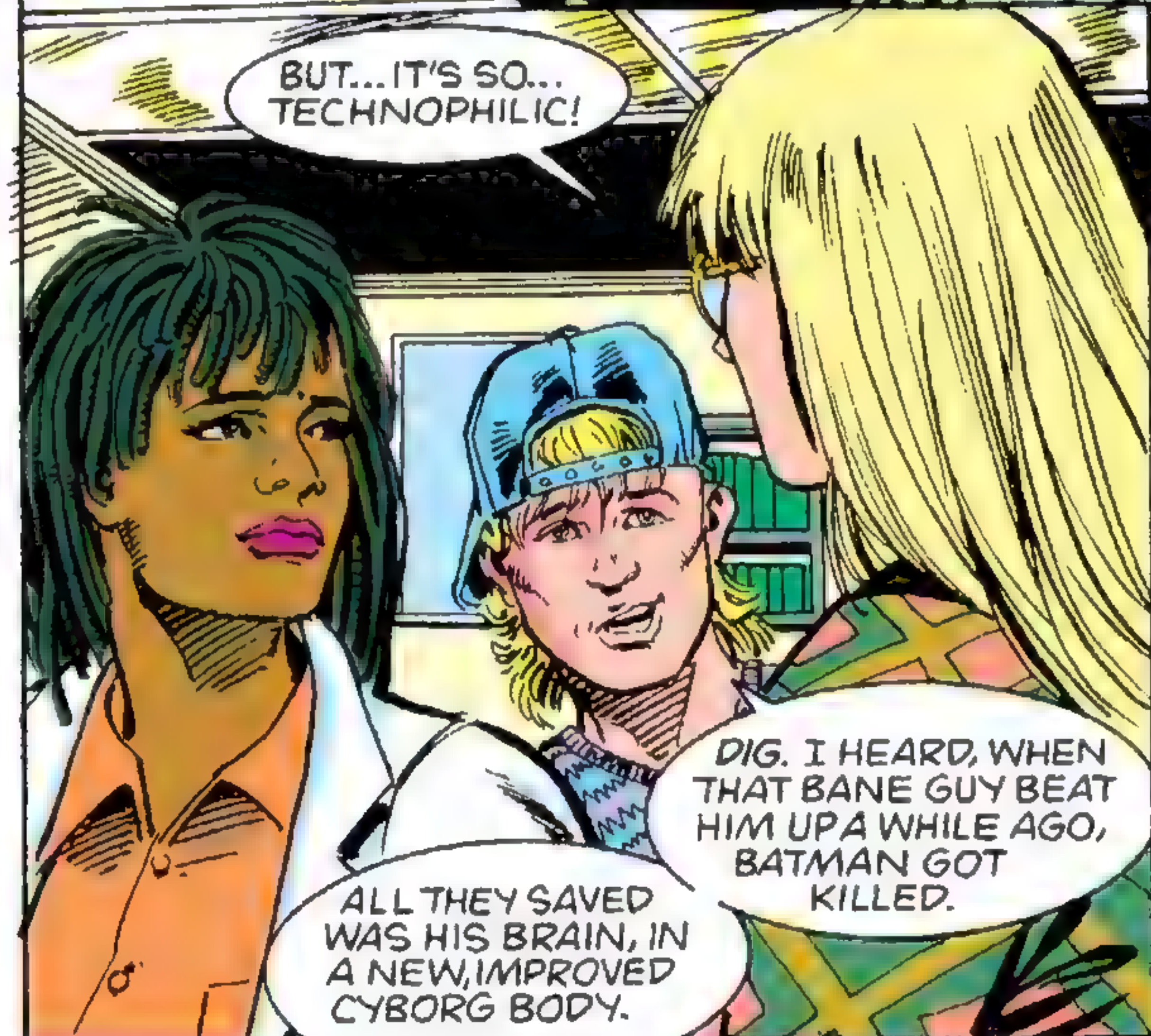
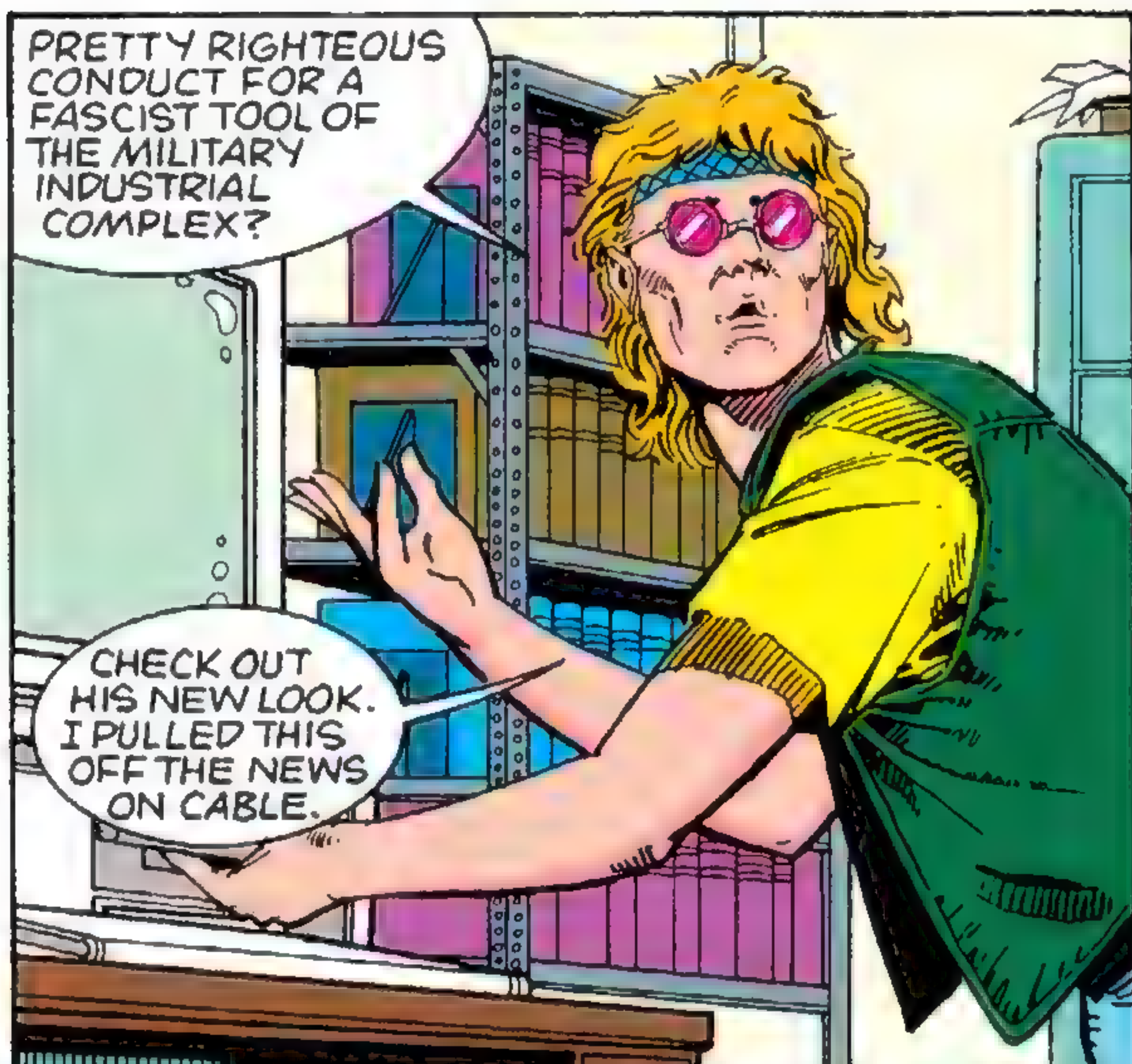
I'LL
TAKE CARE
OF IT
RIGHT
NOW.



STOP
SHOVING.
THERE'S
PLENTY
FOR
EVERYONE!



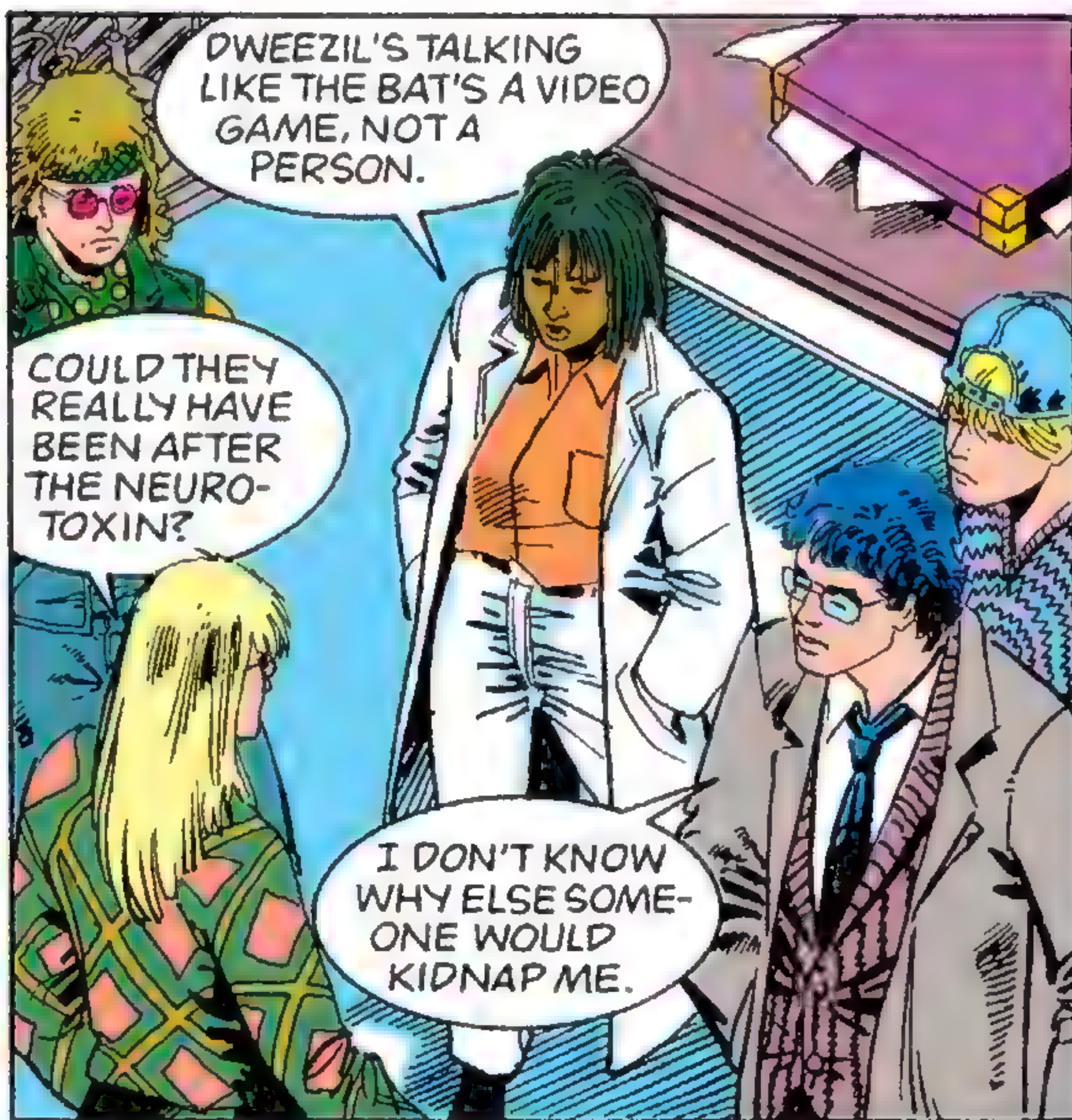






AND I HEAR HE'S GOT LASER AND ROCKETS...

...AND THIS KNIFE THAT'S LIKE TEN FEET LONG, AND A SWORD...



DWEEZIL'S TALKING LIKE THE BAT'S A VIDEO GAME, NOT A PERSON.

COULD THEY REALLY HAVE BEEN AFTER THE NEURO-TOXIN?

I DON'T KNOW WHY ELSE SOMEONE WOULD KIDNAP ME.



NOT THAT IT WOULD DO THEM ANY GOOD.

EVEN IF THEY HAD JOB AND THE TOXIN...XYKLON-C IS INERT TILL IT'S MIXED WITH A CO-AGENT CALLED ATROPHANE.

THE FORMULAS ARE ALL THERE...BUT THE STUFF TAKES WEEKS TO MAKE.



LUCKY THEY DIDN'T CARJACK ME. THE CHEMICAL COMPANY AT HARBORPOINT HAS ALL THE XYKLON-C IN THE WORLD...

...BUT I'VE GOT THE ATROPHANE IN MY VAN.

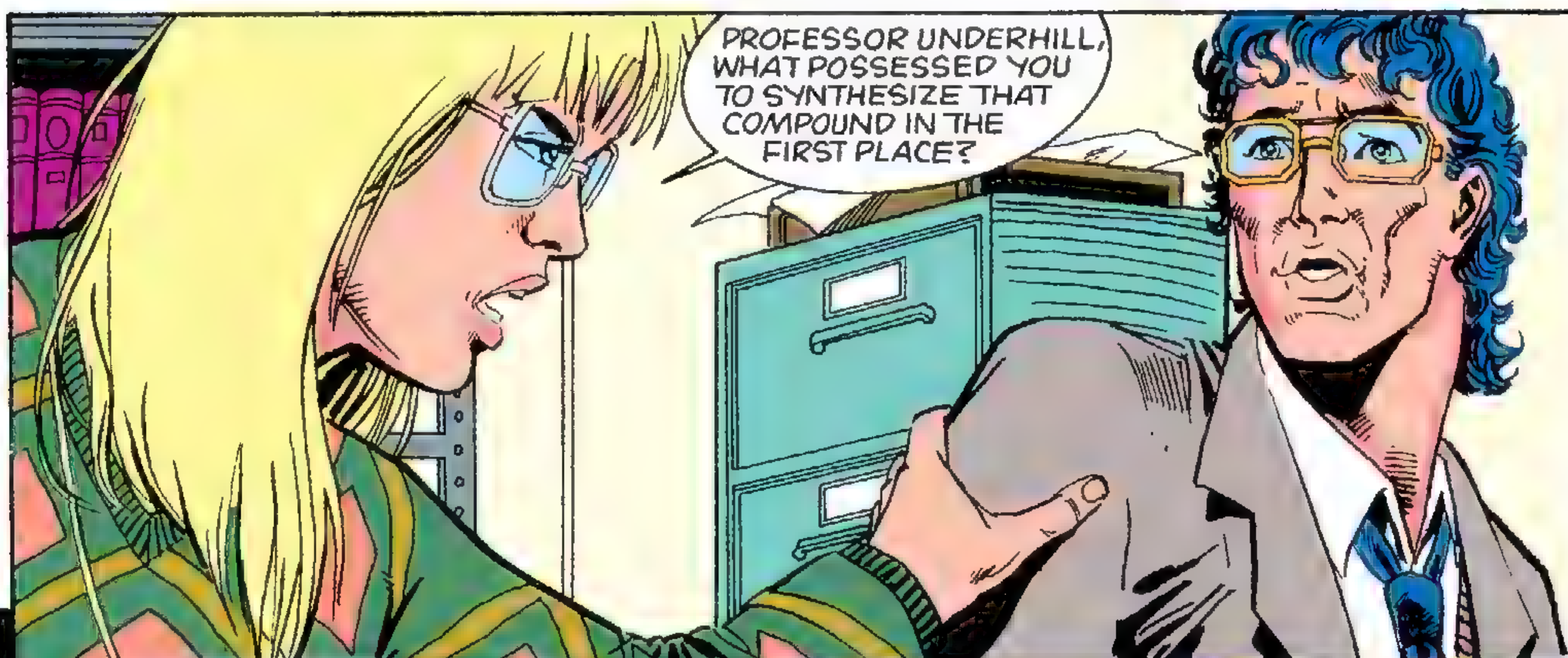
WHEN I REALIZED WHY THEY WANTED IT, I NEVER DELIVERED THE SECOND INGREDIENT.



IF YOU HAVE BOTH COMPONENTS, HOW HARD IS THE COMPOUND TO ACTIVATE?

EXTREMELY COMPLEX. YOU'D NEED EITHER ME...

...OR MY NOTES.



PROFESSOR UNDERHILL, WHAT POSSESSED YOU TO SYNTHESIZE THAT COMPOUND IN THE FIRST PLACE?



BACK OFF, GIRL! YOU KNOW JOB AS WELL AS I DO!

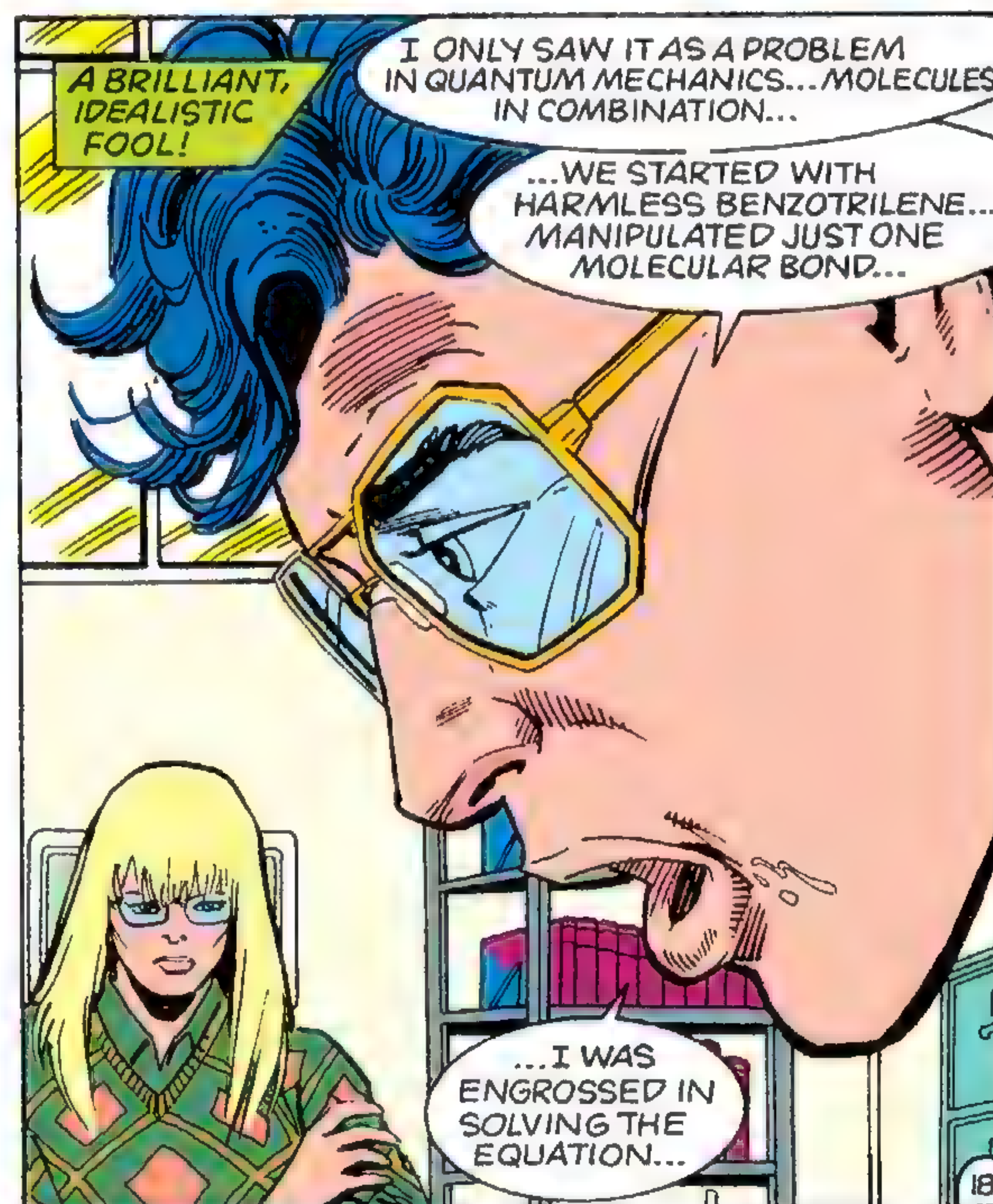
HE NEVER ASKED WHY THEY WANTED IT.



HE SHOULD HAVE!



Y'KNOW, BABE, THEY DIDN'T SAY "WHIP US UP SOME POISON."



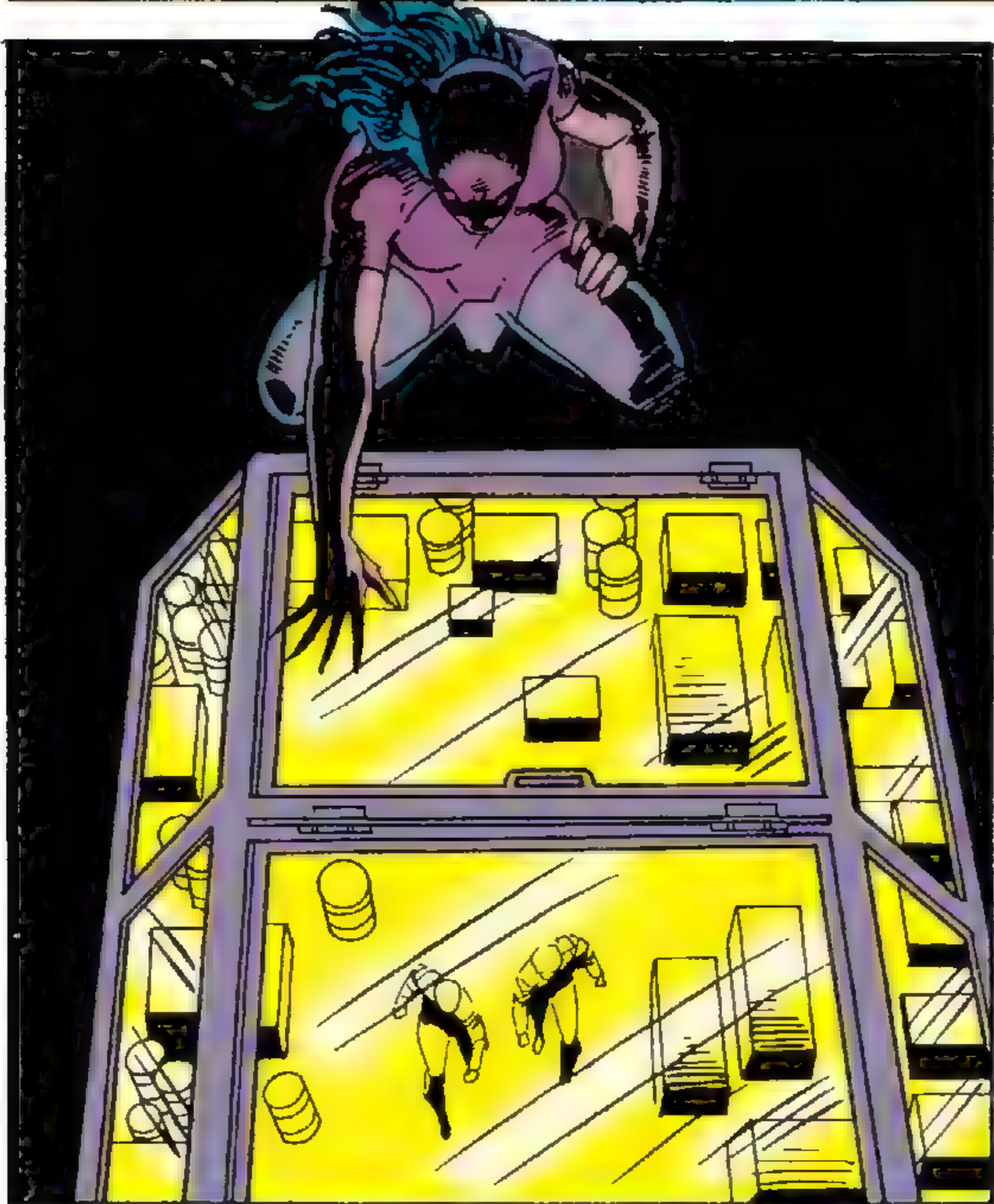
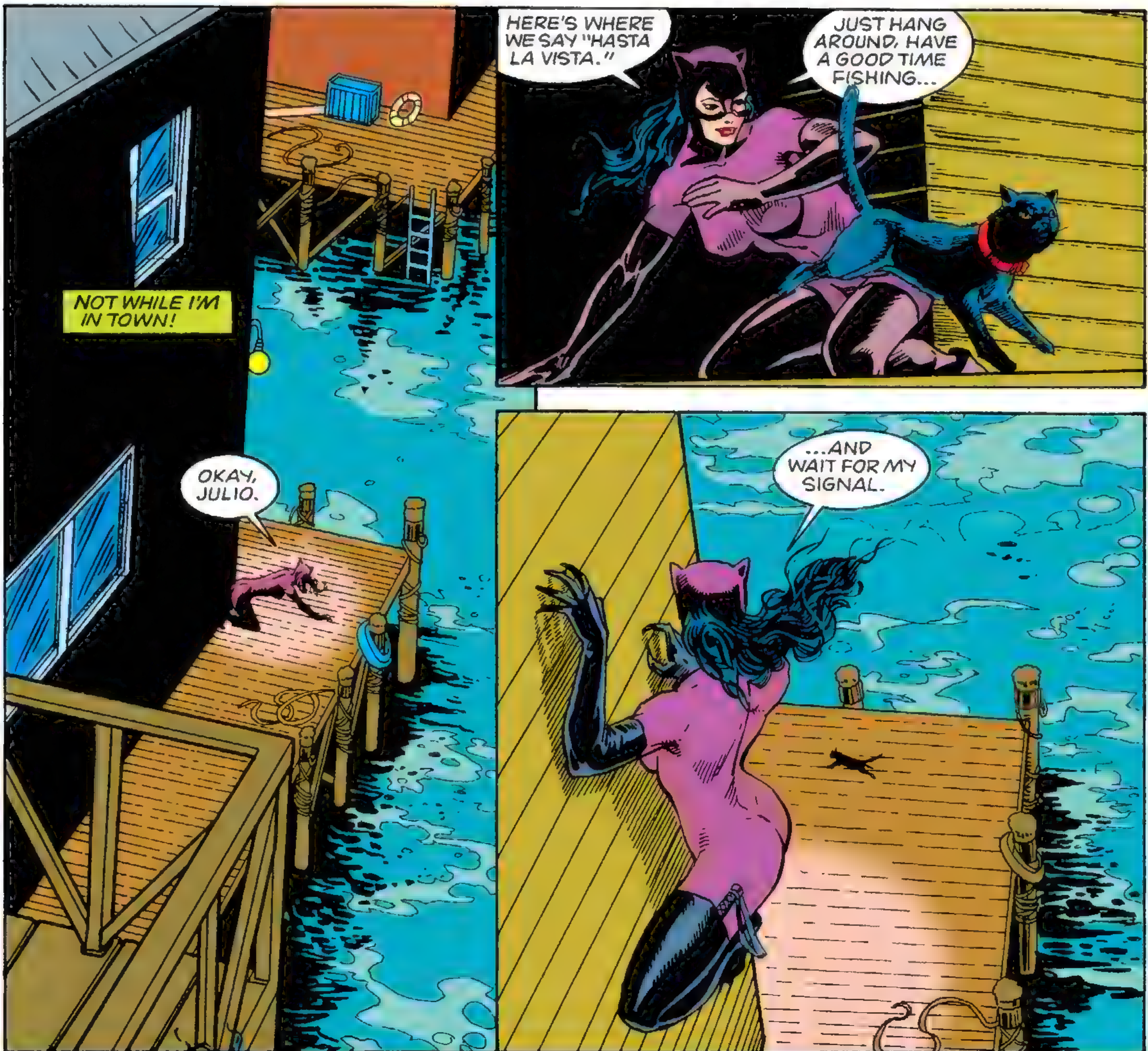
A BRILLIANT, IDEALISTIC FOOL!

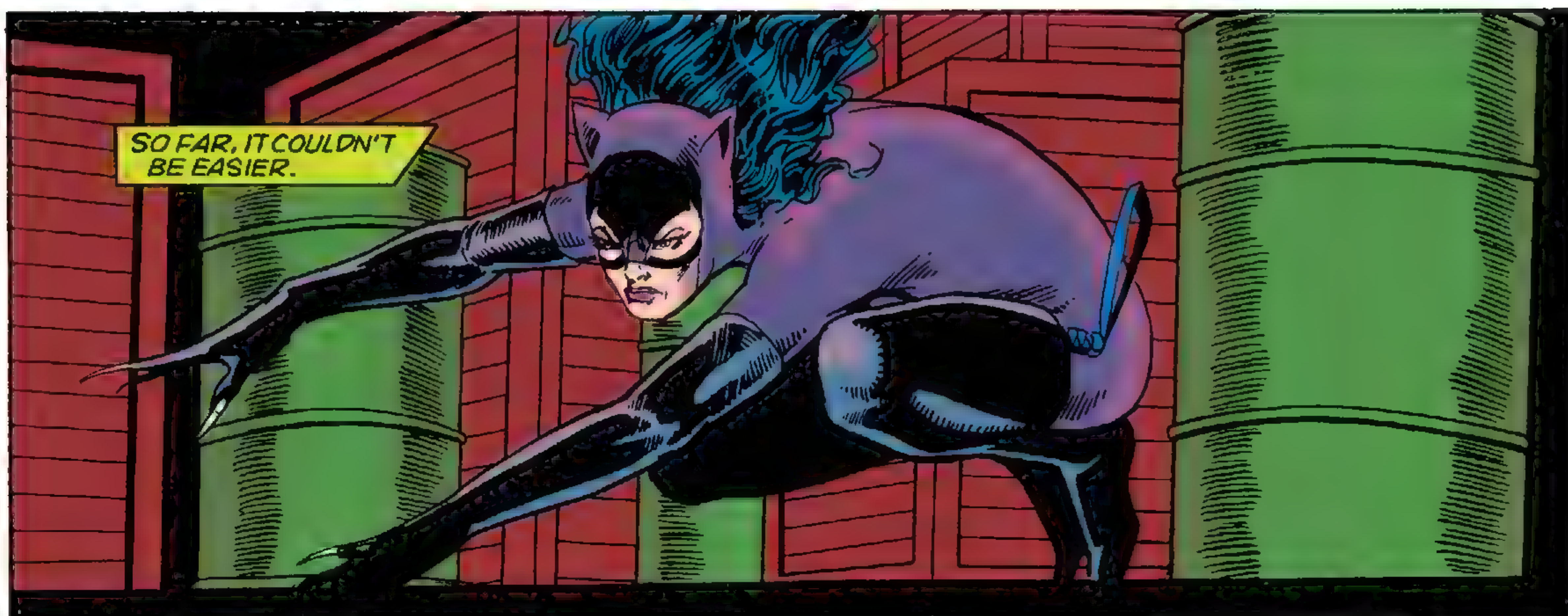
I ONLY SAW IT AS A PROBLEM IN QUANTUM MECHANICS... MOLECULES IN COMBINATION...

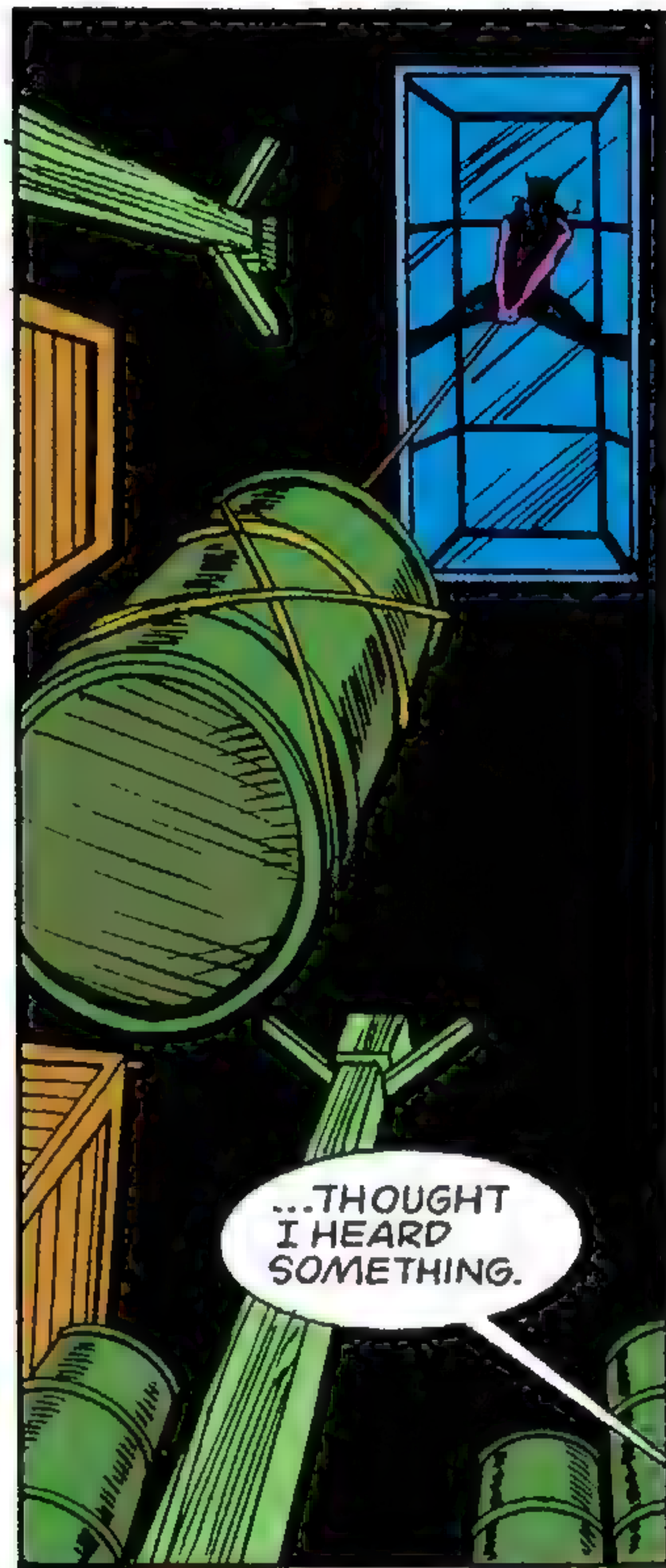
...WE STARTED WITH HARMLESS BENZOTRILENE... MANIPULATED JUST ONE MOLECULAR BOND...

...I WAS ENGROSSED IN SOLVING THE EQUATION...









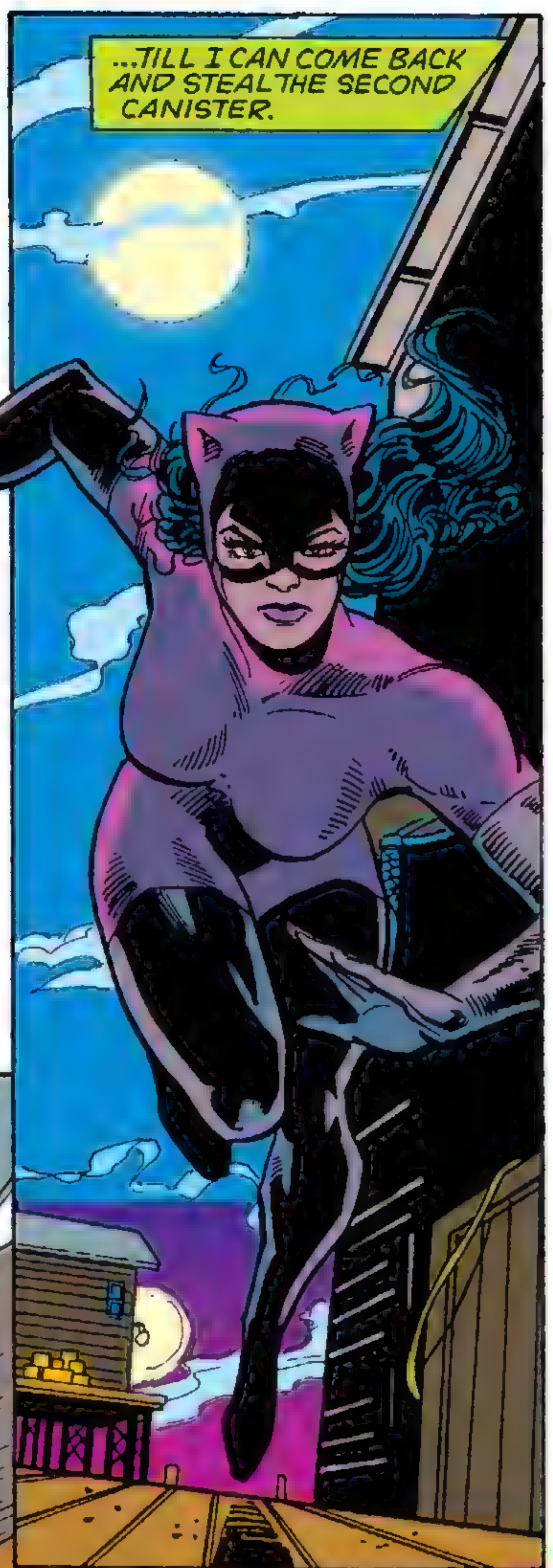
...THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING.



THOSE GUARDS WERE BETTER THAN I THOUGHT.

THEY'RE BOUND TO NOTICE THE TOXIN IS GONE.

IT'LL BE SAFE HERE...



...TILL I CAN COME BACK AND STEAL THE SECOND CANISTER.



THE STORY CONTINUES IN BATMAN #503 AND #504!

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



BATMAN

503

\$1.50 US
\$1.95 CAN
70p UK

DOUG
MOENCH
MIKE
MANLEY

KNIGHTQUEST™
THE CRUSADE



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

BATMAN®



Night Becomes Woman

MUGGERS, DRUNKS,
DOPERS AND PIMPS--
AN UNEVENTFUL NIGHT,
UNTIL NOW...

RIGHT
EYE--
MAGNIFY.

...UNTIL SHE
ENTERS IT.

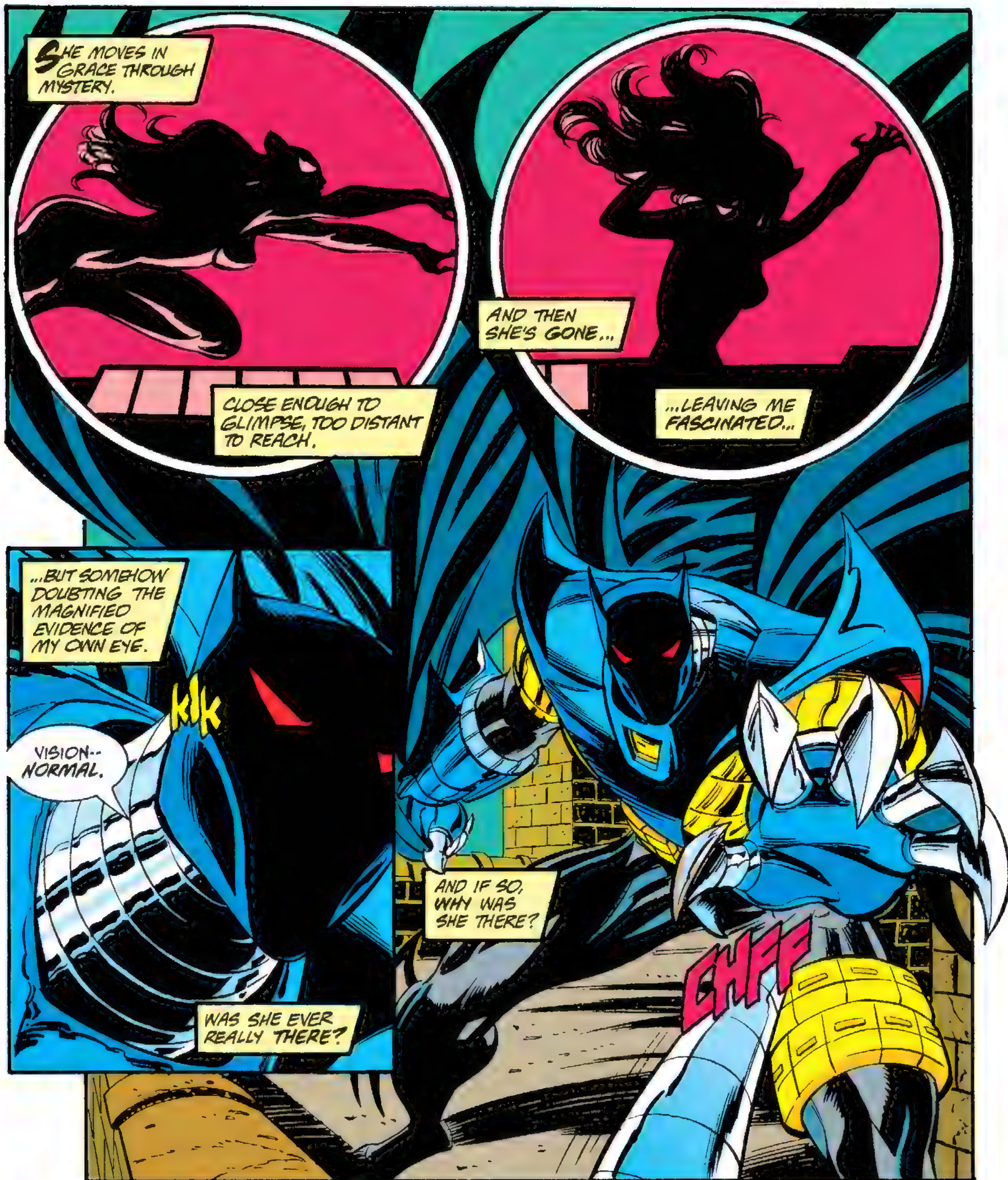
CATWOMAN--A LIVING
SHADE OF RAIN, SLEEK
DARKNESS...

...BRAZENLY
FURTIVE...

...VIVIDLY
TANTALIZING.

DOUG MOENCH--MIKE MANLEY--ADRIENNE ROY--KEN BRUZENAK--JORDAN B. GORFINKEL--DENNY O'NEIL
writer artist colorist letterer assistant editor editor

Batman
created by
BOB KANE



SHE MOVES IN
GRACE THROUGH
MYSTERY.

AND THEN
SHE'S GONE...

CLOSE ENOUGH TO
GLIMPSE, TOO DISTANT
TO REACH.

...LEAVING ME
FASCINATED...

...BUT SOMEHOW
DOUBTING THE
MAGNIFIED
EVIDENCE OF
MY OWN EYE.

VISION--
NORMAL.

AND IF SO,
WHY WAS
SHE THERE?

WAS SHE EVER
REALLY THERE?

CHUFF

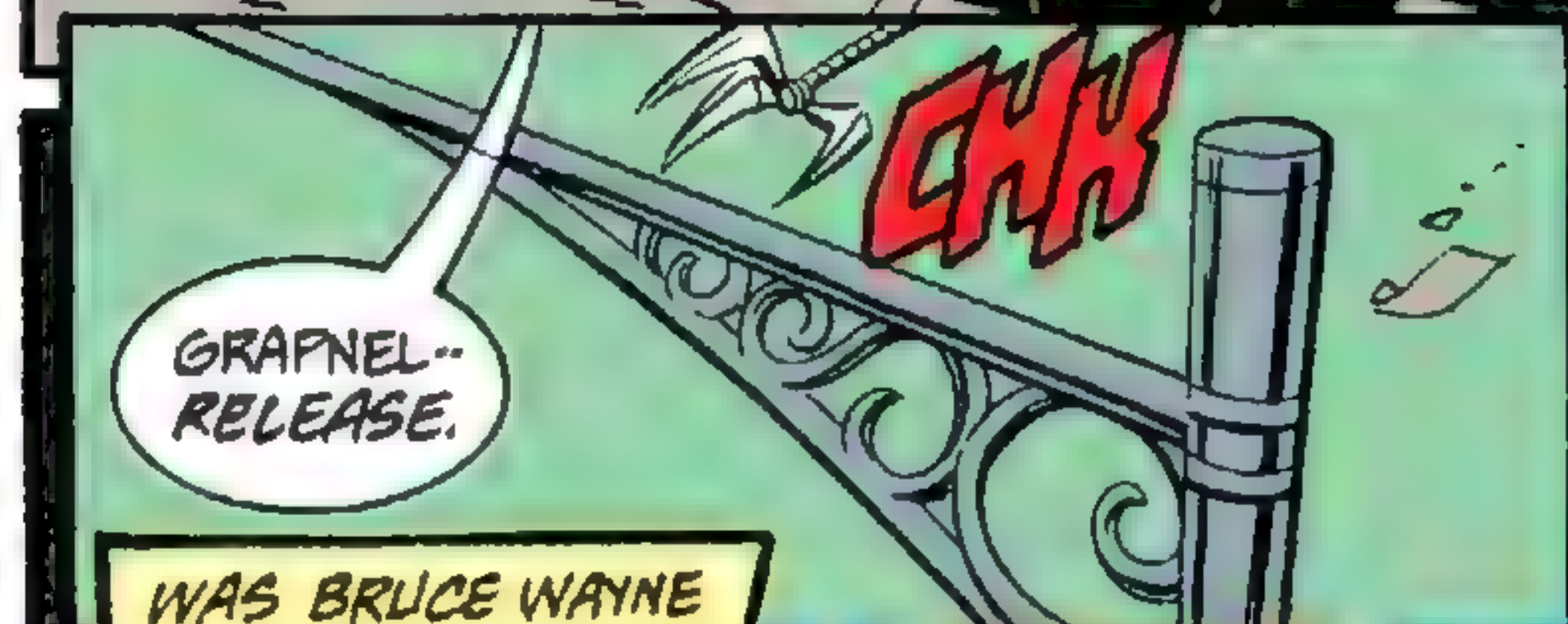
CHANKT

WHY WAS
SHE RUNNING
FREE?



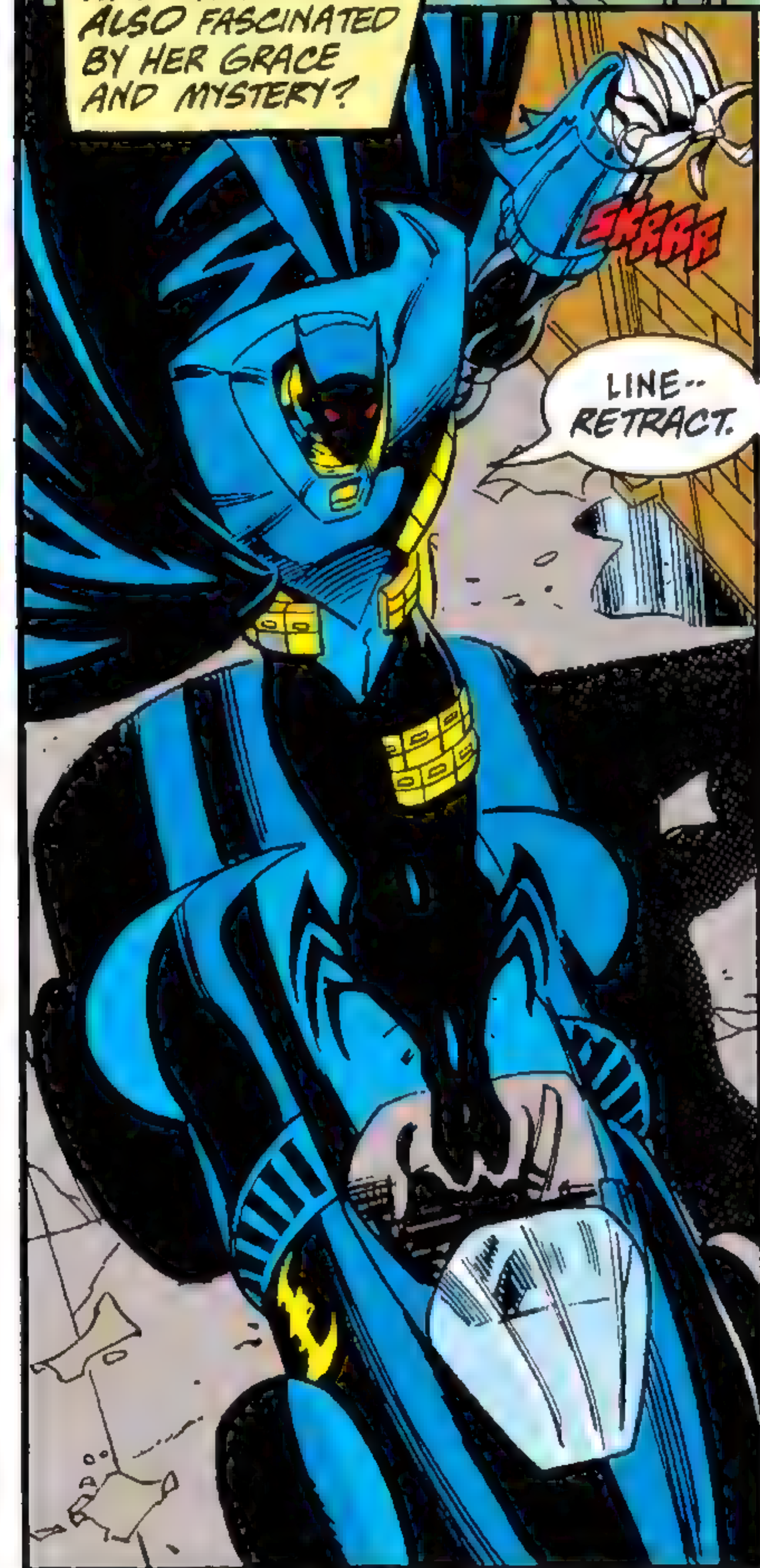
WHY HAS THE FORMER BATMAN NEVER TAKEN HER DOWN FOR GOOD?

LINE-TAUT.



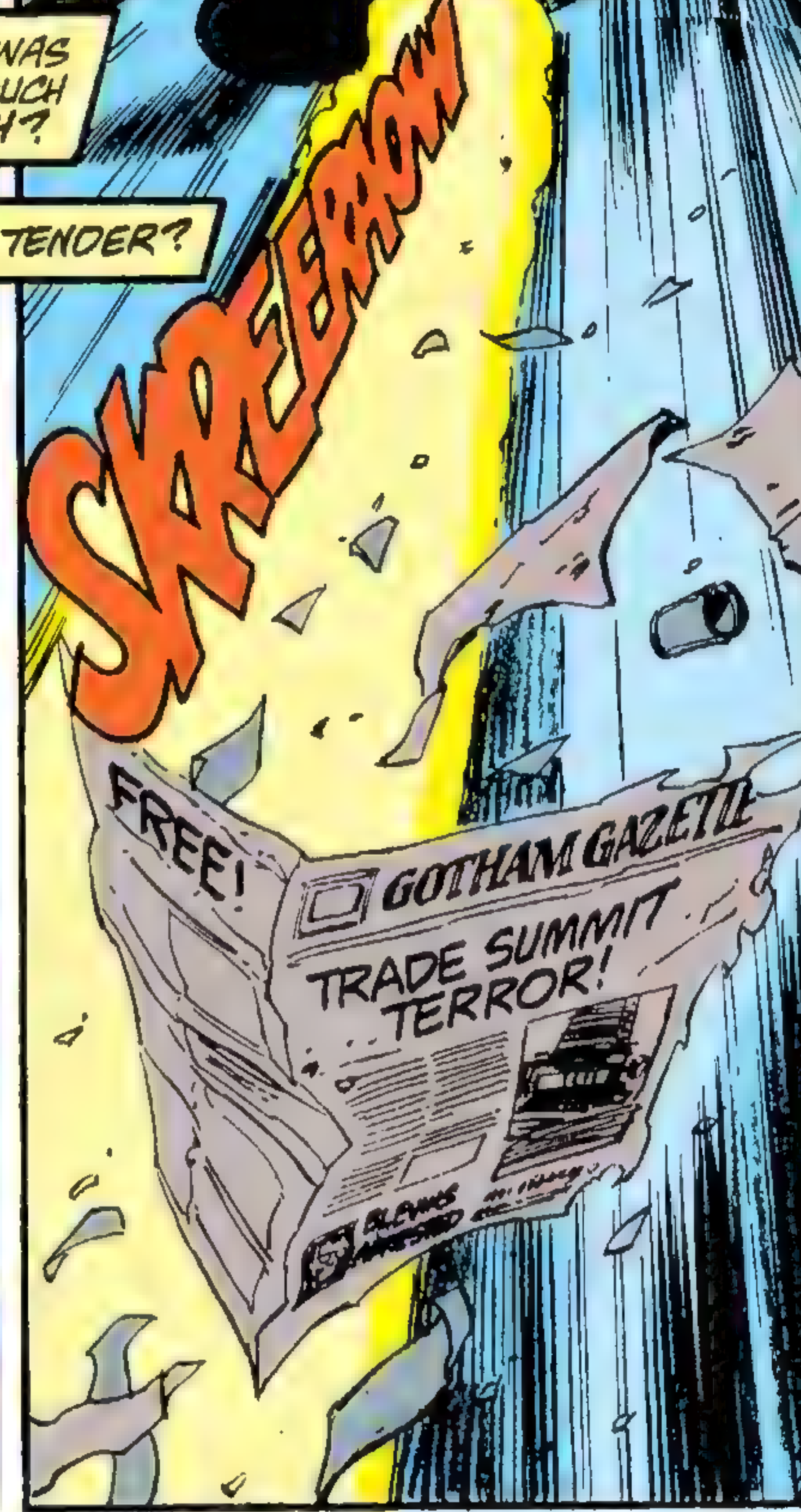
WAS BRUCE WAYNE ALSO FASCINATED BY HER GRACE AND MYSTERY?

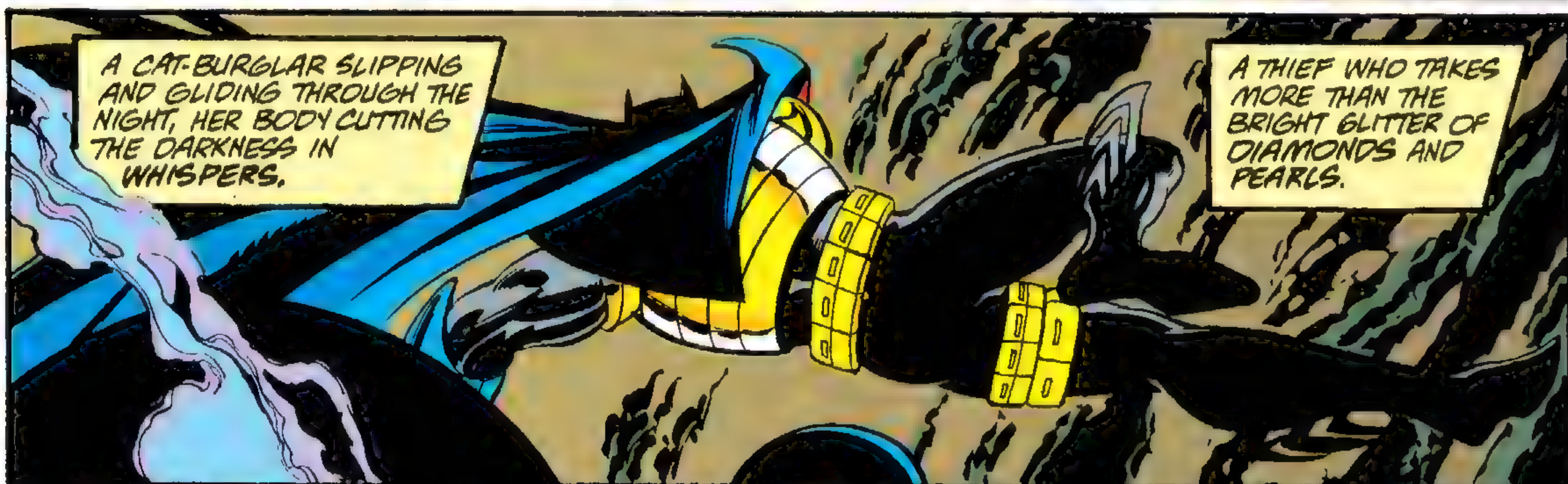
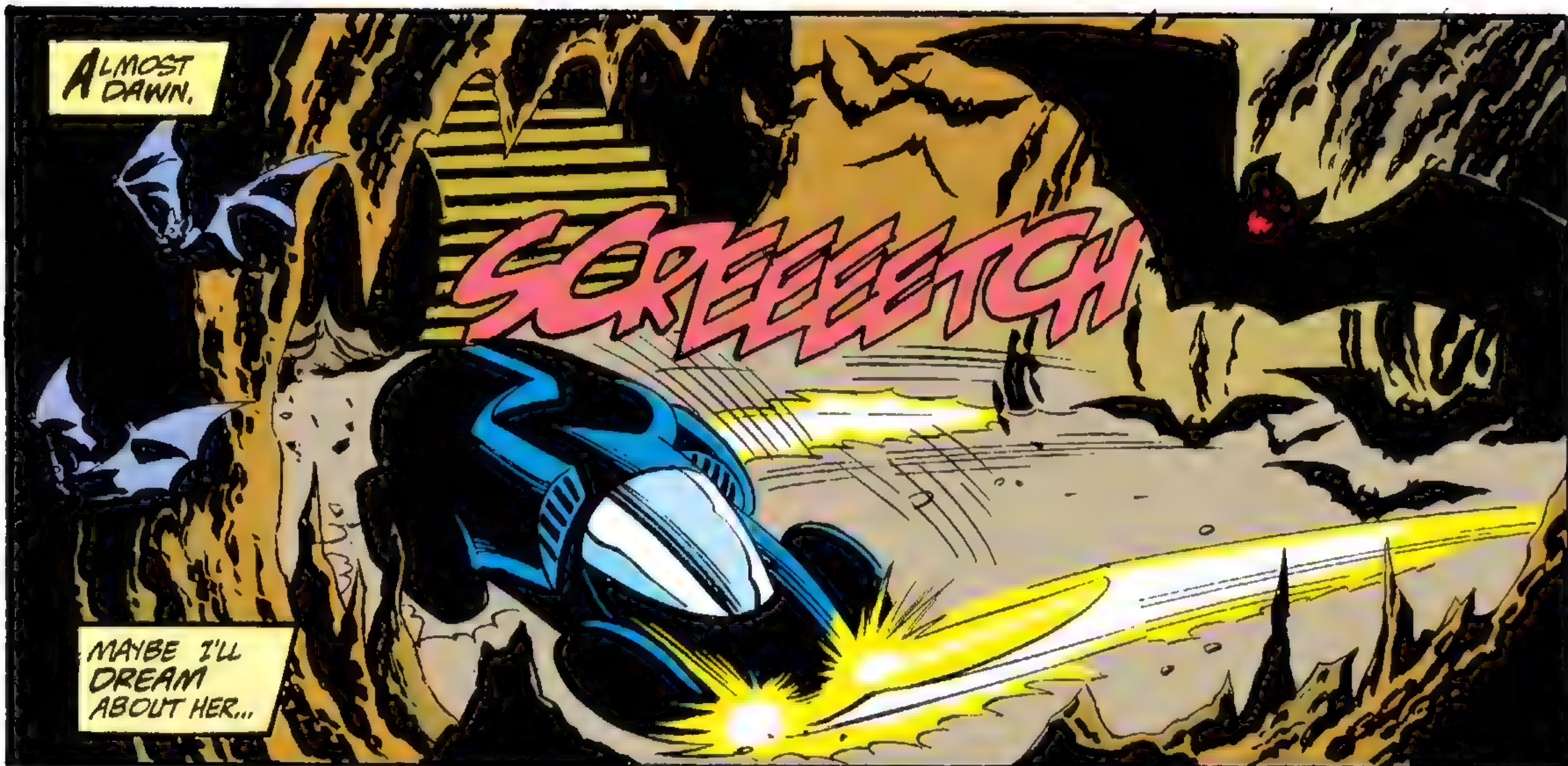
WAS HE EVER CLOSE ENOUGH TO REACH HER?
TO TOUCH HER?

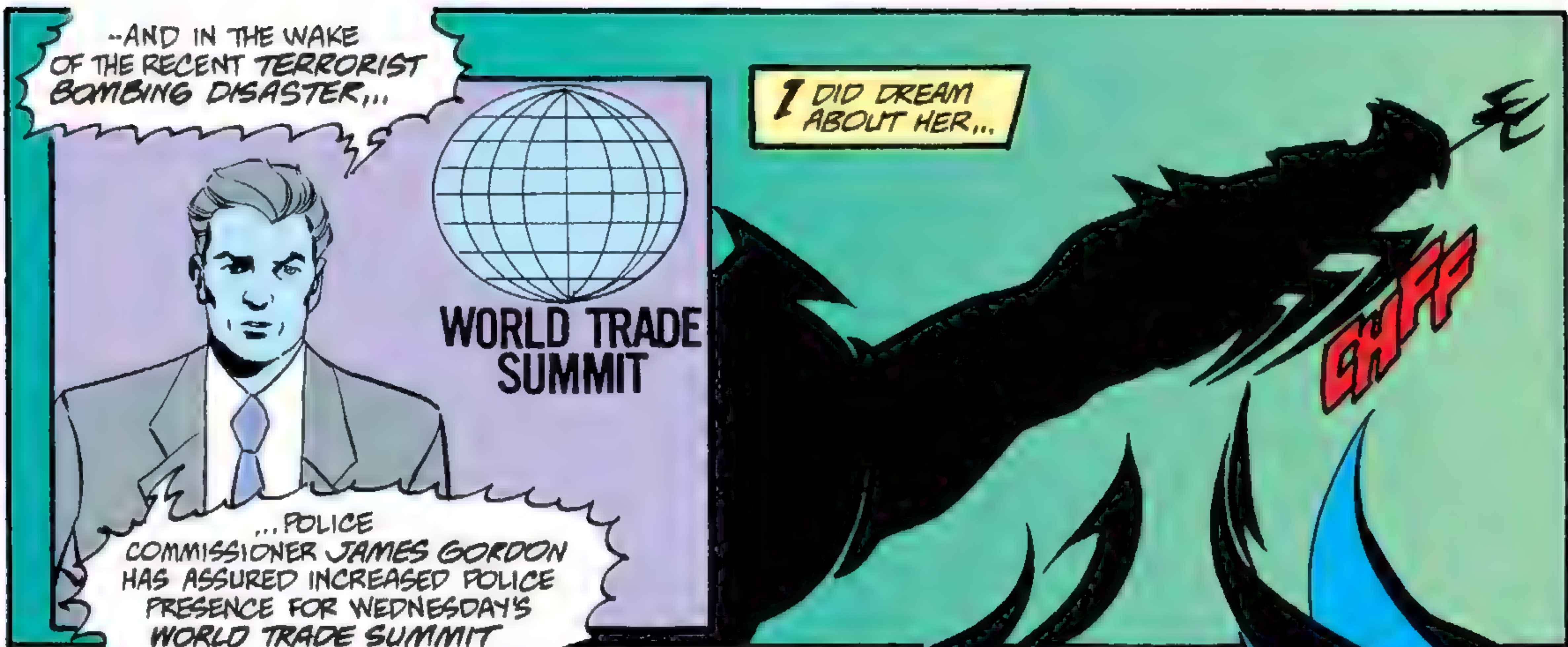


IF SO, WAS THE TOUCH ROUGH?

OR TENDER?



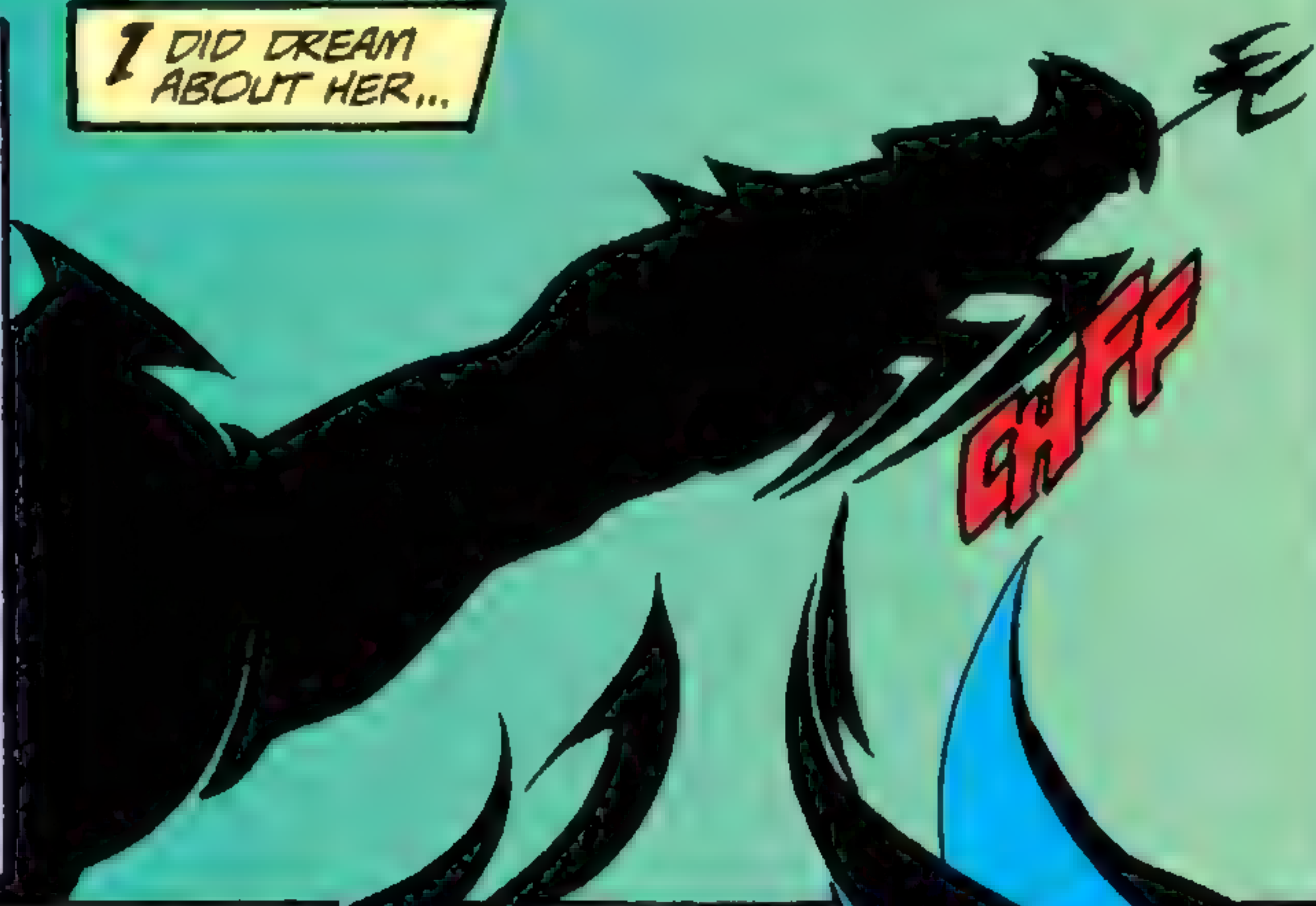




--AND IN THE WAKE
OF THE RECENT TERRORIST
BOMBING DISASTER,...

I DID DREAM
ABOUT HER...

...POLICE
COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON
HAS ASSURED INCREASED POLICE
PRESENCE FOR WEDNESDAY'S
WORLD TRADE SUMMIT
HERE IN GOTHAM...

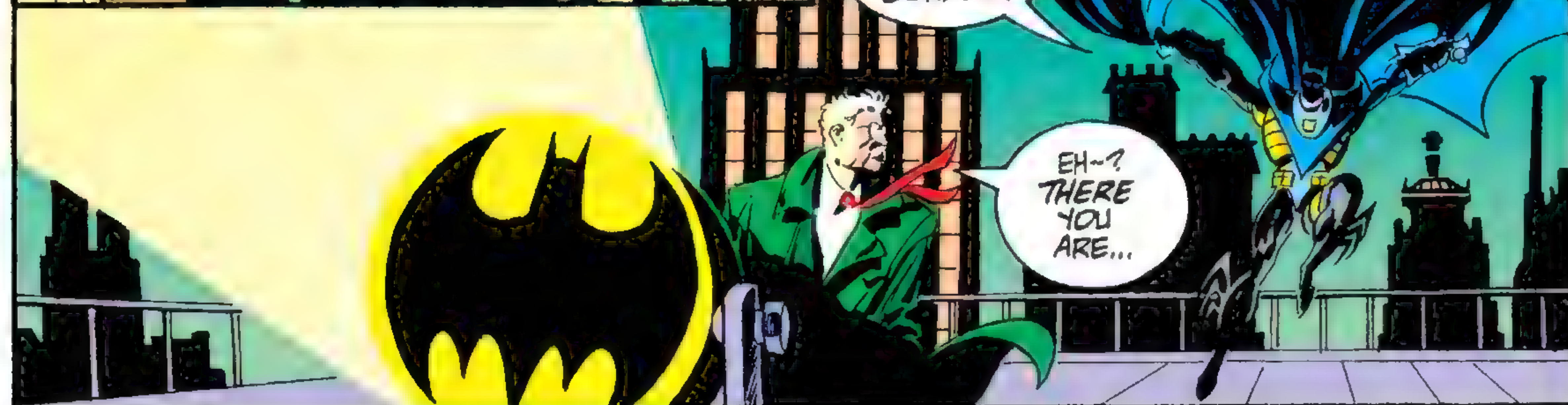


...ALL THE WAY
TO DARKNESS.



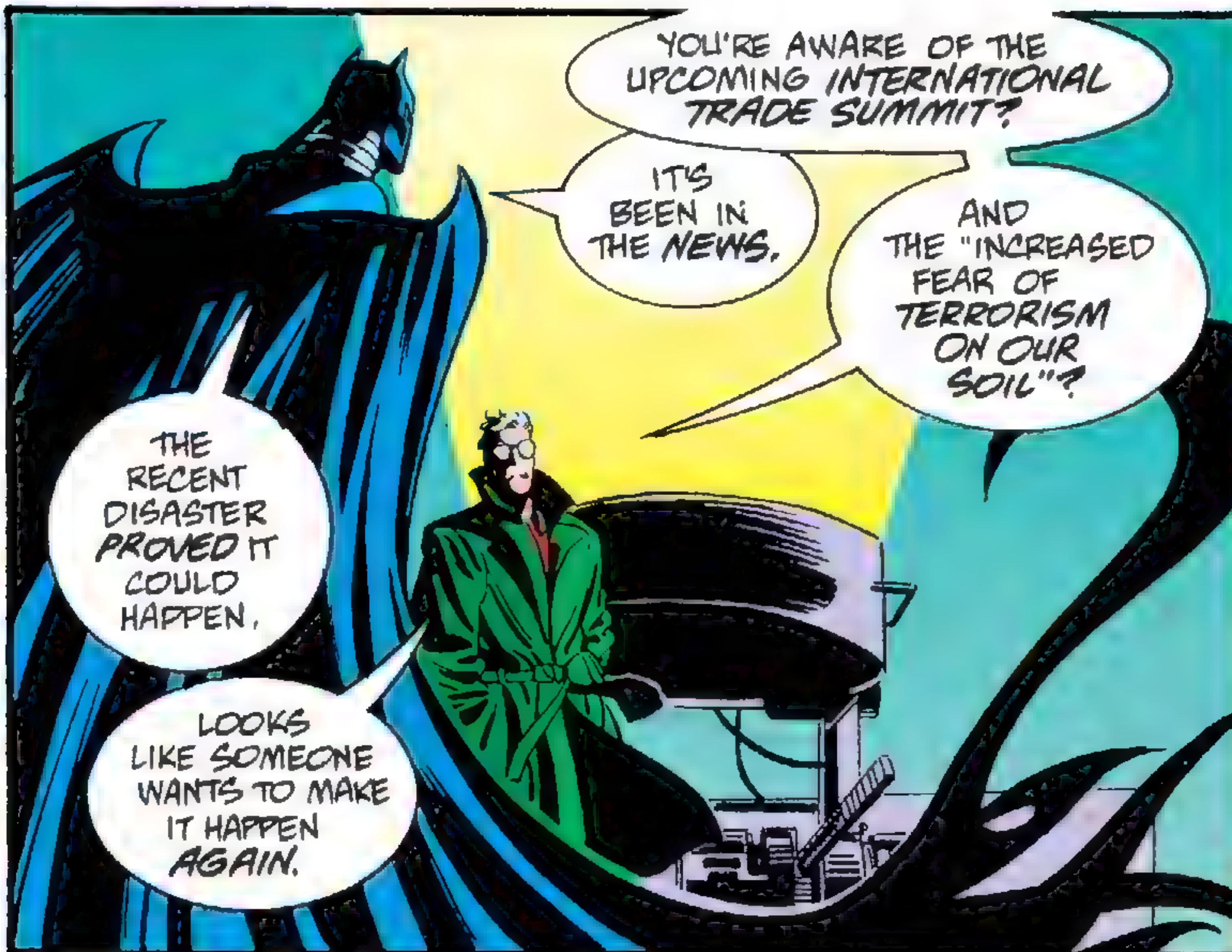
AND THE
DREAMS
WERE...

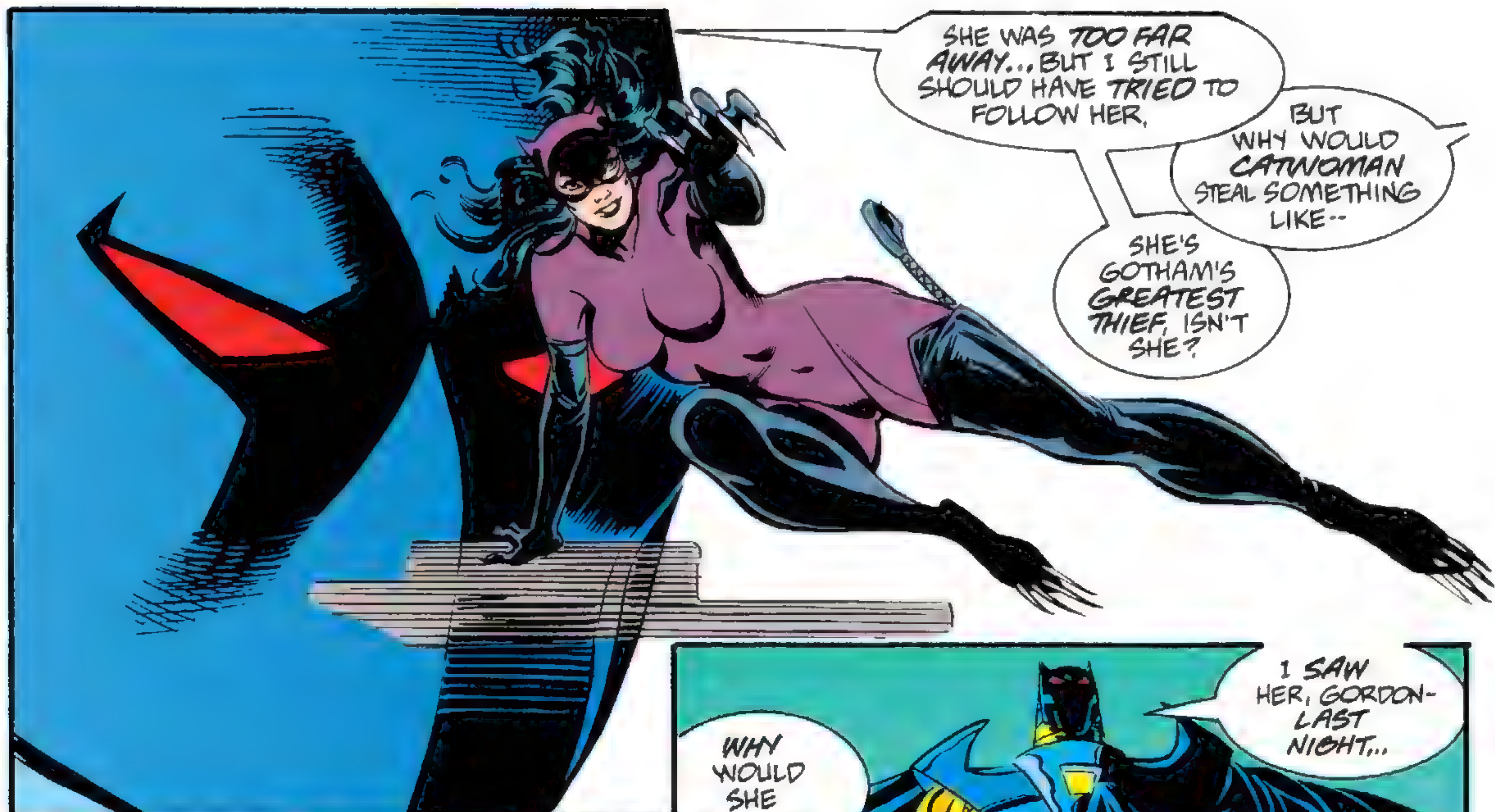
...SHAMEFUL.



WHAT
IS IT,
GORDON?

EH~?
THERE
YOU
ARE...





SHE WAS TOO FAR AWAY... BUT I STILL SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO FOLLOW HER,

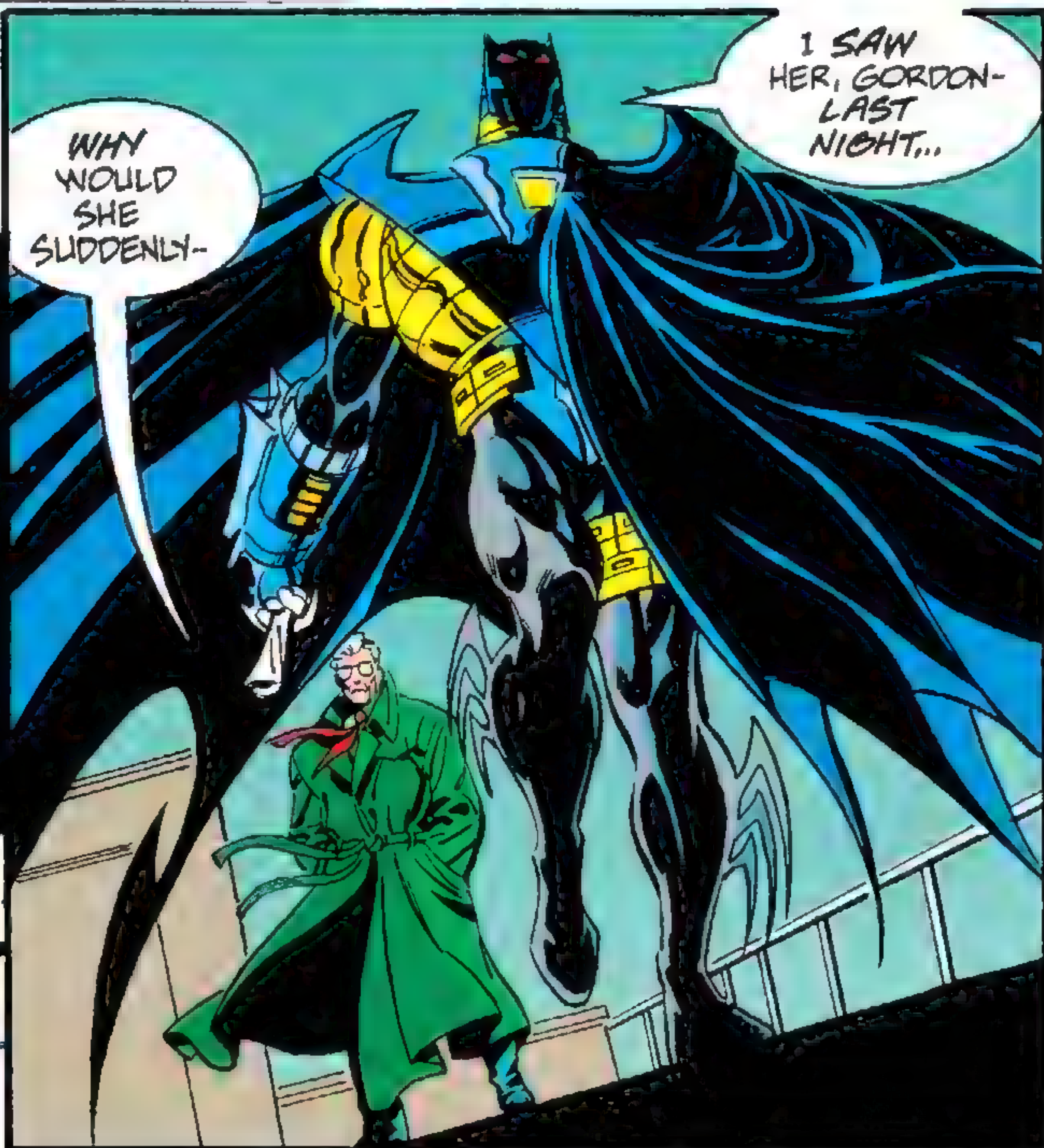
BUT WHY WOULD CATWOMAN STEAL SOMETHING LIKE--

SHE'S GOTHAM'S GREATEST THIEF, ISN'T SHE?



BUT THAT'S MY POINT. SHE'S NEVER KILLED ANYONE. SHE'S A CAT-BURGLAR...

...NEVER REALLY HURTS HER VICTIMS-- EVEN AVOIDS CONTACT WITH THEM,



WHY WOULD SHE SUDDENLY--

I SAW HER, GORDON-- LAST NIGHT...



...ON THE WHARF.

AND THE DREAMS, NOW, CAN NEVER BE MORE THAN DARK FANTASY.

IF HE IS THE SAME MAN, WHY IS HE SUDDENLY READING CATWOMAN WRONG?

THE HEAT BETWEEN THEM IS PERSONAL, AND GOES BACK A LONG WAY...

...BUT HE SHOULD KNOW HER BETTER THAN--



YO, COMMISS--



WHAT IS IT, SERGEANT BULLOCK?

YOUR FAVORITE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GUY WANTS TO SEE YA--MAYOR KROL...



"...AT HIS MANSION-NOW."

WELL, GORDON? WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THIS NEUROTOXIN SITUATION--?



HAVE YOU GOTTEN BATMAN ON THE CASE YET?

YES, FOR WHATEVER THAT'S WORTH.



ARE YOU SUGGESTING THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH OUR MASKED FRIEND?



LETS SAY... HE'S DEFINITELY CHANGED SINCE BANE.

AND LET'S ALSO SAY... SO WHAT?



I SAY THANK GOD FOR THE CHANGE...

...AND LET THE TERRORISTS BEWARE.

ACCORDING TO GORDON'S INFORMATION, AIRBORNE XYKLON-C DIRECTLY ATTACKS THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM...

CONVULSIONS... DISORIENTATION... UNCONTROLLABLE VOMITING... EXTREME AND PROLONGED PAIN... FOLLOWED BY DEATH.

IF THE WINDS ARE RIGHT-OR WRONG--TWENTY KILOS WOULD BE ENOUGH TO KILL HUNDREDS, EVEN THOUSANDS, AND MAYBE SICKEN THE WHOLE CITY.

A JOB FOR THE BATMAN, IF EVER THERE WAS ONE.

THE ONLY BRIGHT NOTE IS THAT IT'S STORED AND SHIPPED IN ITS INERT LIQUID FORM--THE FORM IN WHICH IT WAS STOLEN...

...AND REQUIRES A CATALYST CALLED ATROPHANE TO BE RENDERED ACTIVE.

BUT IF CATWOMAN COULD STEAL THE XYKLON-C ITSELF, SHE CAN CERTAINLY LIFT ENOUGH ATROPHANE TO MIX AN EXTREMELY VALUABLE COCKTAIL.

AND EVEN IF GORDON'S RIGHT ABOUT HER MOTIVES--GREED RATHER THAN KILLING--WHAT'S TO PREVENT HER FROM 'FENCING' THE STUFF?

TO TERRORISTS, IT'D BE WORTH FAR MORE THAN ITS WEIGHT IN DIAMONDS OR GOLD...

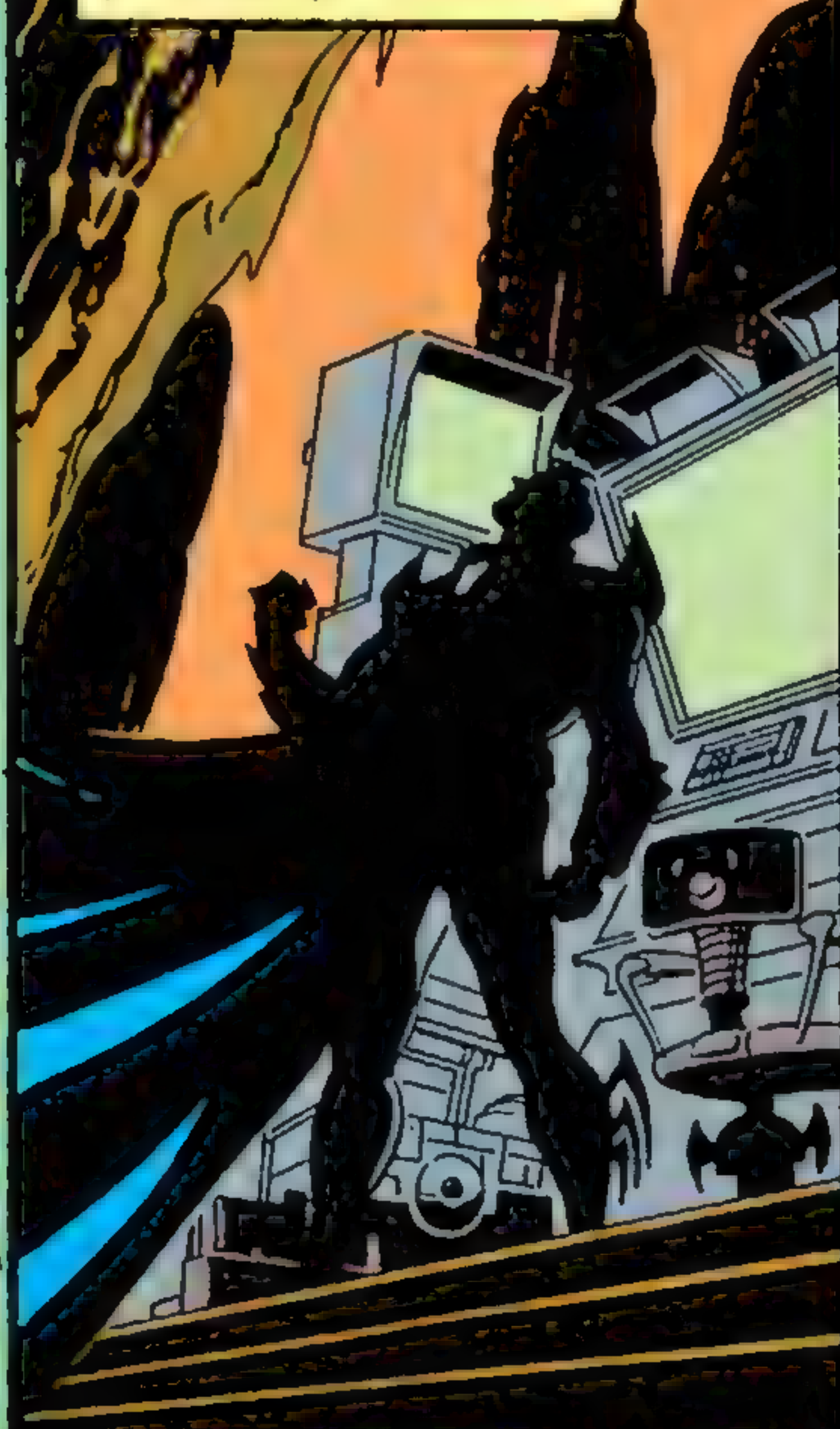
HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN
FASCINATED BY SUCH A
WOMAN? HOW COULD I
DREAM ABOUT HER?



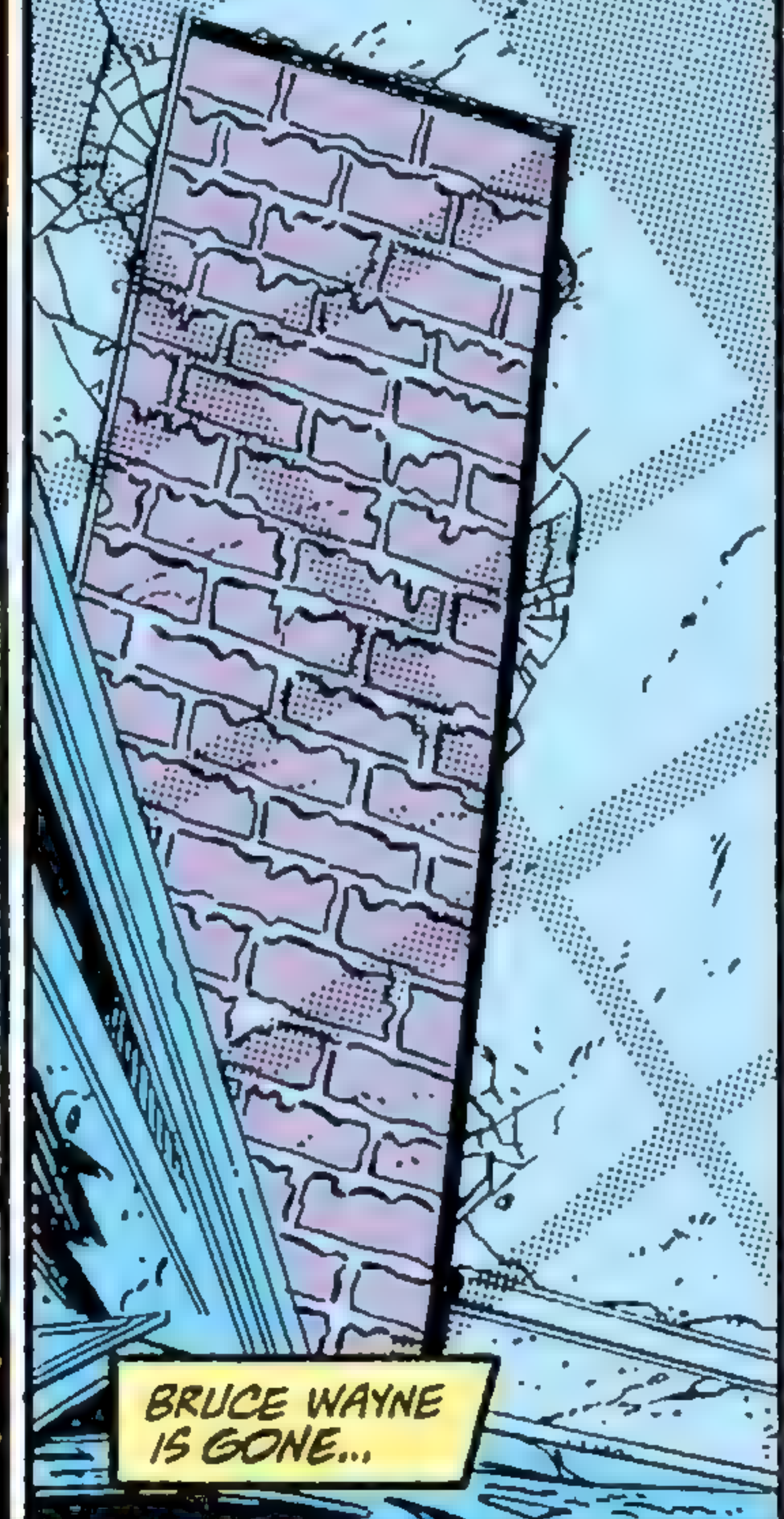
DO CERTAIN FORMS OF
EVIL HOLD SOME DARK
BEAUTY TO WHICH NO
MAN IS IMMUNE?

IS THAT WHY SHE'S FREE--
THE FORMER BATMAN
HASN'T TAKEN HER DOWN?

WAS BRUCE WAYNE
EQUALLY FASCINATED
BY HER MYSTERIOUS
ALLURE?

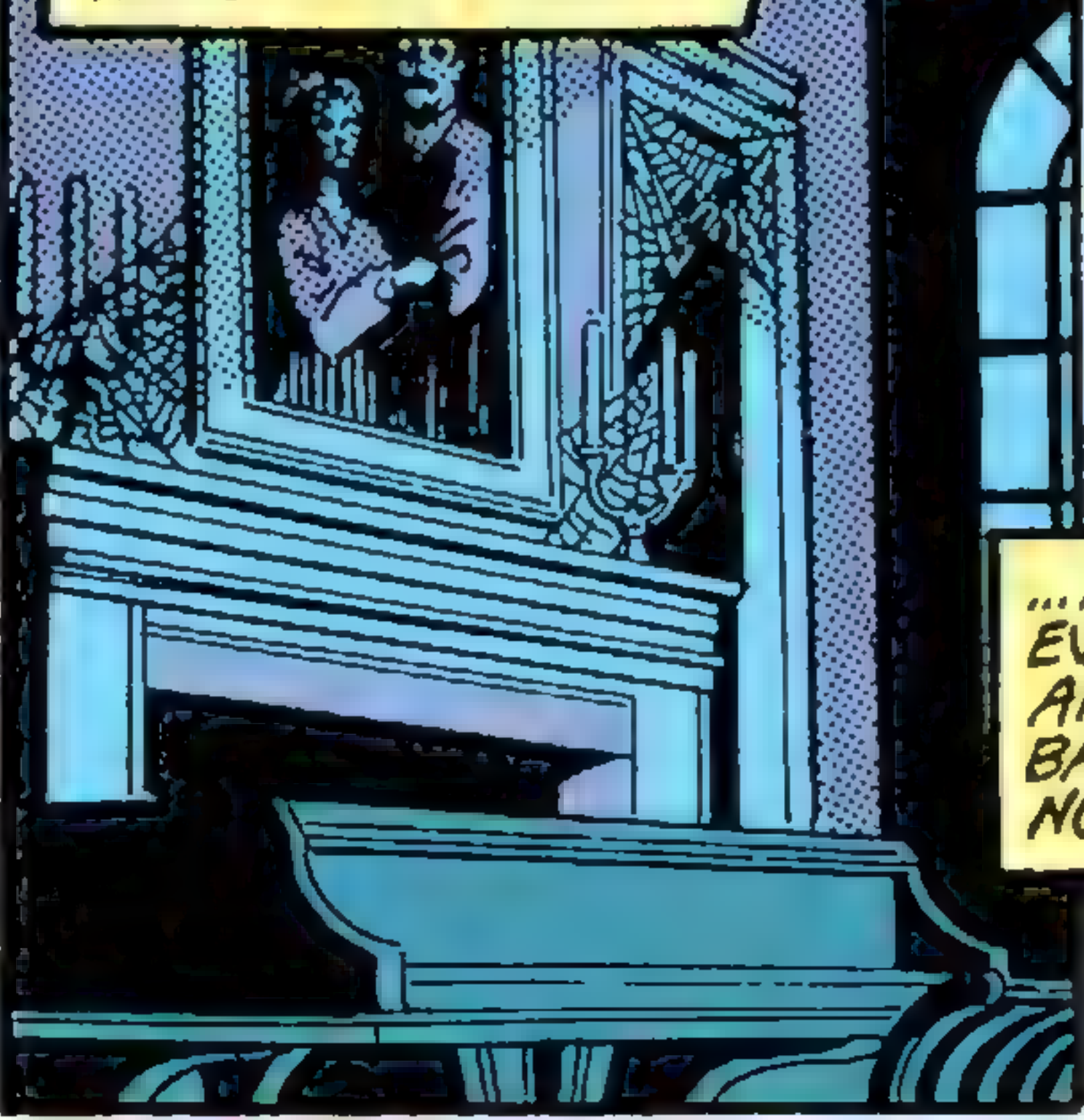


IT DOESN'T
MATTER.

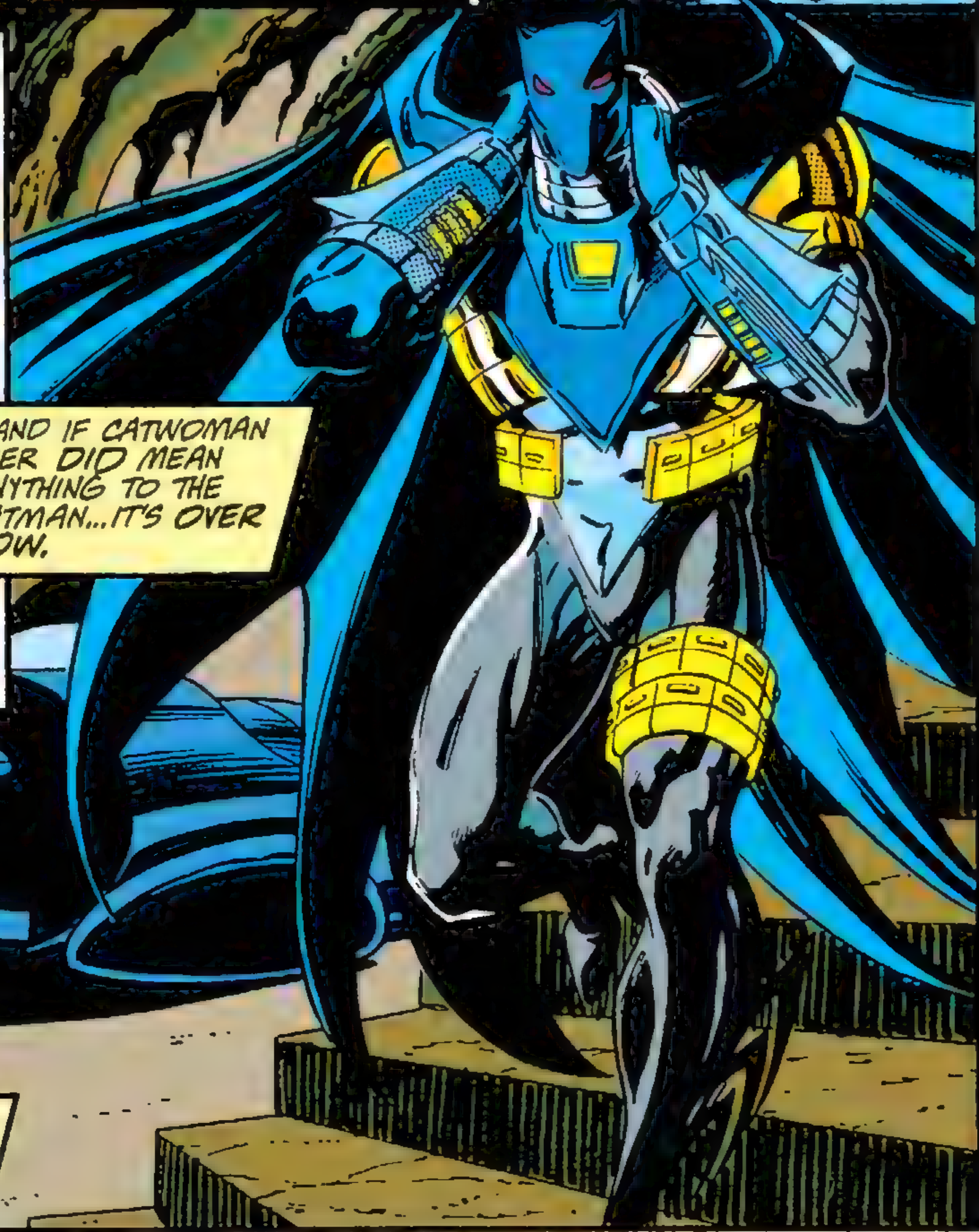


BRUCE WAYNE
IS GONE...

...HIS LIFE
YESTERDAY'S NEWS...



...AND IF CATWOMAN
EVER DID MEAN
ANYTHING TO THE
BATMAN...IT'S OVER
NOW.



SHE FALLS--
AND FALLS HARD.

AS YOU KNOW, DR. CARRUTHERS,
THE ATTENDING NATIONS HAVE REFUSED
TO CANCEL THE PENDING SUMMIT OR TO
"BOW TO TERRORIST THREATS IN ANY
WAY OR FASHION..."

...AN UNWISE
ATTITUDE, IN MY
OPINION, AT THIS
JUNCTURE.

MRAOWWW

Prrrrrr

SO, EVEN THOUGH
THERE WILL BE
EXTRAORDINARY
SECURITY MEASURES
TAKEN AT THE
CONFERENCE--

THERE IS NO SECURITY AGAINST
A MASSIVE DISPERSAL OF THESE
NEUROTOXINS, EITHER AIRBORNE
OR RELEASED IN THE CITY'S WATER
SUPPLY--OR EVEN SIMPLY DUMPED
IN GOTHAM HARBOR.

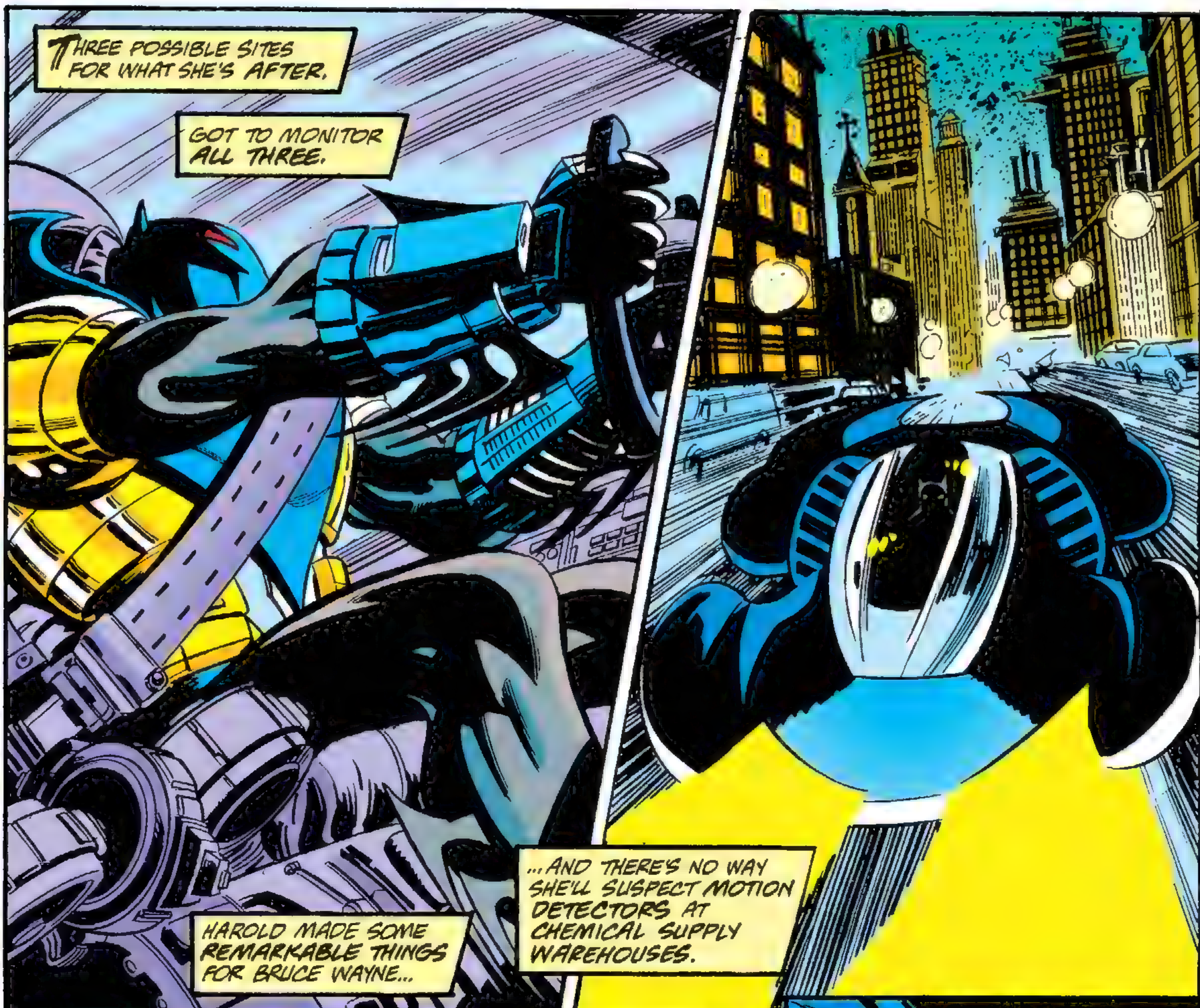
MYOWLL

MIAOW

MEEYAAOW

WHICH
IS PRECISELY WHY I'VE
GOT TO STEAL TWENTY
KILOS OF
BENZOTRILENE.

MRAOWWWWW

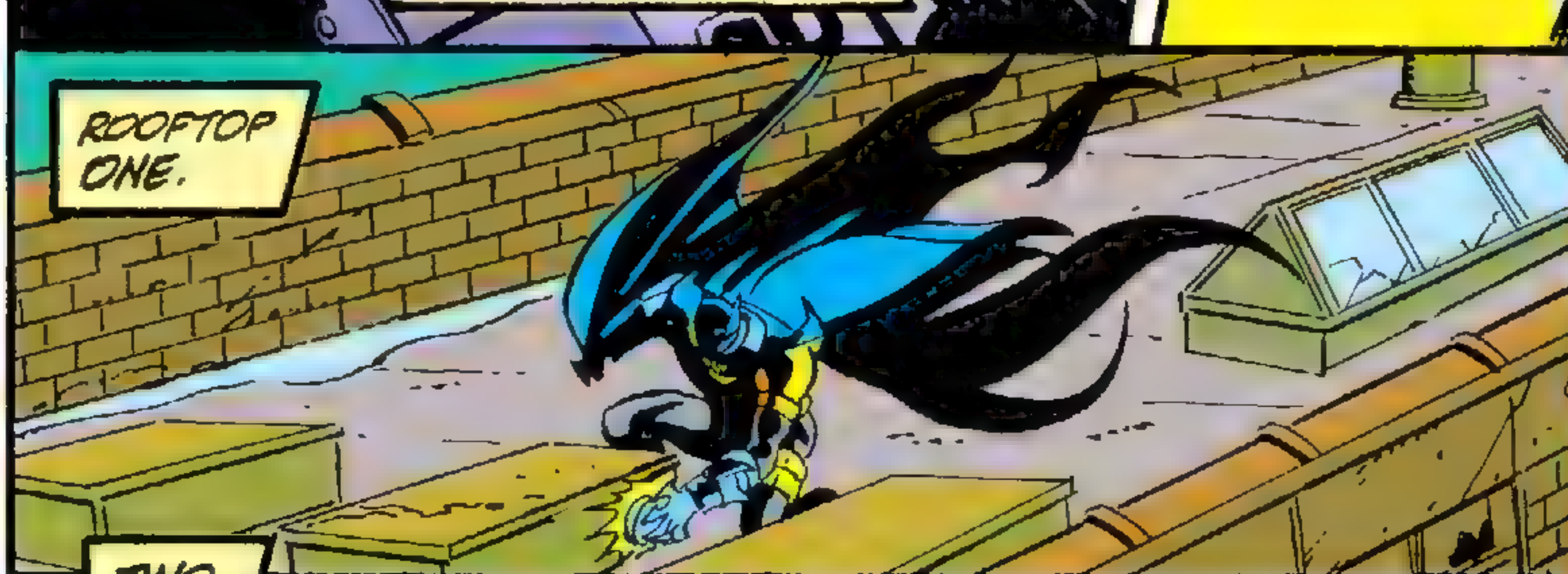


THREE POSSIBLE SITES
FOR WHAT SHE'S AFTER.

GOT TO MONITOR
ALL THREE.

HAROLD MADE SOME
REMARKABLE THINGS
FOR BRUCE WAYNE...

...AND THERE'S NO WAY
SHE'LL SUSPECT MOTION
DETECTORS AT
CHEMICAL SUPPLY
WAREHOUSES.

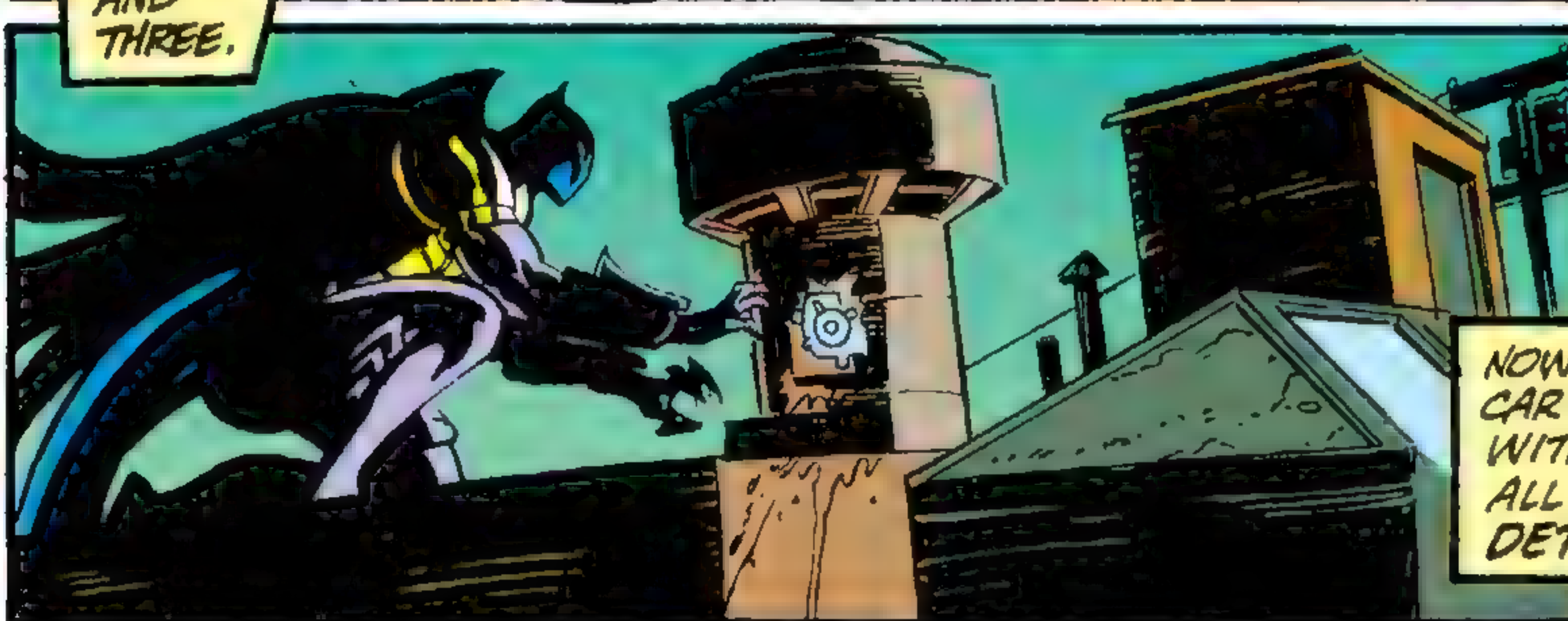


ROOFTOP
ONE.

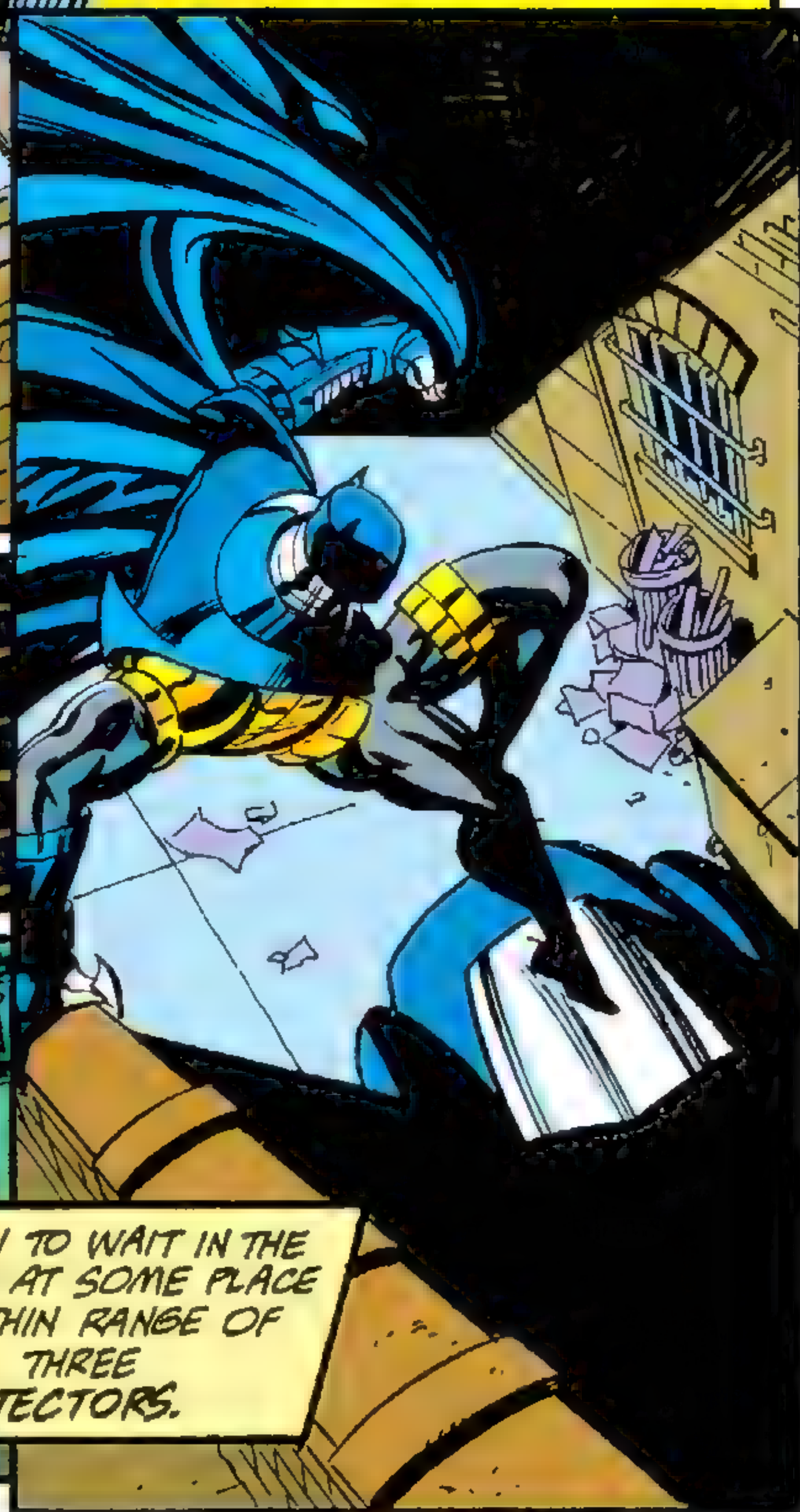
TWO.

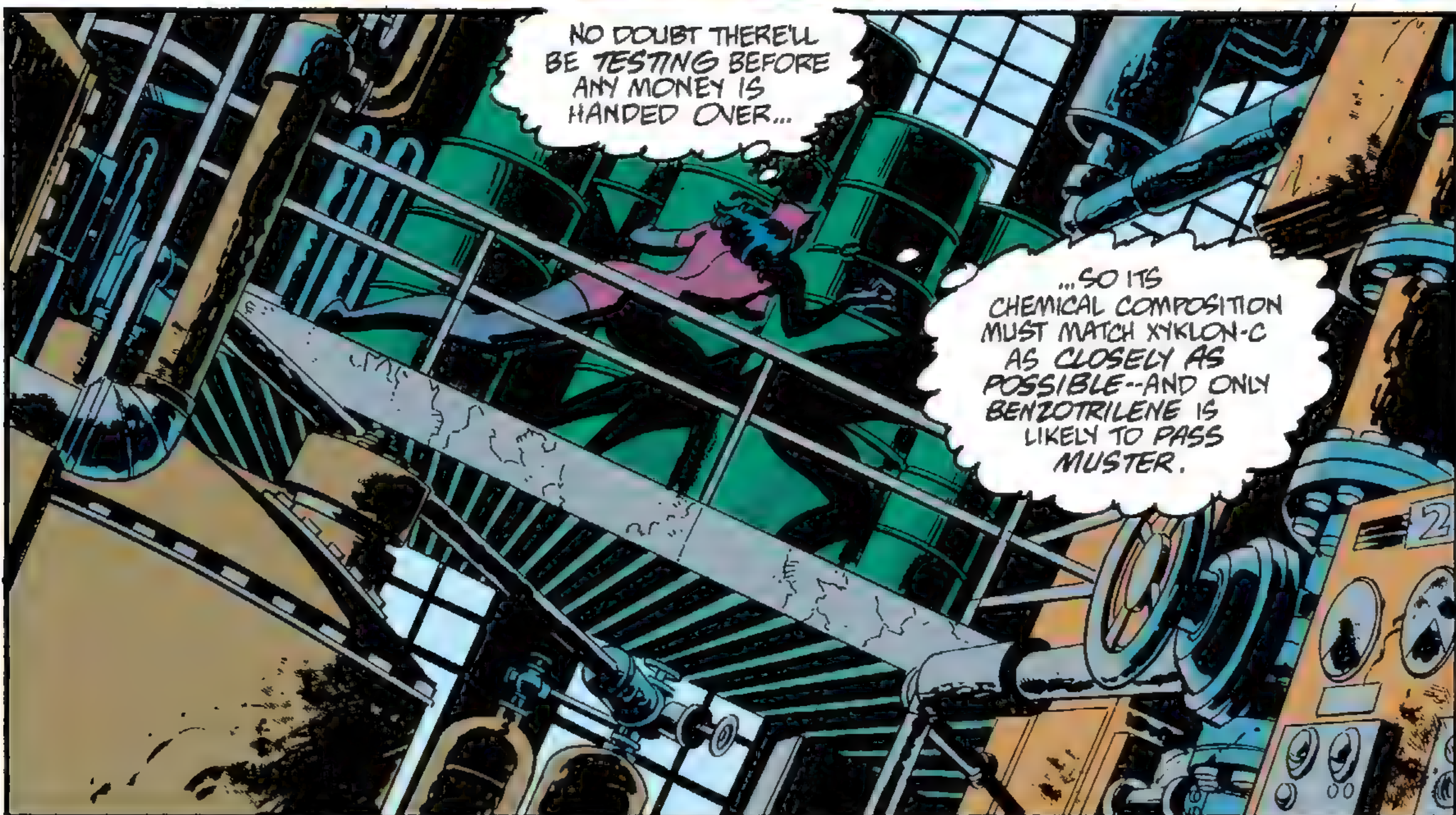
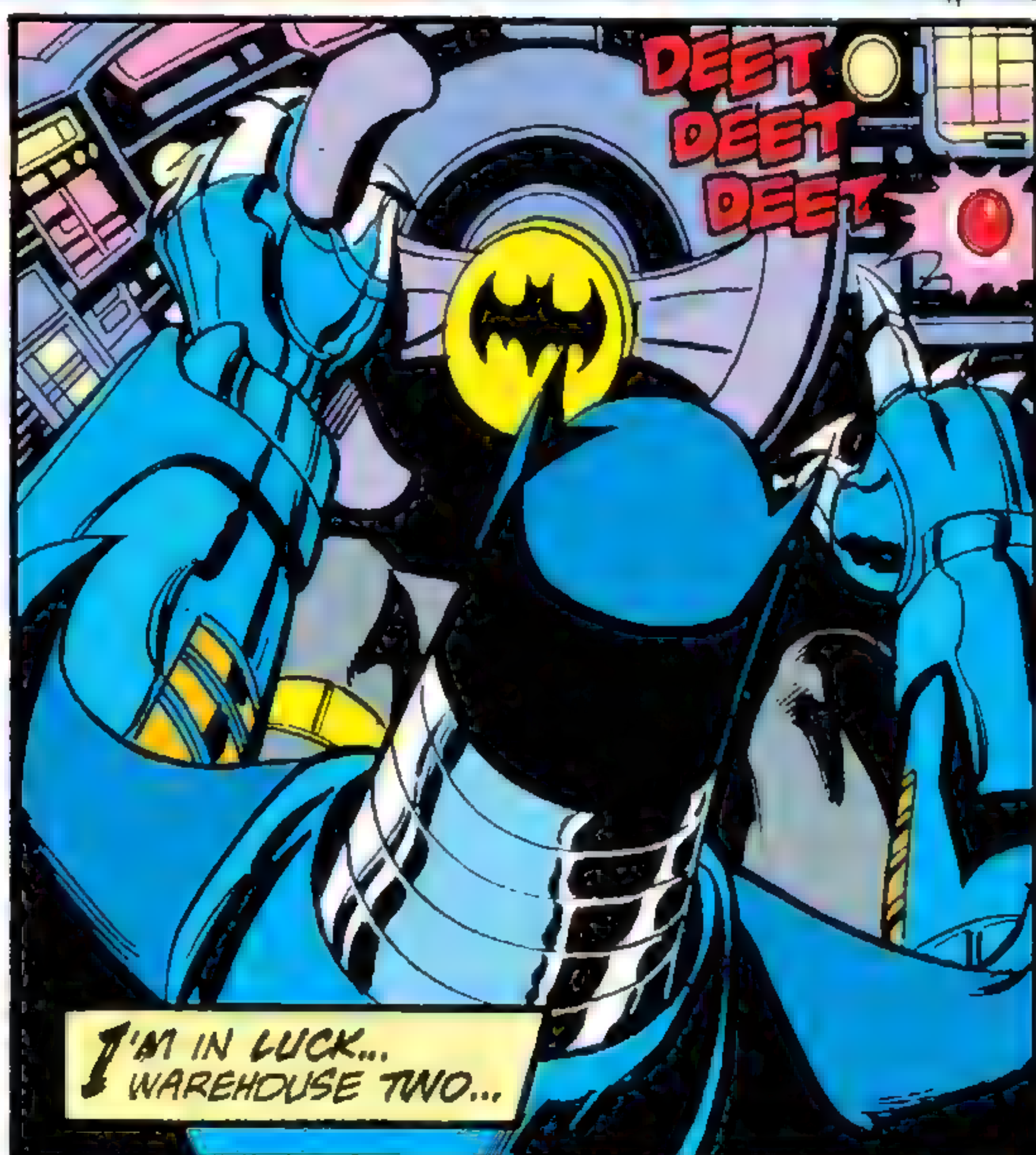
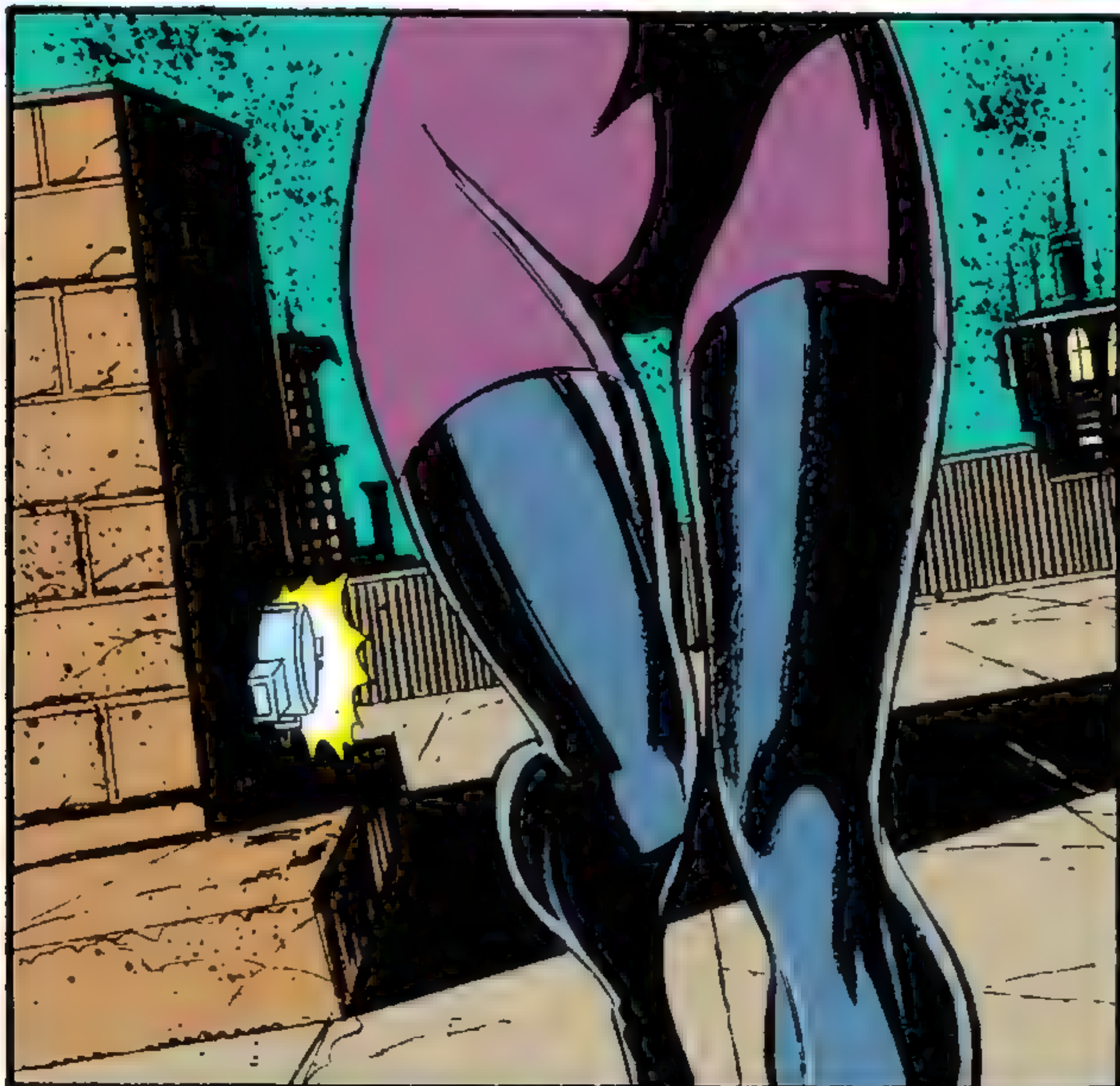
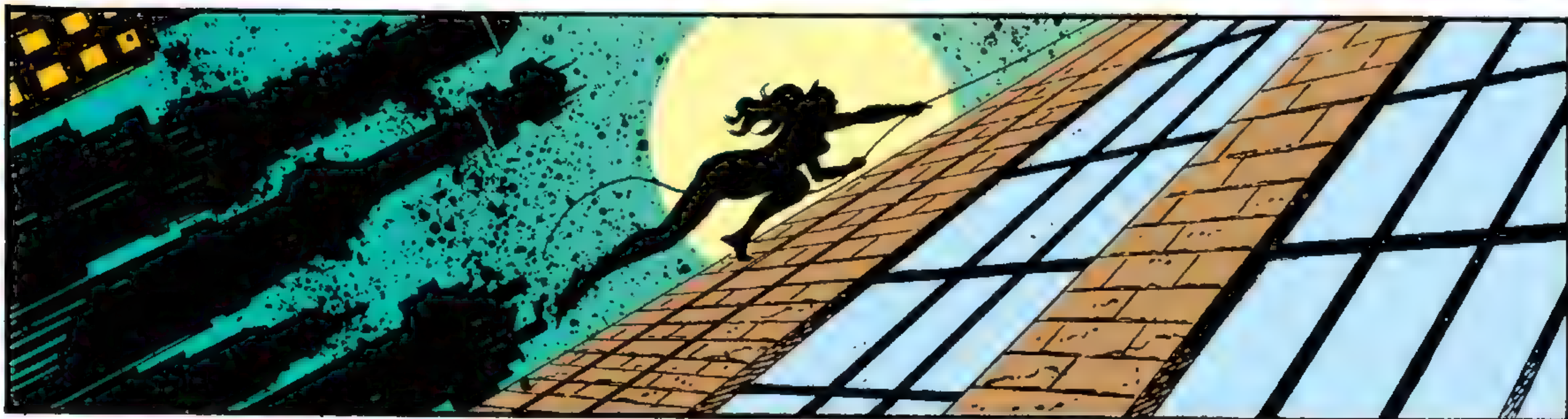


AND
THREE.



NOW TO WAIT IN THE
CAR AT SOME PLACE
WITHIN RANGE OF
ALL THREE
DETECTORS.









AND THERE'S NO WAY YOU LEAVE HERE WITH THE ATROPHANE.

THE XYKLON CATALYST--? I'M NOT AFTER THAT.

I TOOK THE NEUROTOXIN TO PREVENT IT FROM BECOMING ACTIVE IN THE FIRST PLACE...



I'M AFTER BENZOTRILENE, A HARMLESS SUBSTI-

DROP THE WHIP,



ALL RIGHT... MAYBE YOU WILL SEE REASON IF I'M HARMLESS...

NO CLOSER.

BUT THERE'S SO MUCH--AND YET NOTHING-- BETWEEN US AT THIS DISTANCE...



I SAID--

WHAT'S THE MATTER? IS THE BIG BAD BAT AFRAID OF A MERE CAT?

SHE'S TRYING TO TEMPT ME... TRICK ME...



...BUT I STILL CAN'T DO IT...CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO FIRE THE SHURIKENS...

...CAN'T SPILL THE FIRST BLOOD.



THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH!

YOU'RE RIGHT... CLOSE ENOUGH TO REALIZE... YOU'RE NOT HIM... ARE YOU?

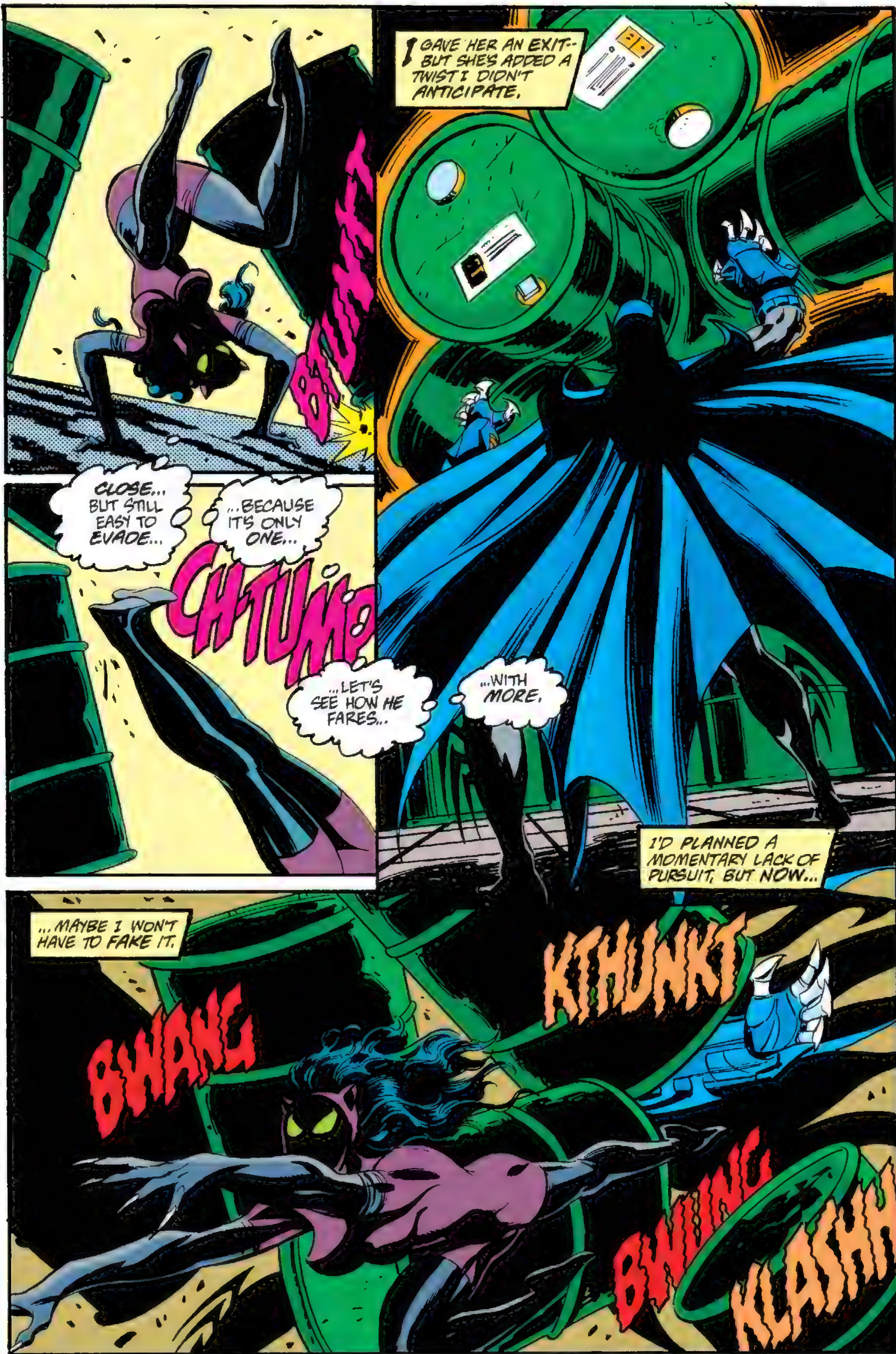
HOW DOES SHE KNOW?

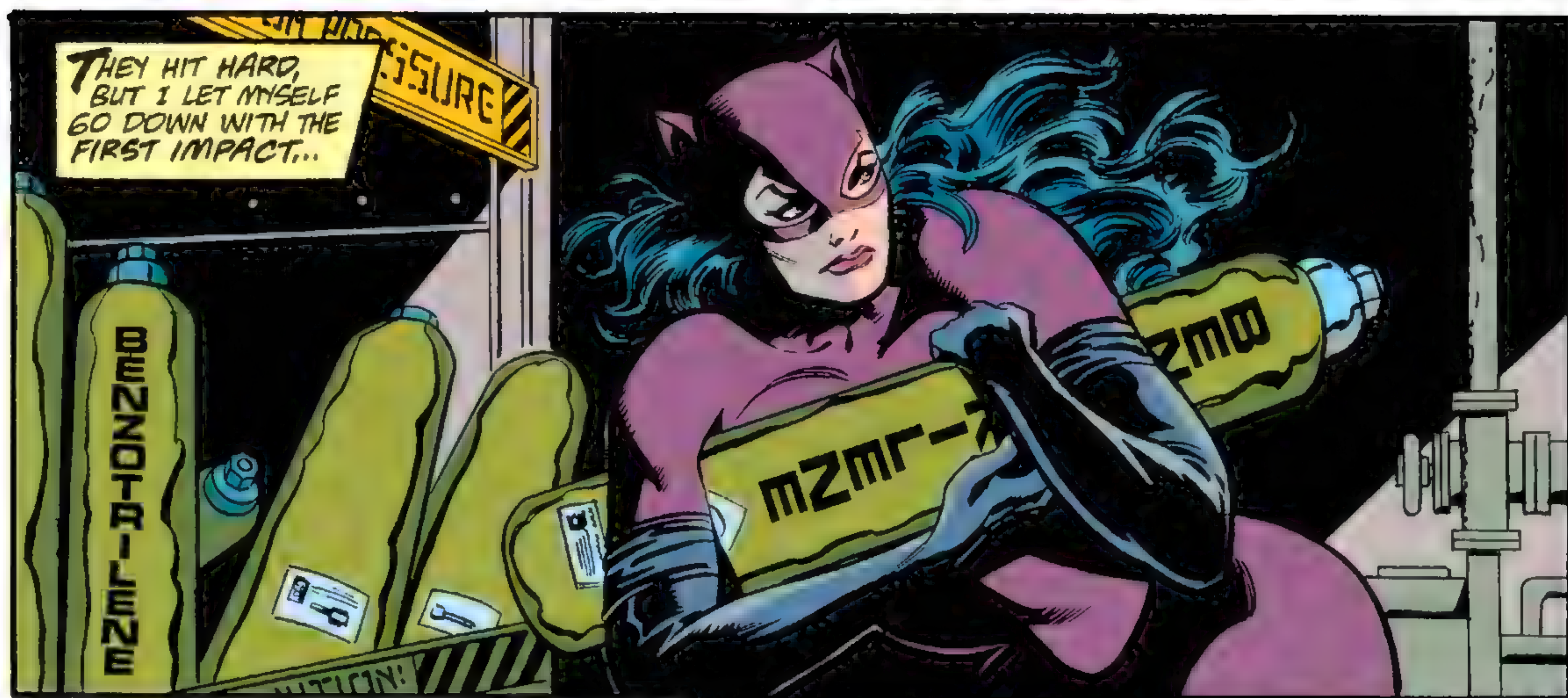
I'VE MASTERED THE ROUGH, GRATING VOICE--EVEN ROBIN ONCE THOUGHT I WAS BRUCE WAYNE...



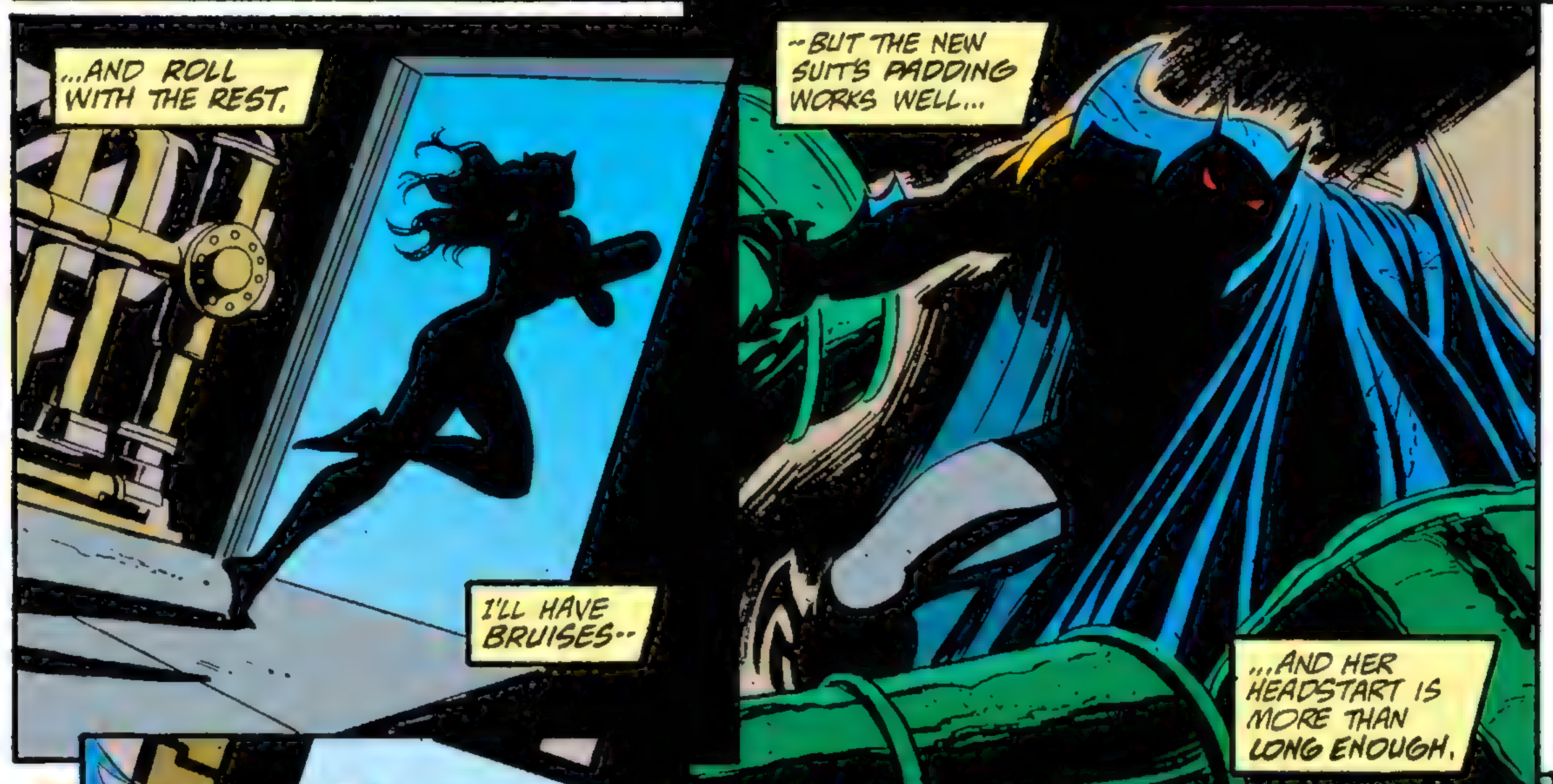








THEY HIT HARD,
BUT I LET MYSELF
GO DOWN WITH THE
FIRST IMPACT...

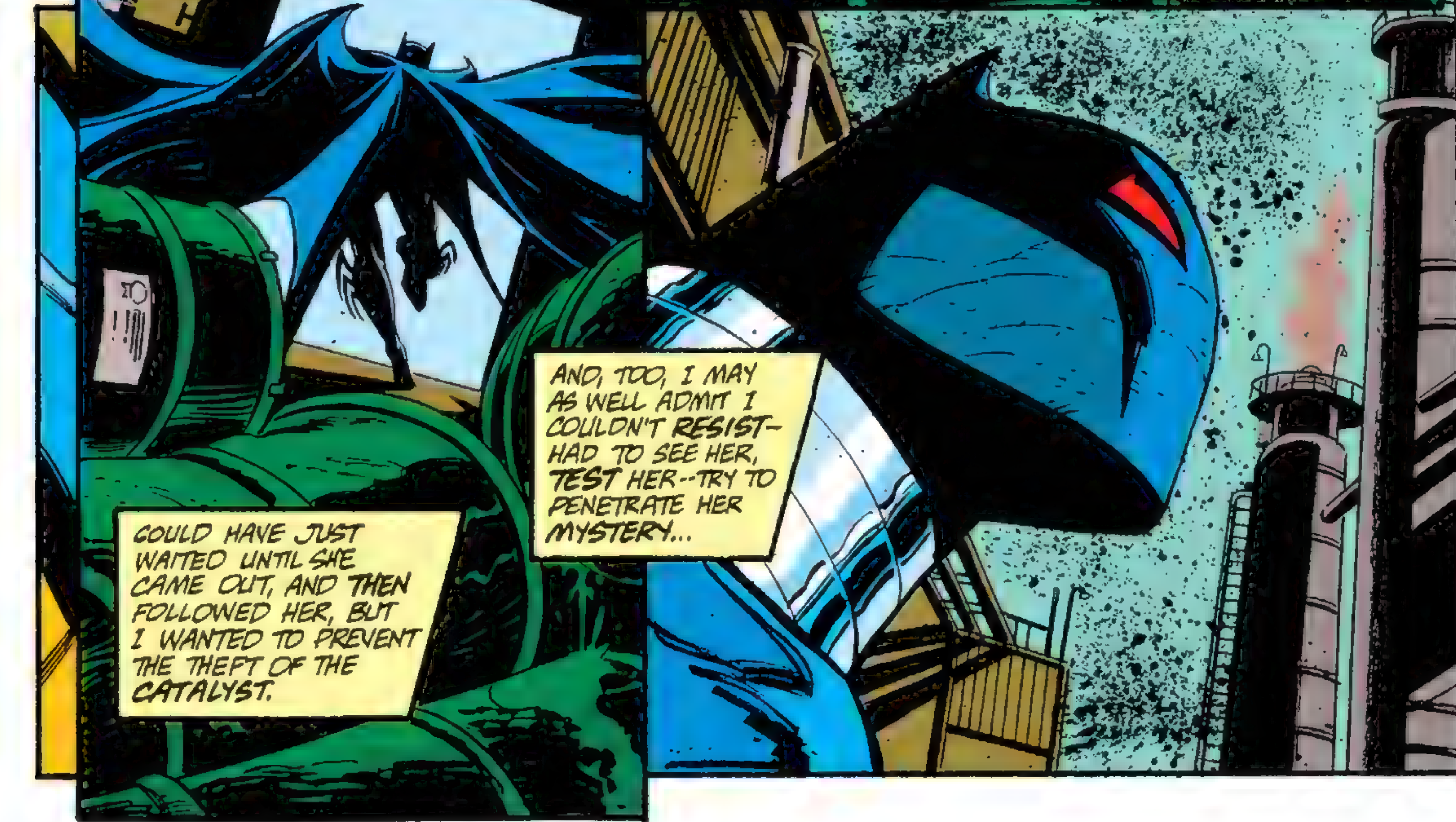


...AND ROLL
WITH THE REST.

--BUT THE NEW
SUITS PADDING
WORKS WELL...

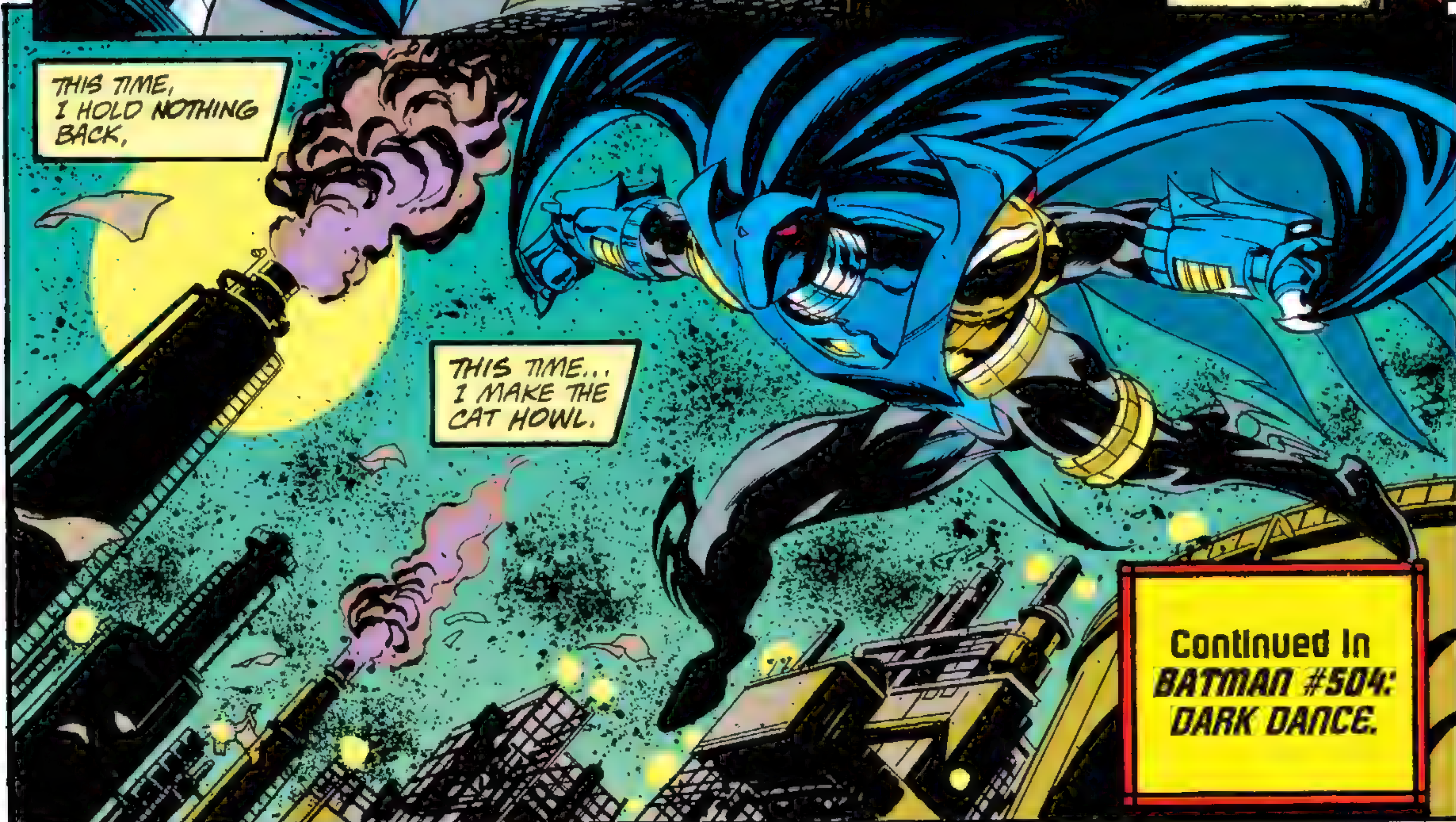
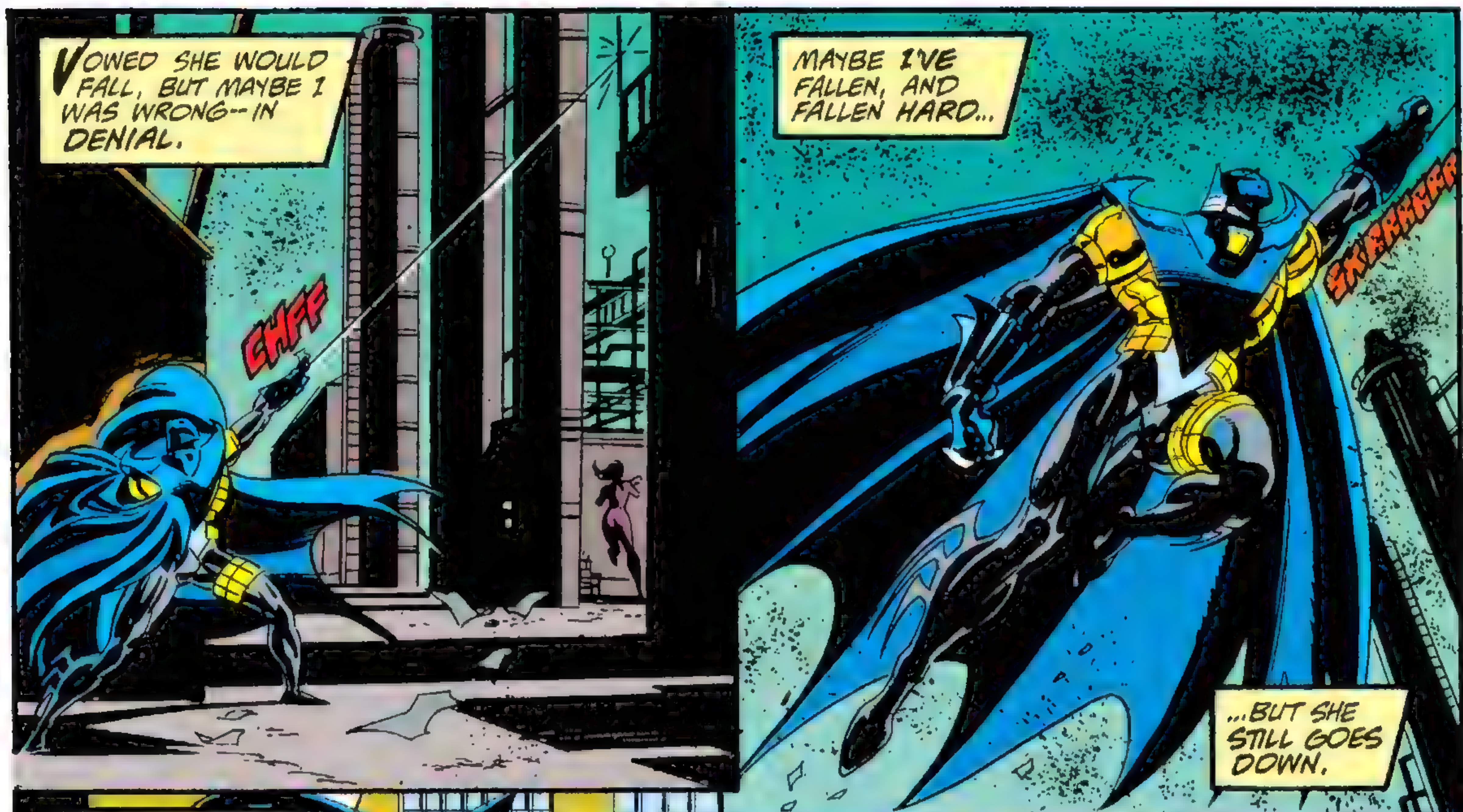
I'LL HAVE
BRUISES--

...AND HER
HEADSTART IS
MORE THAN
LONG ENOUGH.



COULD HAVE JUST
WAITED UNTIL SHE
CAME OUT, AND THEN
FOLLOWED HER, BUT
I WANTED TO PREVENT
THE THEFT OF THE
CATALYST.

AND, TOO, I MAY
AS WELL ADMIT I
COULDN'T RESIST--
HAD TO SEE HER,
TEST HER--TRY TO
PENETRATE HER
MYSTERY...



Cover art by KELLEY JONES



BATMAN

504

\$1.50 US
\$1.95 CAN
70p UK



KNIGHTQUEST
THE CRUSADE



BATMAN



DOUG
MOENCH
MIKE
MANLEY

DARK DANCE

I AM
SAINT DUMAS--
HERE TO
GUIDE YOUR
CRUSADE.

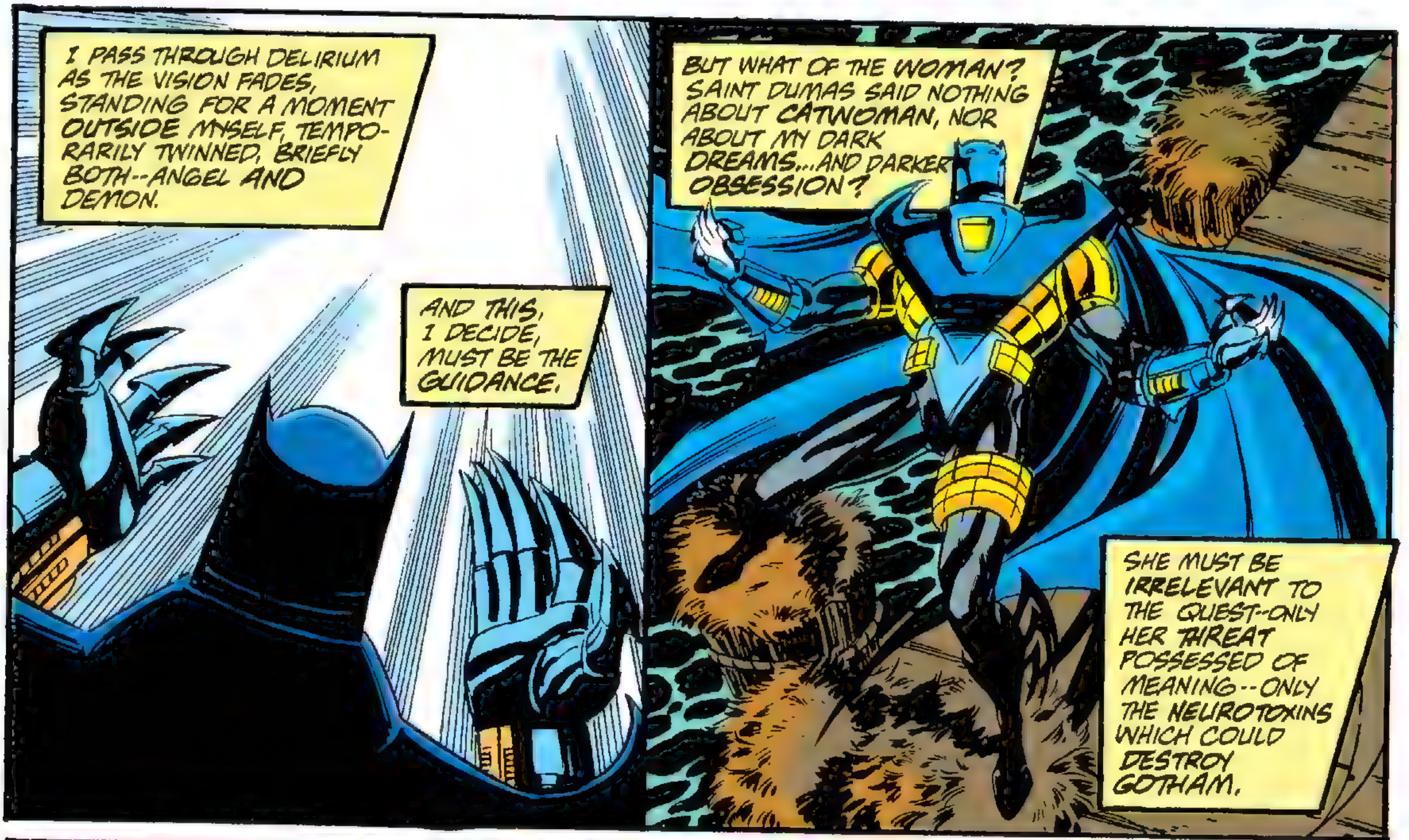
AGAIN HE APPEARS, A
DELUSION IMPLANTED IN
MY MIND, A VISION AS
REAL AS PAIN.

YET YOUR
PAST GUIDANCE
CREATES CONFLICT,
FIRST TELLING ME TO
BECOME DARKER...
THEN TO FOLLOW
THE LIGHT.

THE
CONTRADICTION
LIES AT THE HEART
OF WHAT YOU HAVE
PLEGGED TO
BECOME--A FORCE
OF DARKNESS
BRINGING LIGHT--
SALVATION
WROUGHT FROM
TERROR.

AND HE
SPEAKS NO
MORE.

DOUG MOENCH - MIKE MANLEY - ADRIENNE ROY - KEN BRUZENAK - JORDAN B. GORFINKEL - DENNIS O'NEIL - Batman created by
writer artist colorist letterer assistant editor editor BOB KANE.

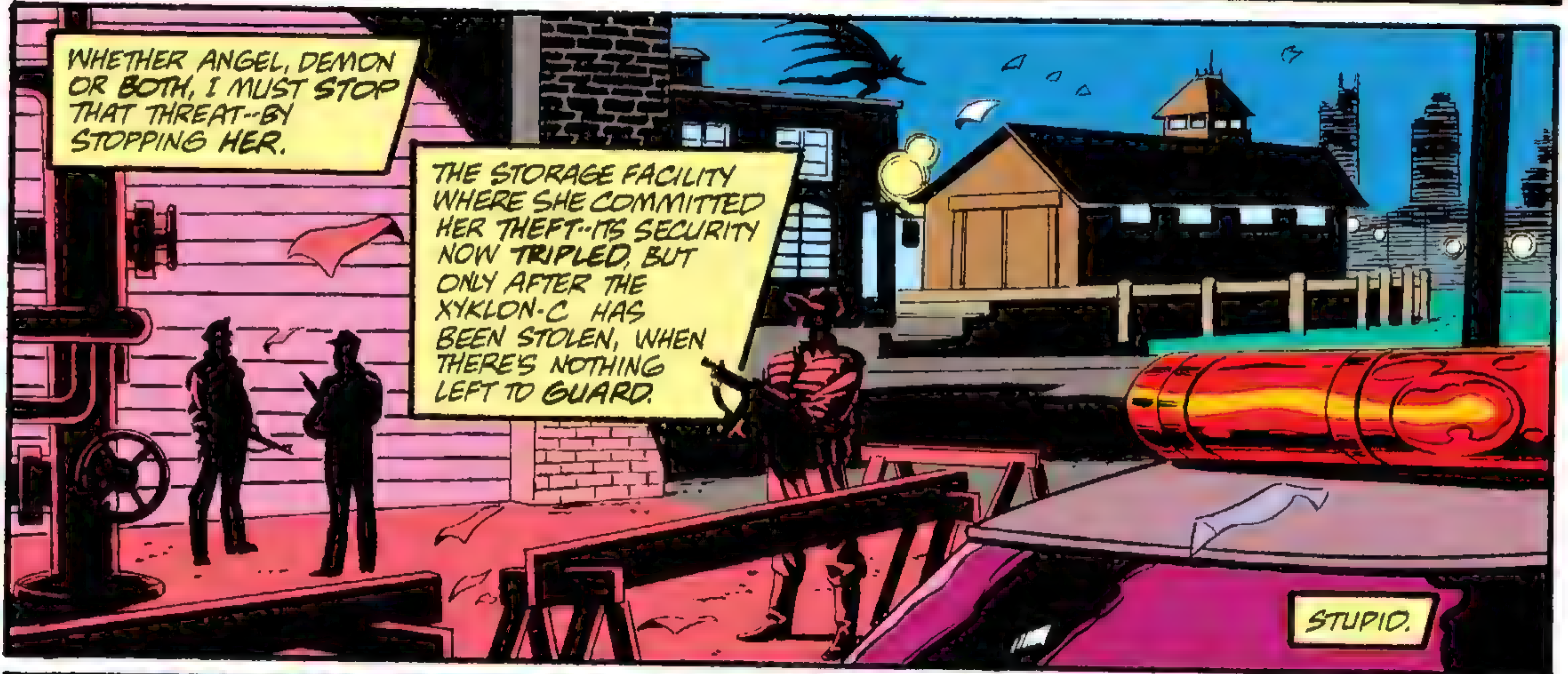


I PASS THROUGH DELIRIUM AS THE VISION FADES, STANDING FOR A MOMENT OUTSIDE MYSELF, TEMPORARILY TWINNED, BRIEFLY BOTH--ANGEL AND DEMON.

AND THIS, I DECIDE, MUST BE THE GUIDANCE.

BUT WHAT OF THE WOMAN? SAINT DUMAS SAID NOTHING ABOUT CATWOMAN, NOR ABOUT MY DARK DREAMS...AND DARKER OBSESSION?

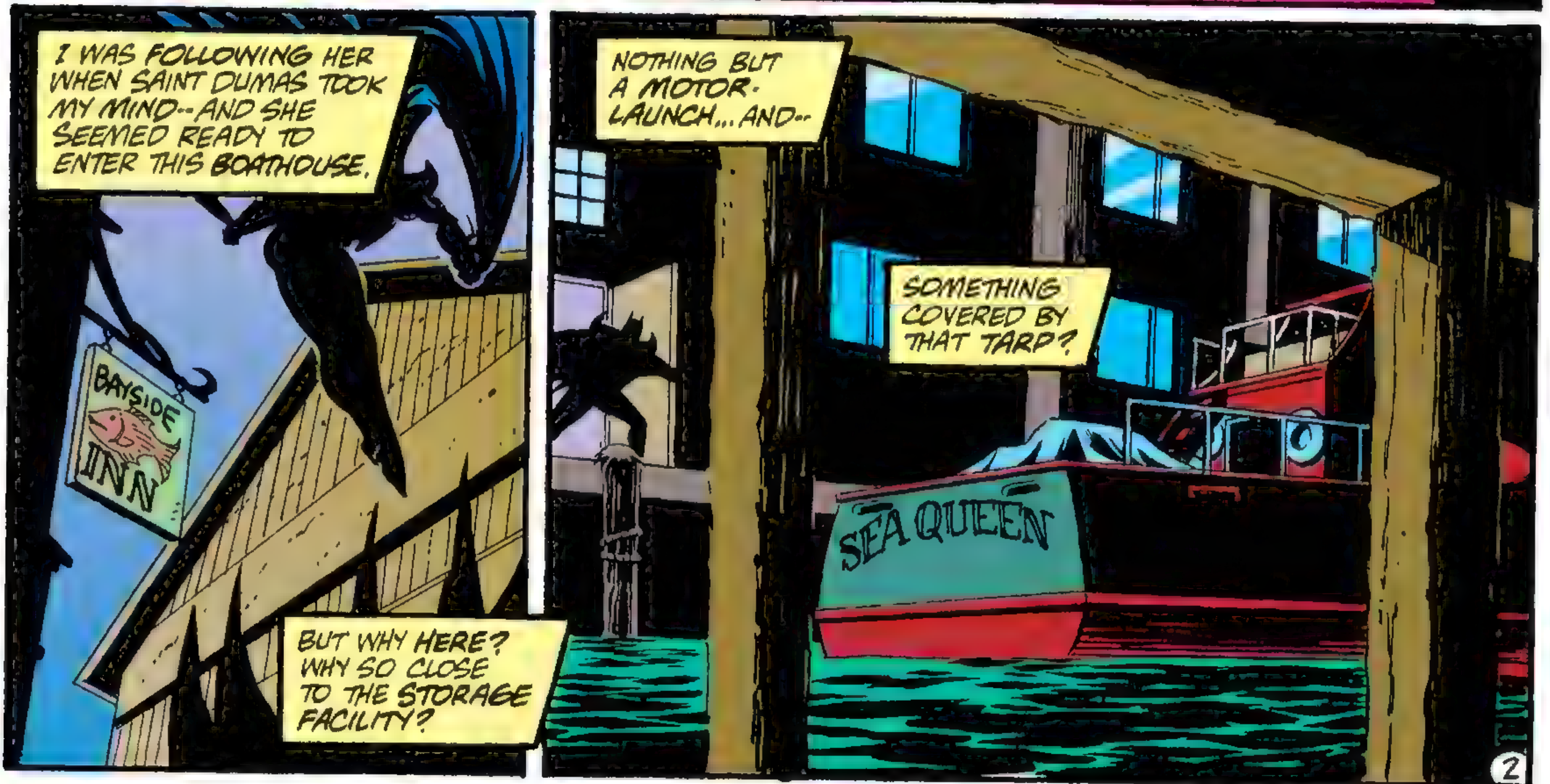
SHE MUST BE IRRELEVANT TO THE QUEST--ONLY HER THREAT POSSESSED OF MEANING--ONLY THE NEUROTOXINS WHICH COULD DESTROY GOTHAM.



WHETHER ANGEL, DEMON OR BOTH, I MUST STOP THAT THREAT--BY STOPPING HER.

THE STORAGE FACILITY WHERE SHE COMMITTED HER THEFT--ITS SECURITY NOW TRIPLED, BUT ONLY AFTER THE XYKLON-C HAS BEEN STOLEN, WHEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO GUARD.

STUPID.

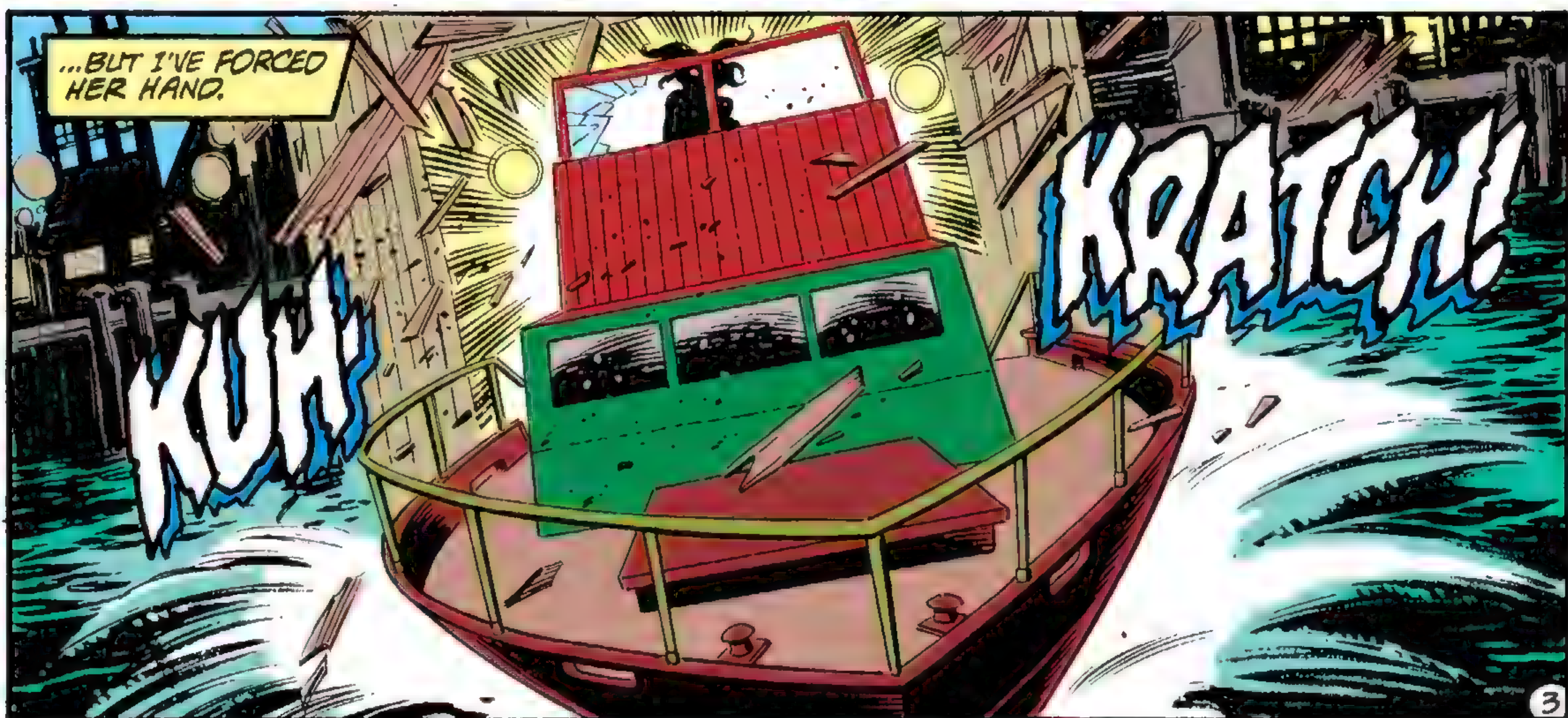
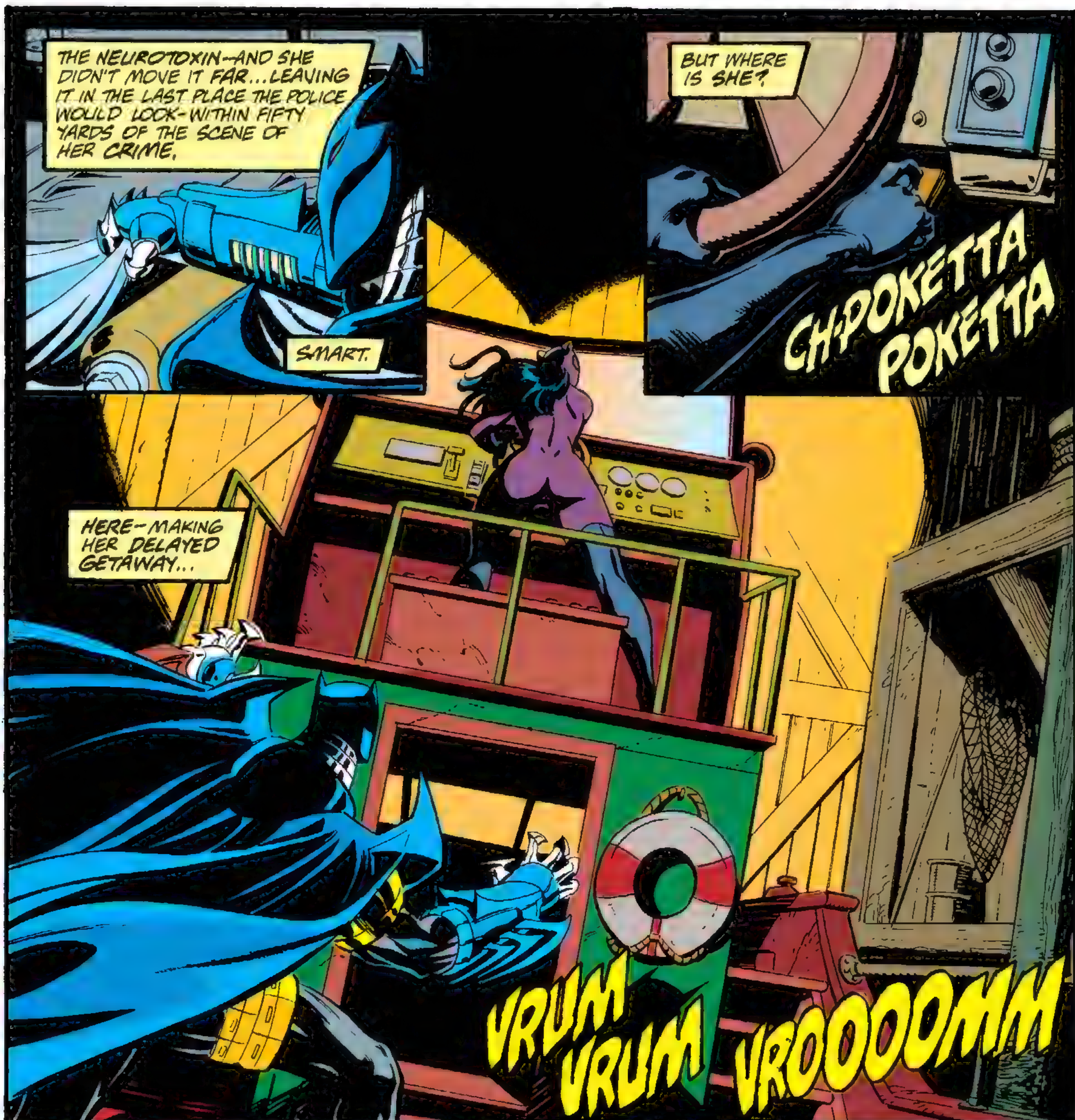


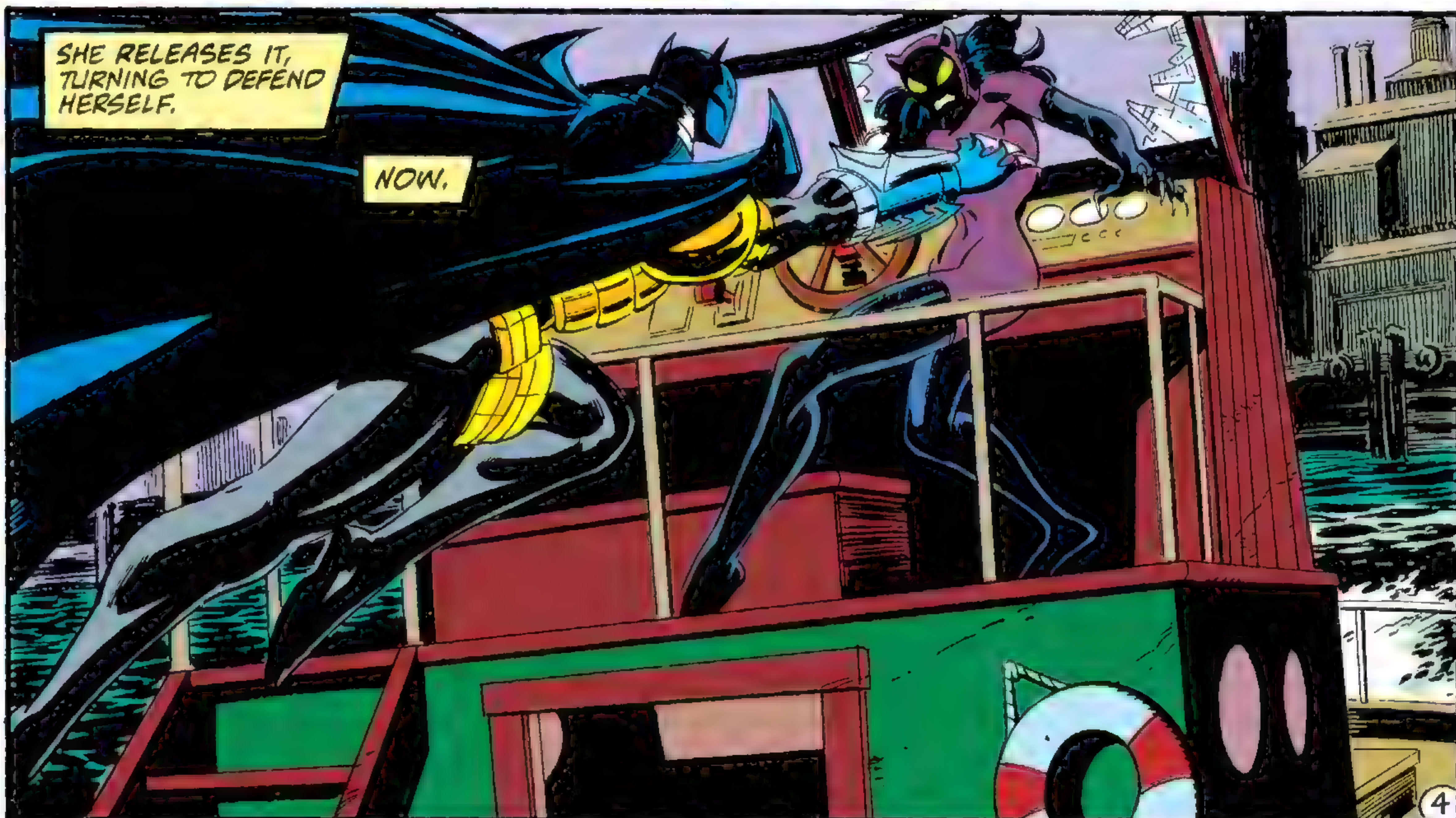
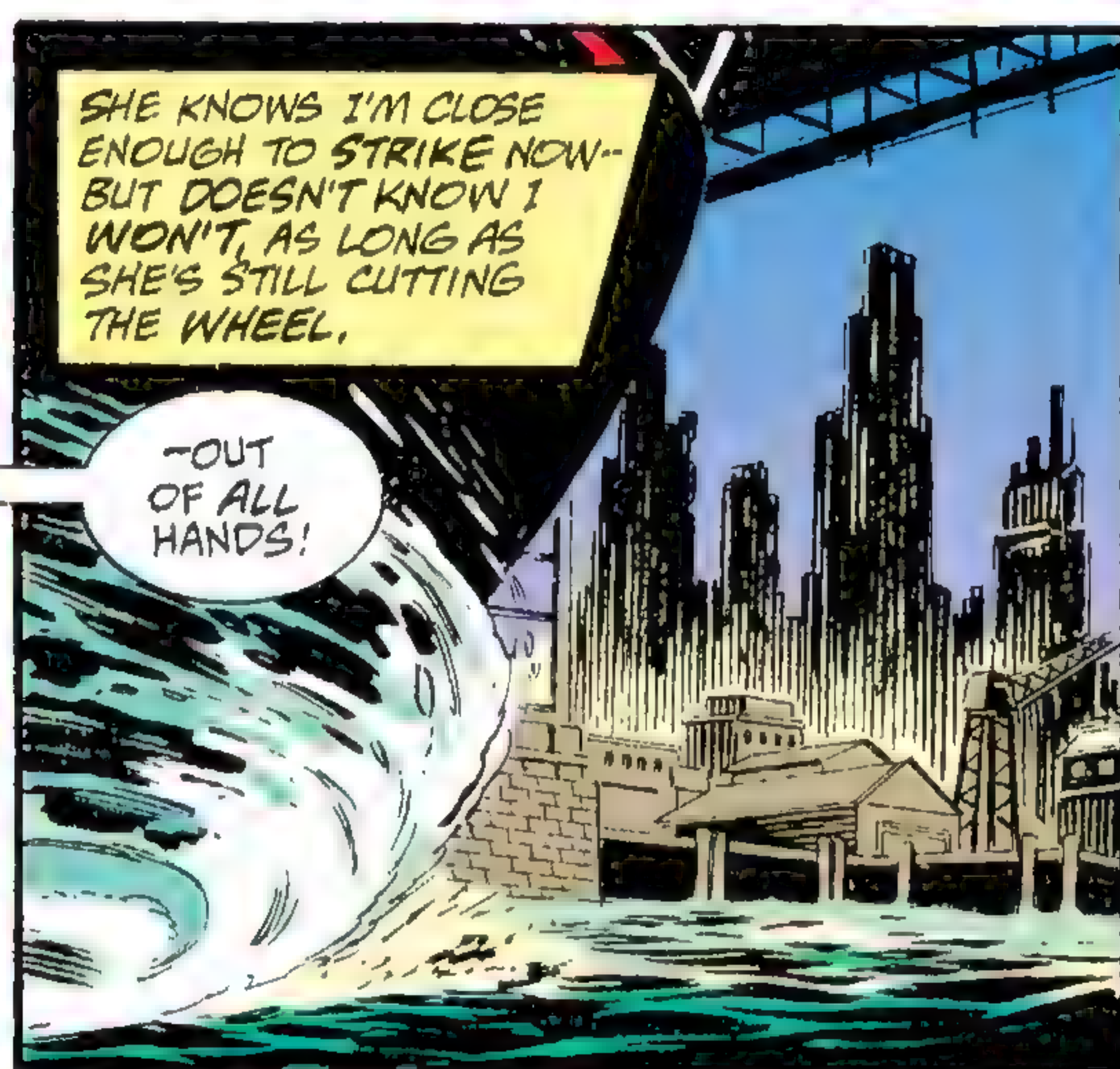
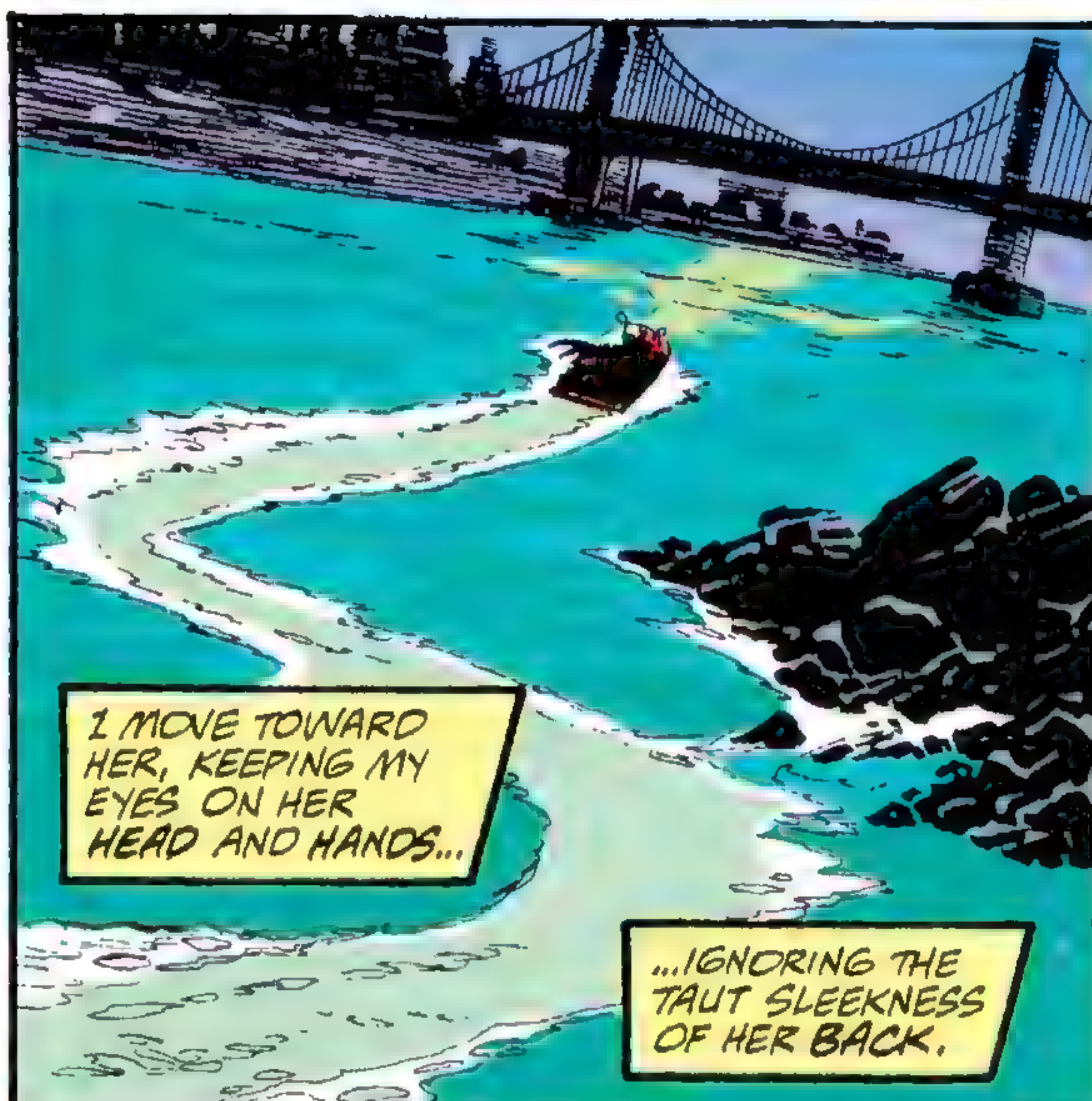
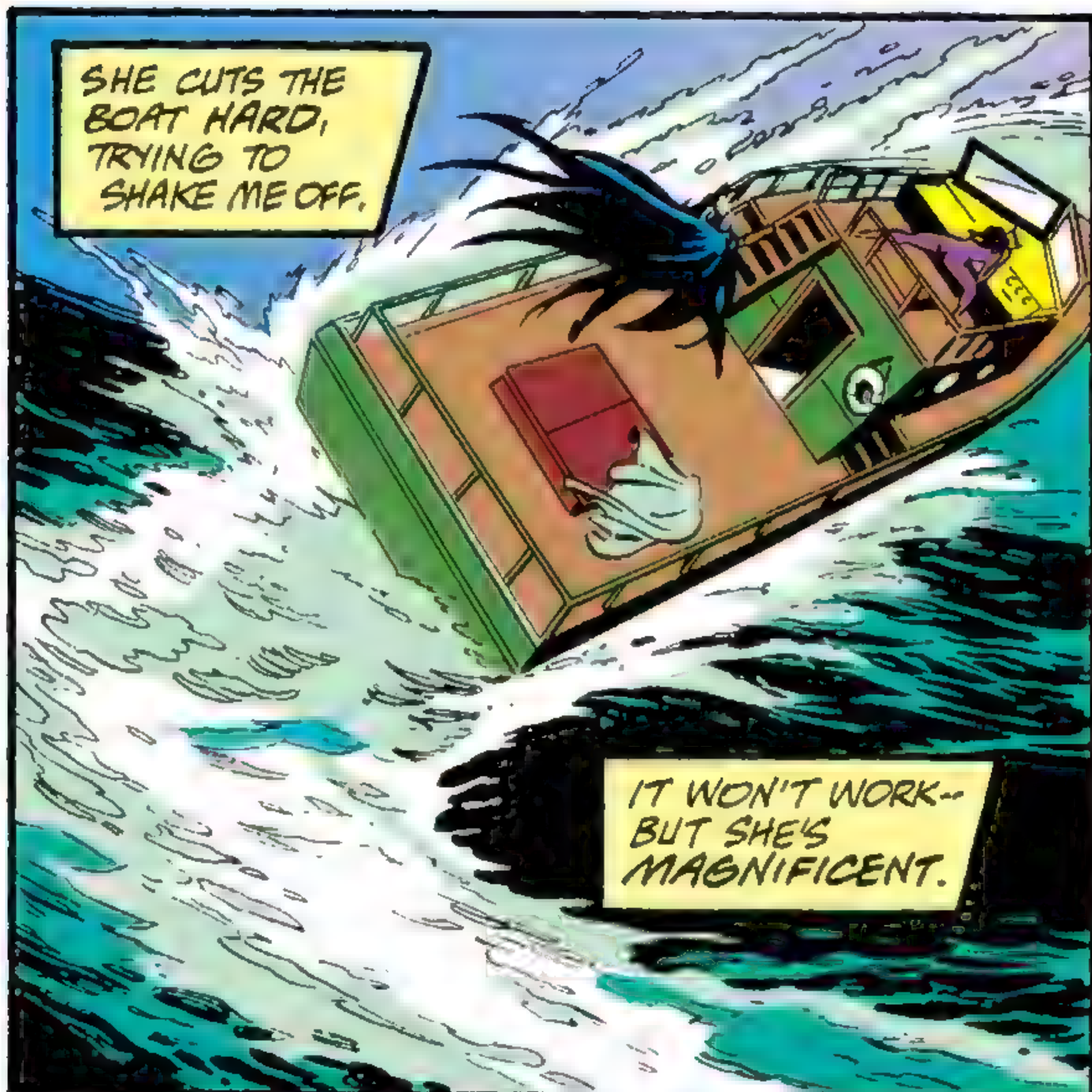
I WAS FOLLOWING HER WHEN SAINT DUMAS TOOK MY MIND--AND SHE SEEMED READY TO ENTER THIS BOATHOUSE.

NOTHING BUT A MOTOR LAUNCH...AND--

SOMETHING COVERED BY THAT TARP?

BUT WHY HERE? WHY SO CLOSE TO THE STORAGE FACILITY?

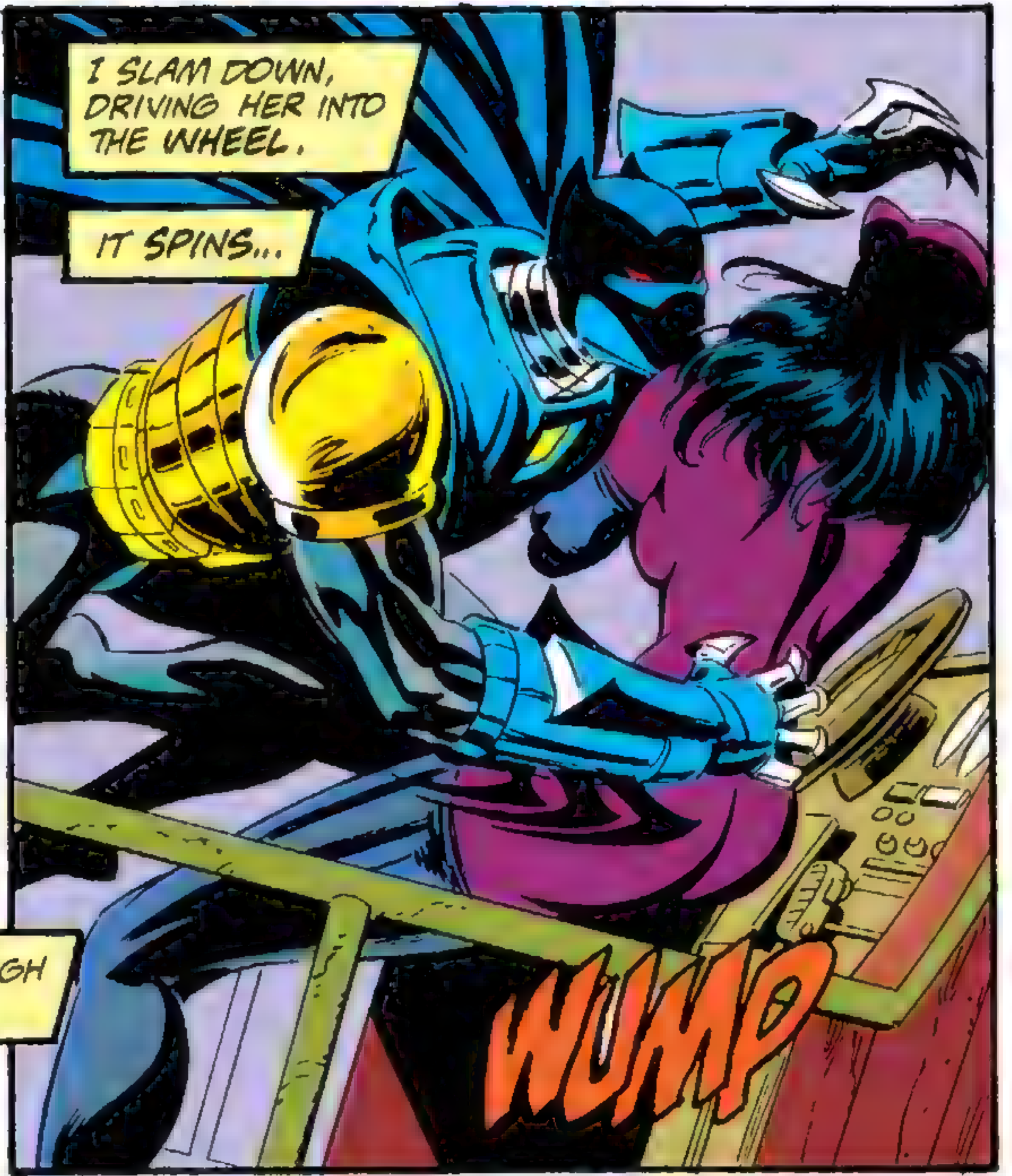






A GOOD KICK--

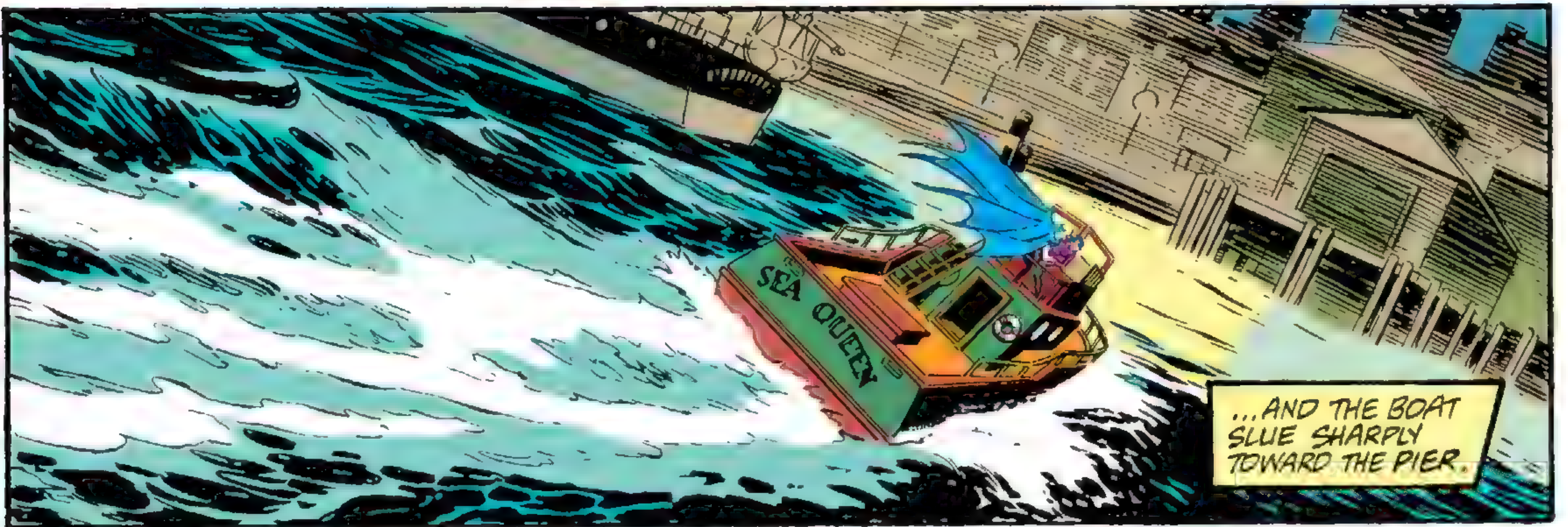
--BUT NOT ENOUGH TO STOP ME...



I SLAM DOWN, DRIVING HER INTO THE WHEEL.

IT SPINS...

WUMP



...AND THE BOAT SLUE SHARPLY TOWARD THE PIER.



WE'RE GOING TO CRASH.

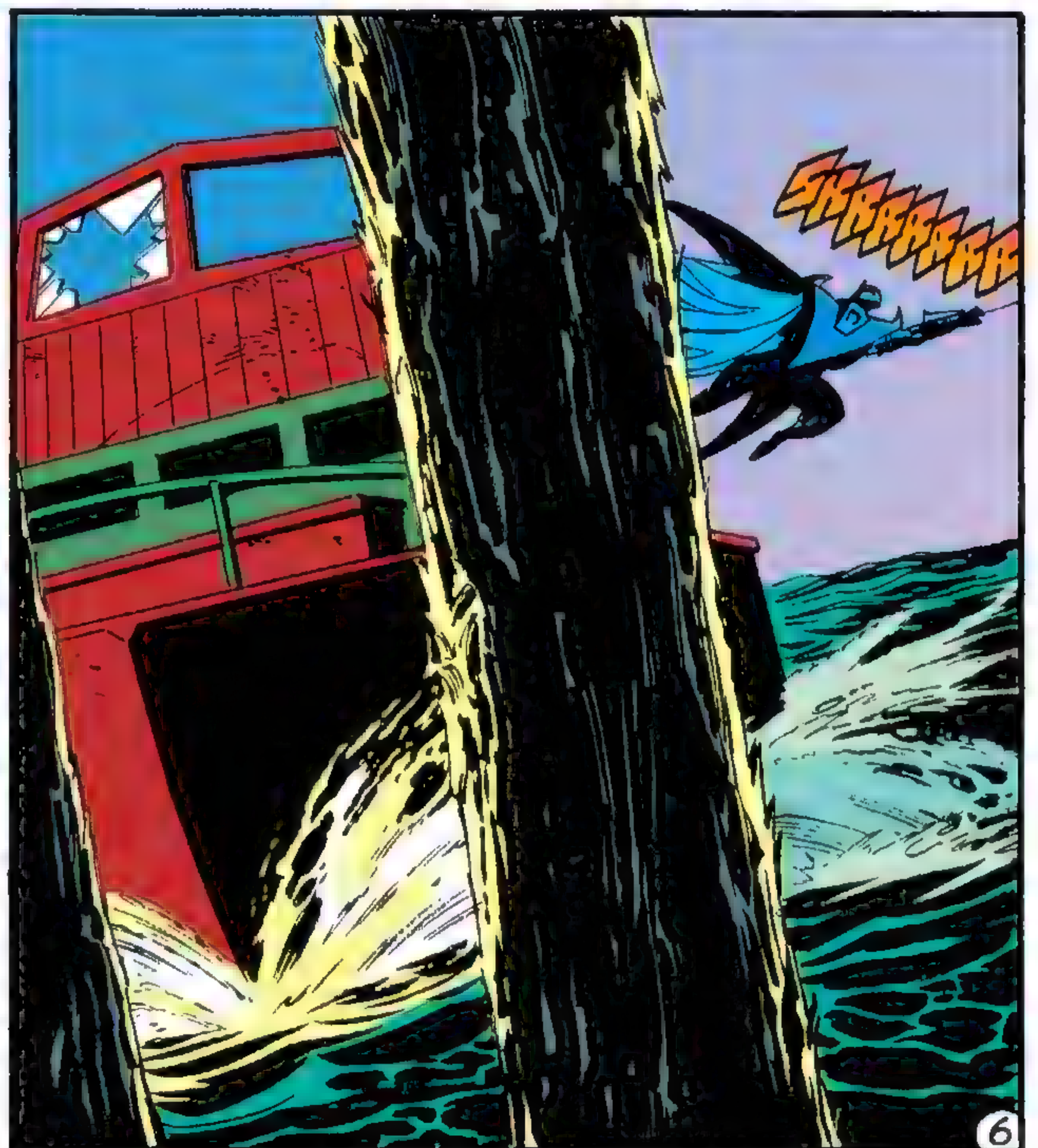
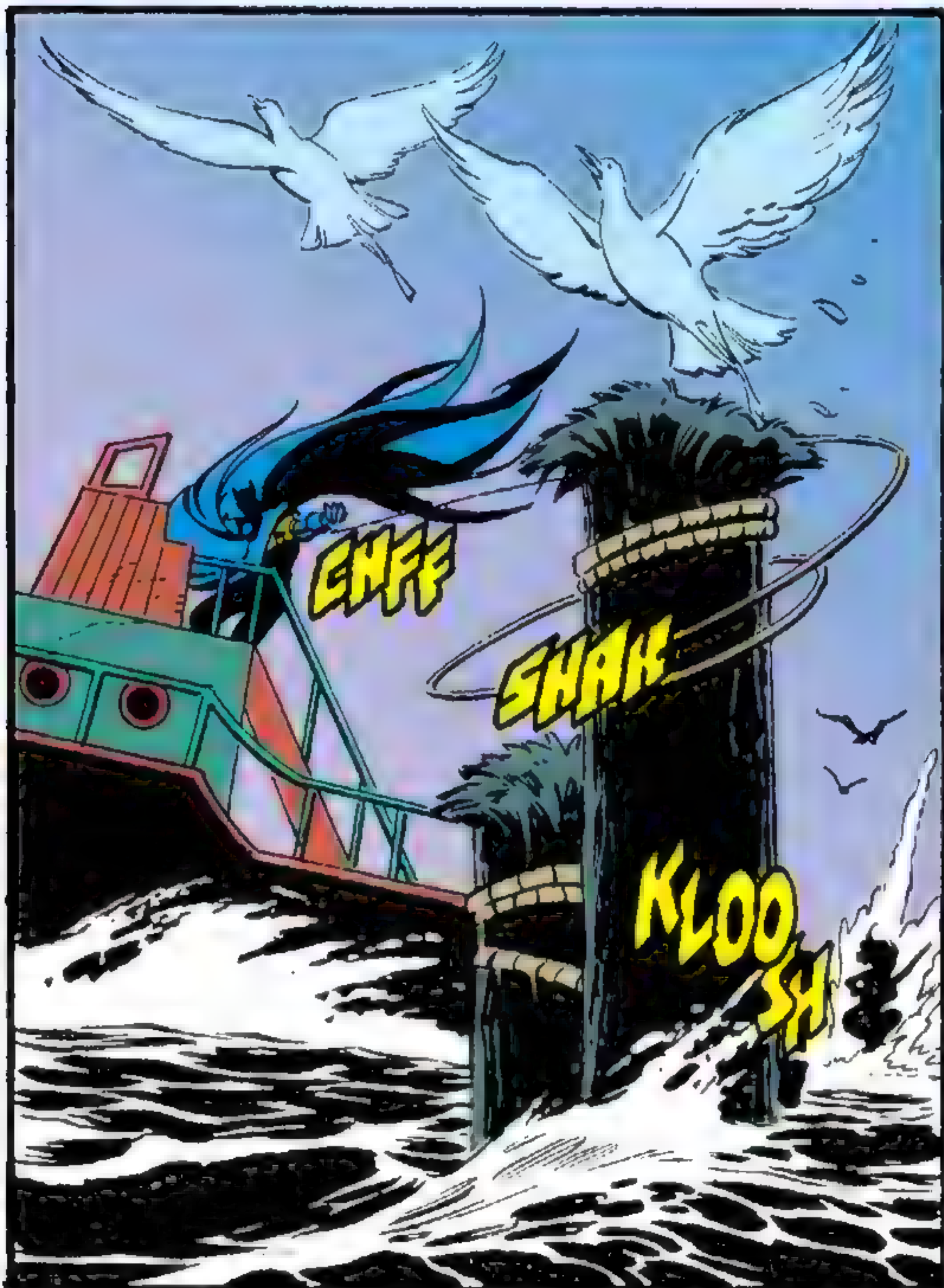
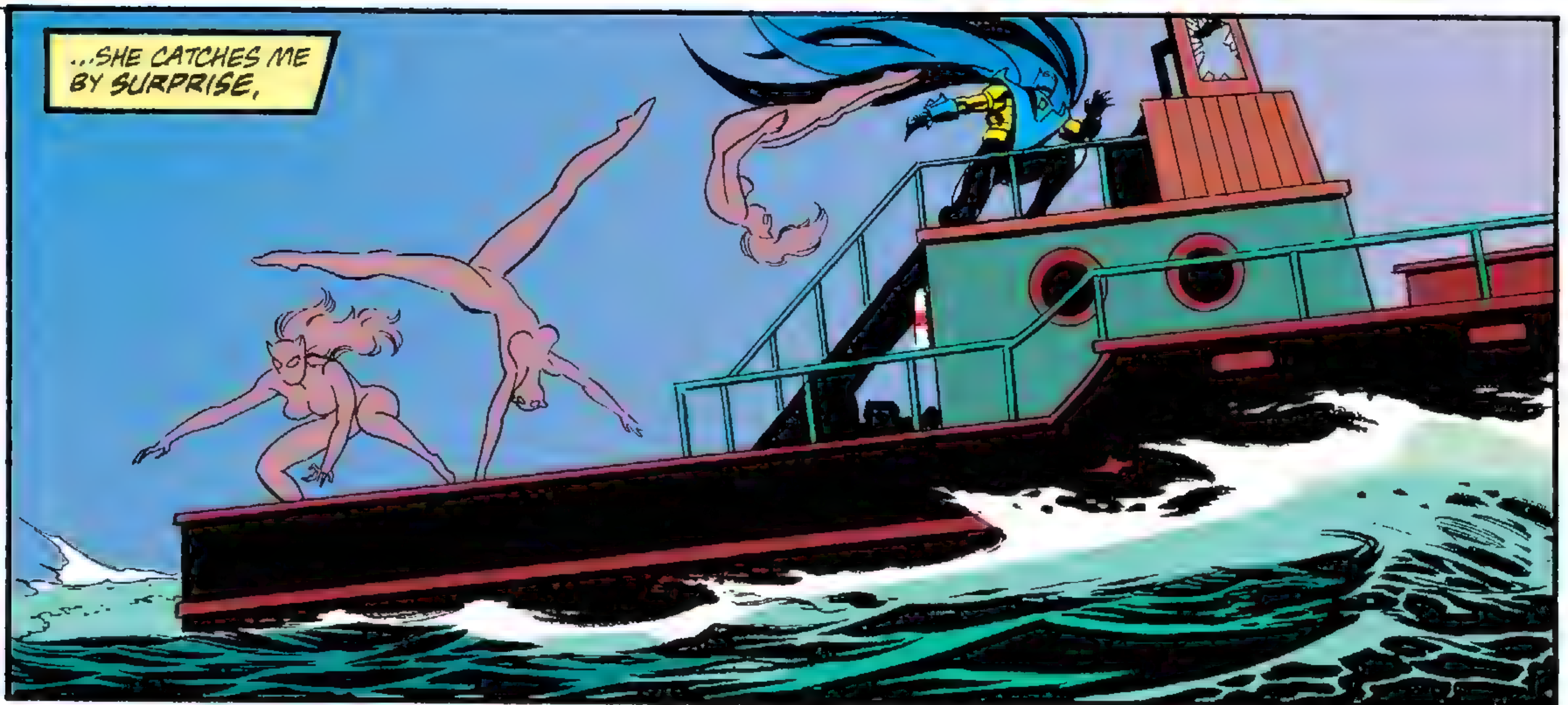
YOU AND I ALREADY HAVE.

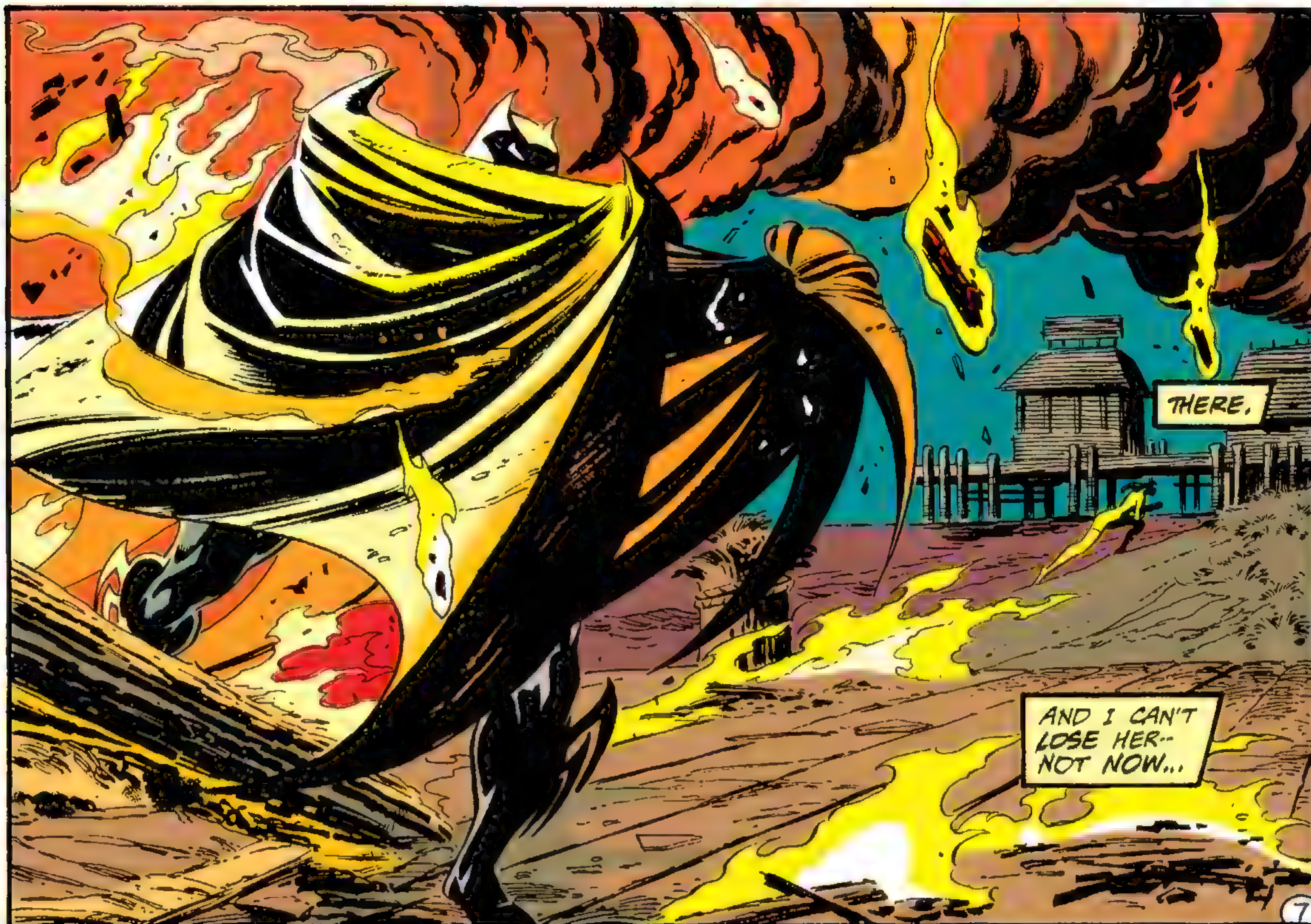
BUT NEITHER ONE OF US WILL LET GO...

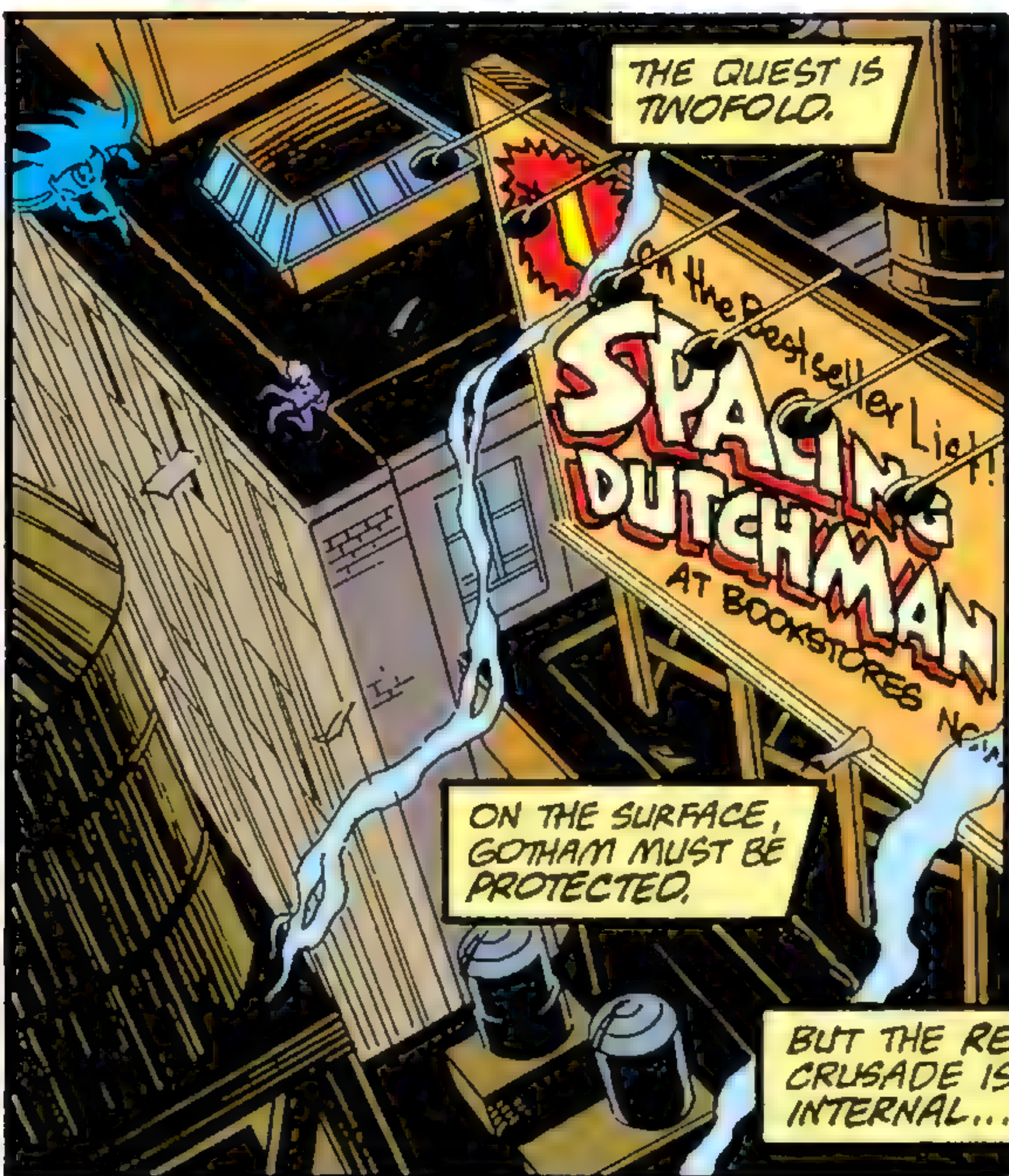
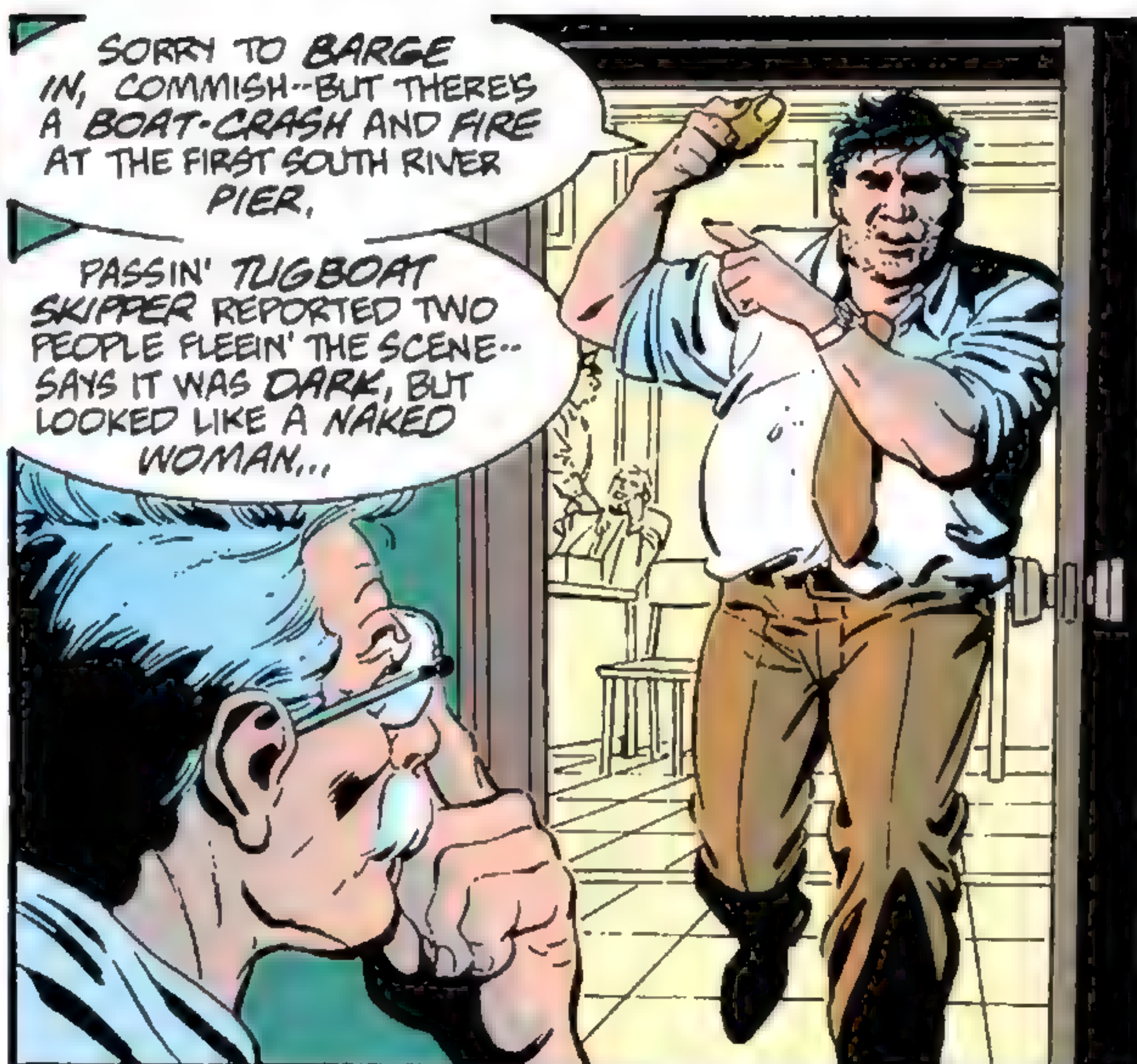
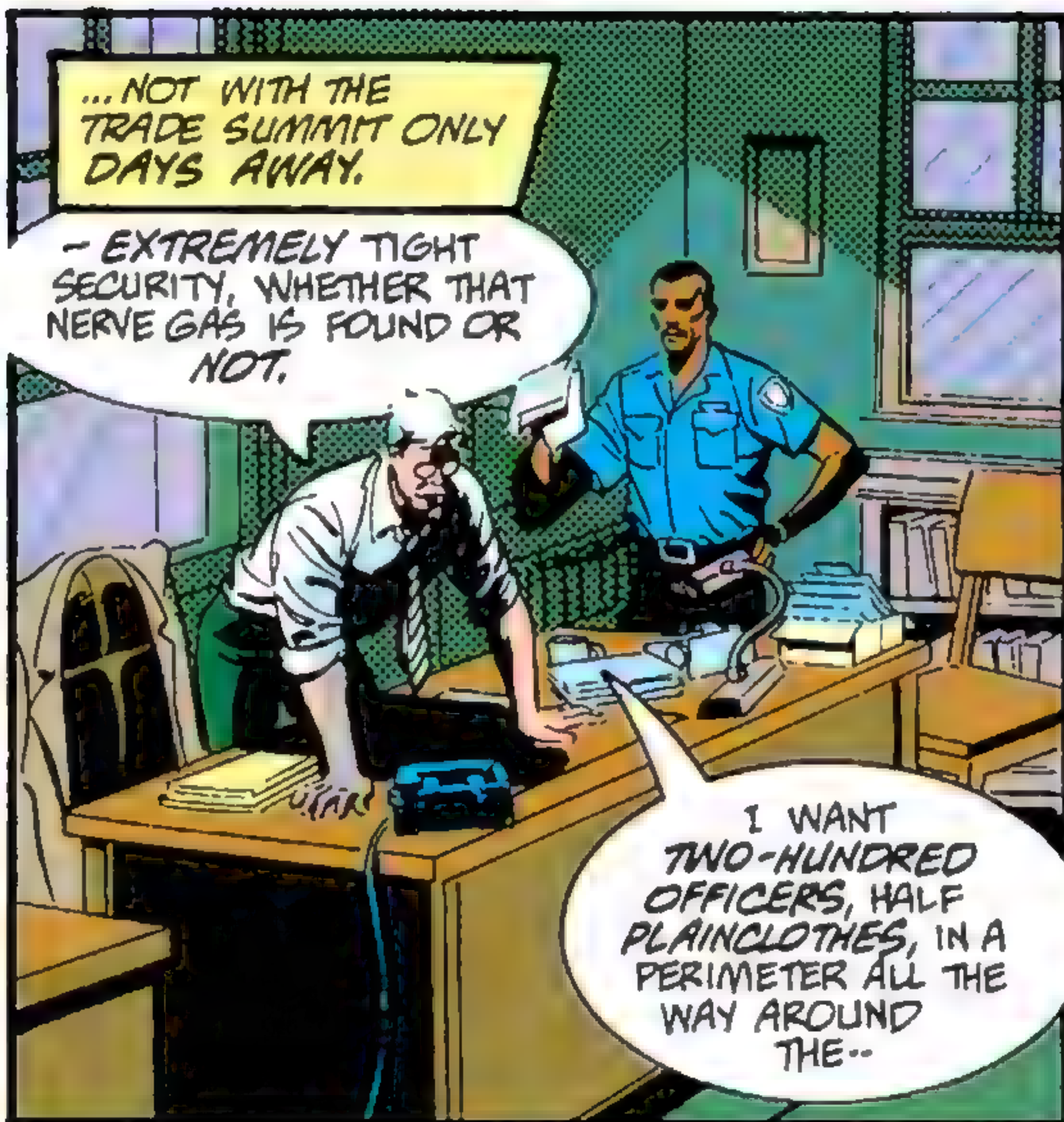


...UNTIL--

WUNK









CANISTER'S
WEIGHING ME
DOWN.

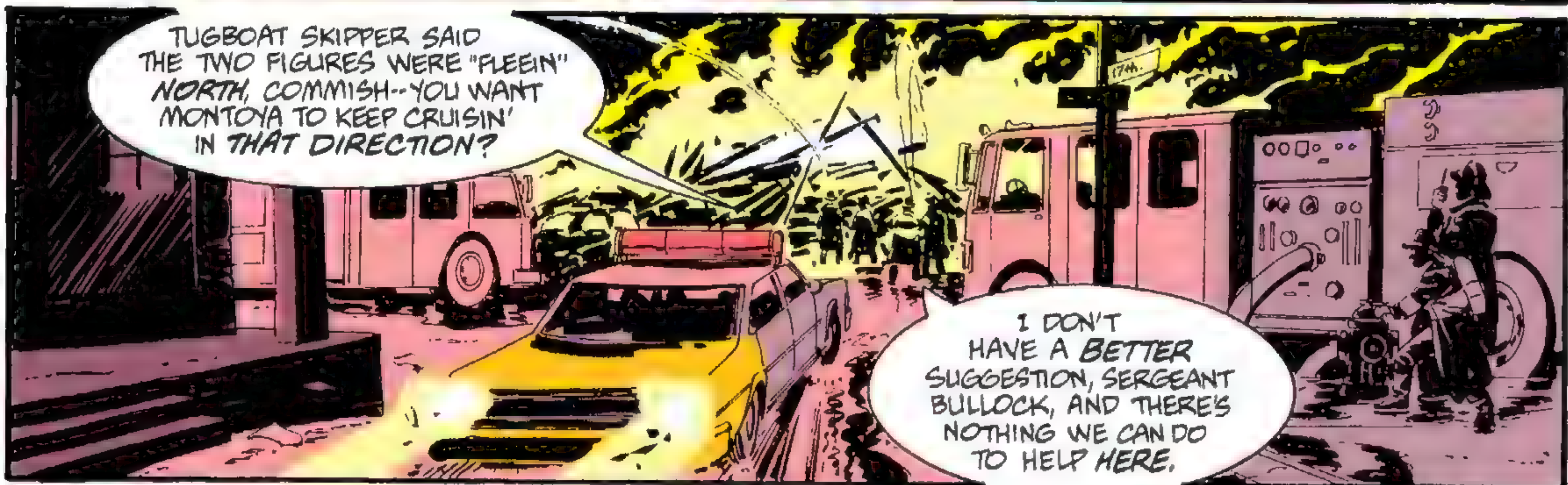
HE'S
GAINING.

GOT TO
FIND A WAY
TO LOSE
HIM...



THERE--
SKYLIGHT ON
THE TUSCANY
BUILDING.

SHE'S HEADING FOR THAT
GARBOYLE BUILDING--
PROBABLY HOPES TO LOSE ME
INSIDE--BUT I'VE ALREADY
CLOSED ENOUGH DISTANCE
TO CUT HER OFF.



TUGBOAT SKIPPER SAID
THE TWO FIGURES WERE "FLEEIN"
NORTH, COMMISH--YOU WANT
MONTONA TO KEEP CRUISIN'
IN THAT DIRECTION?

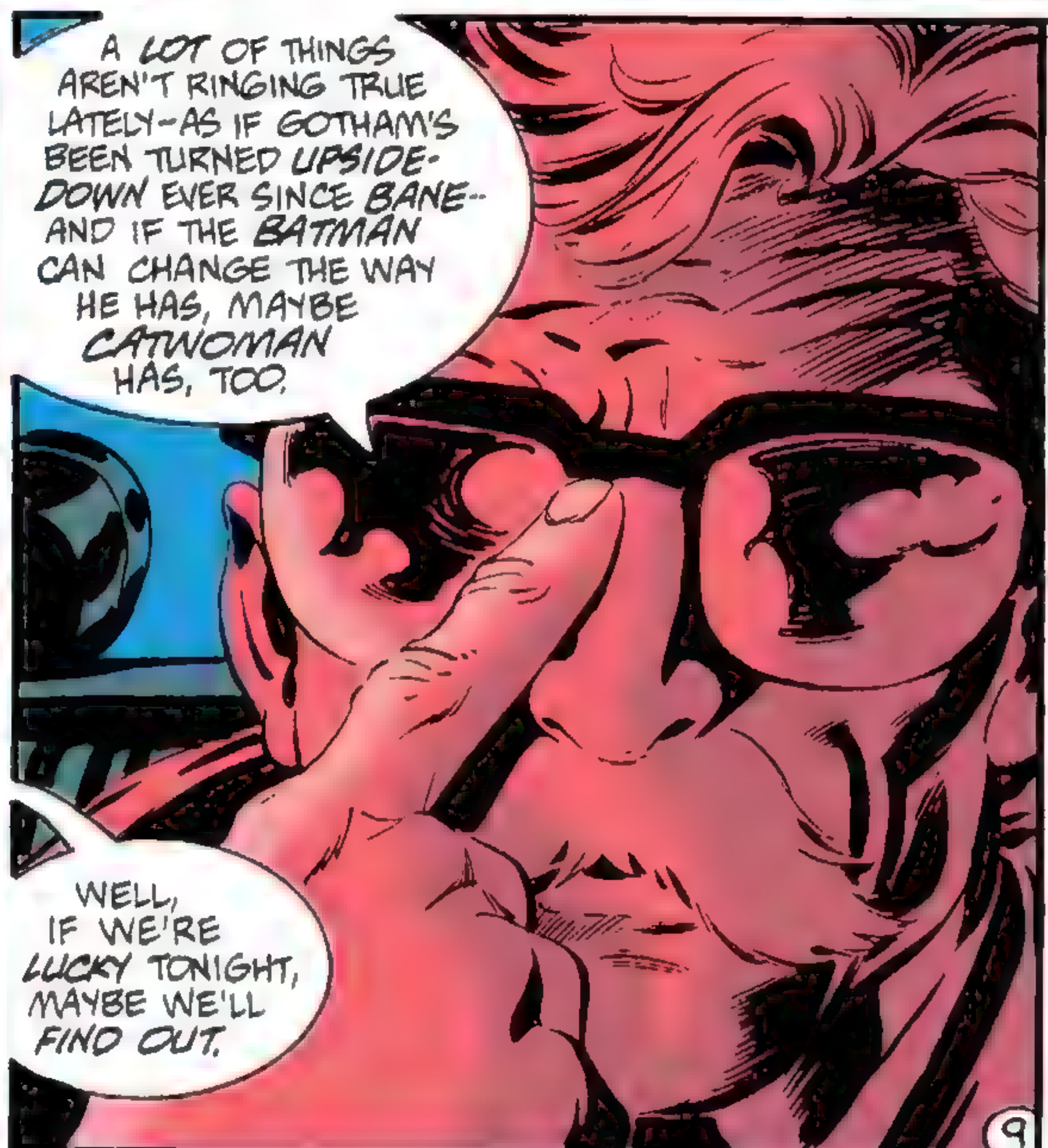
I DON'T
HAVE A BETTER
SUGGESTION, SERGEANT
BULLOCK, AND THERE'S
NOTHING WE CAN DO
TO HELP HERE.



YOU THINK
BATMAN'S RIGHT
ABOUT CATWOMAN,
COMMISH?

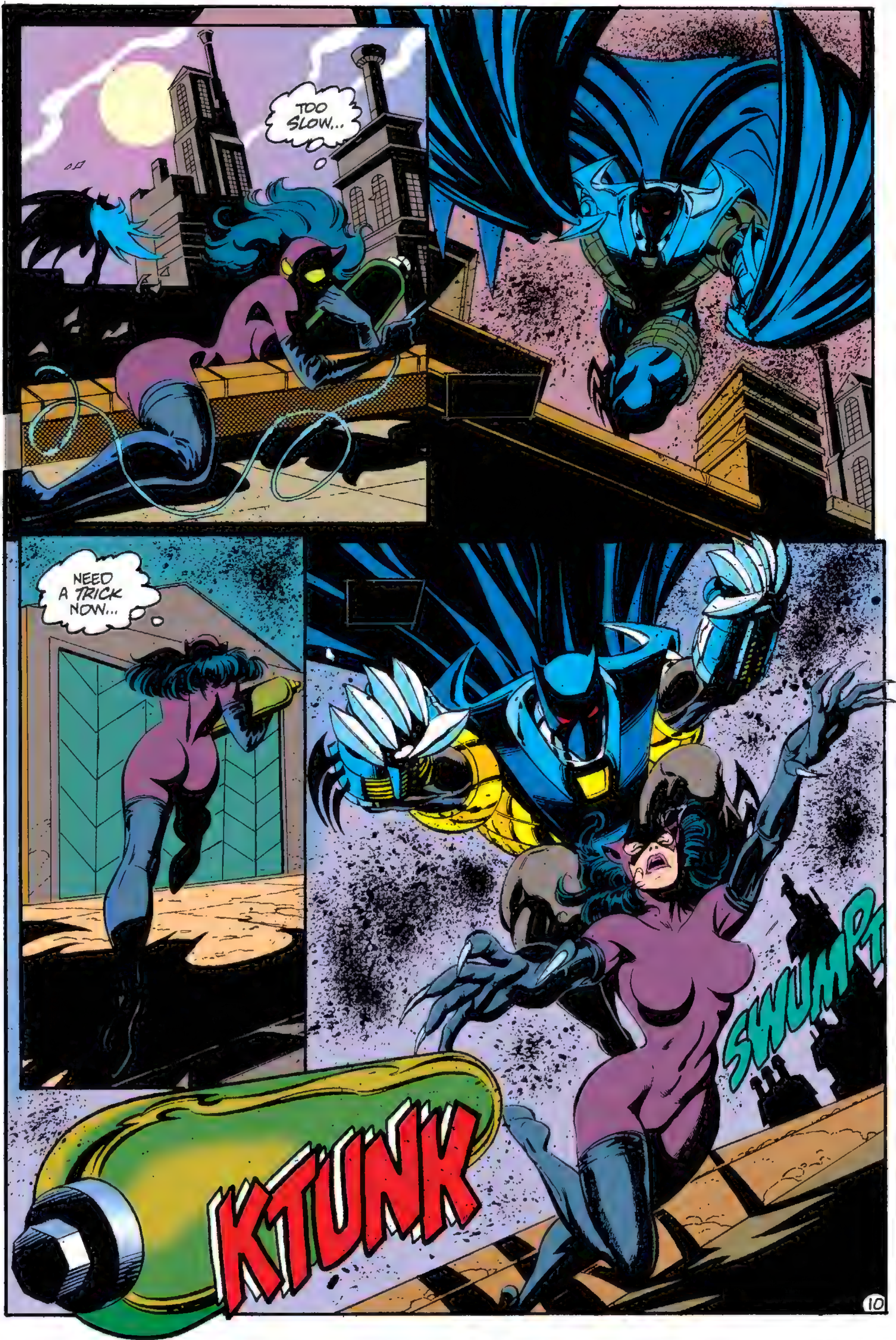
SURE SOUNDS
LIKE IT'S HER HE'S
CHASING.

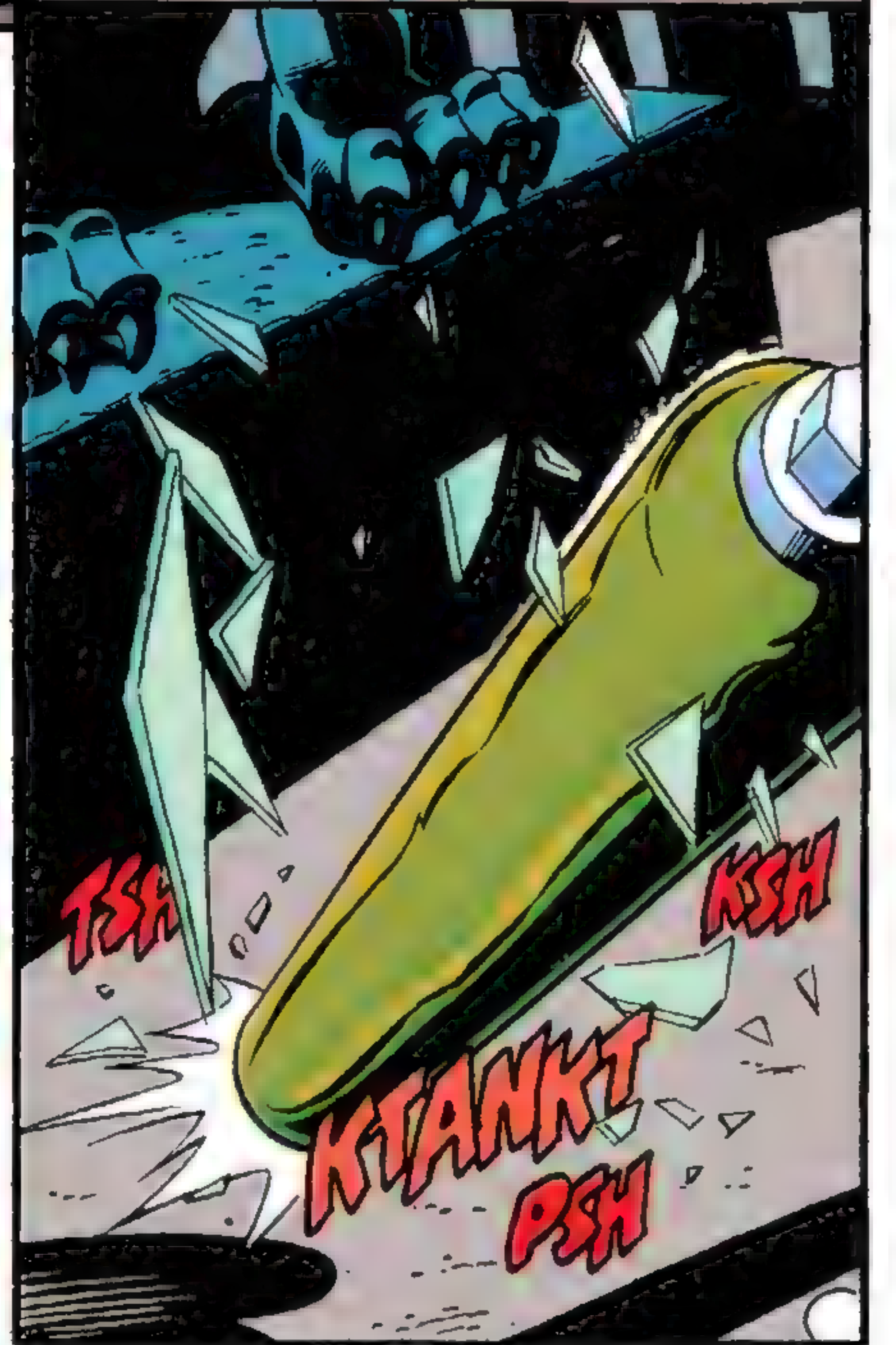
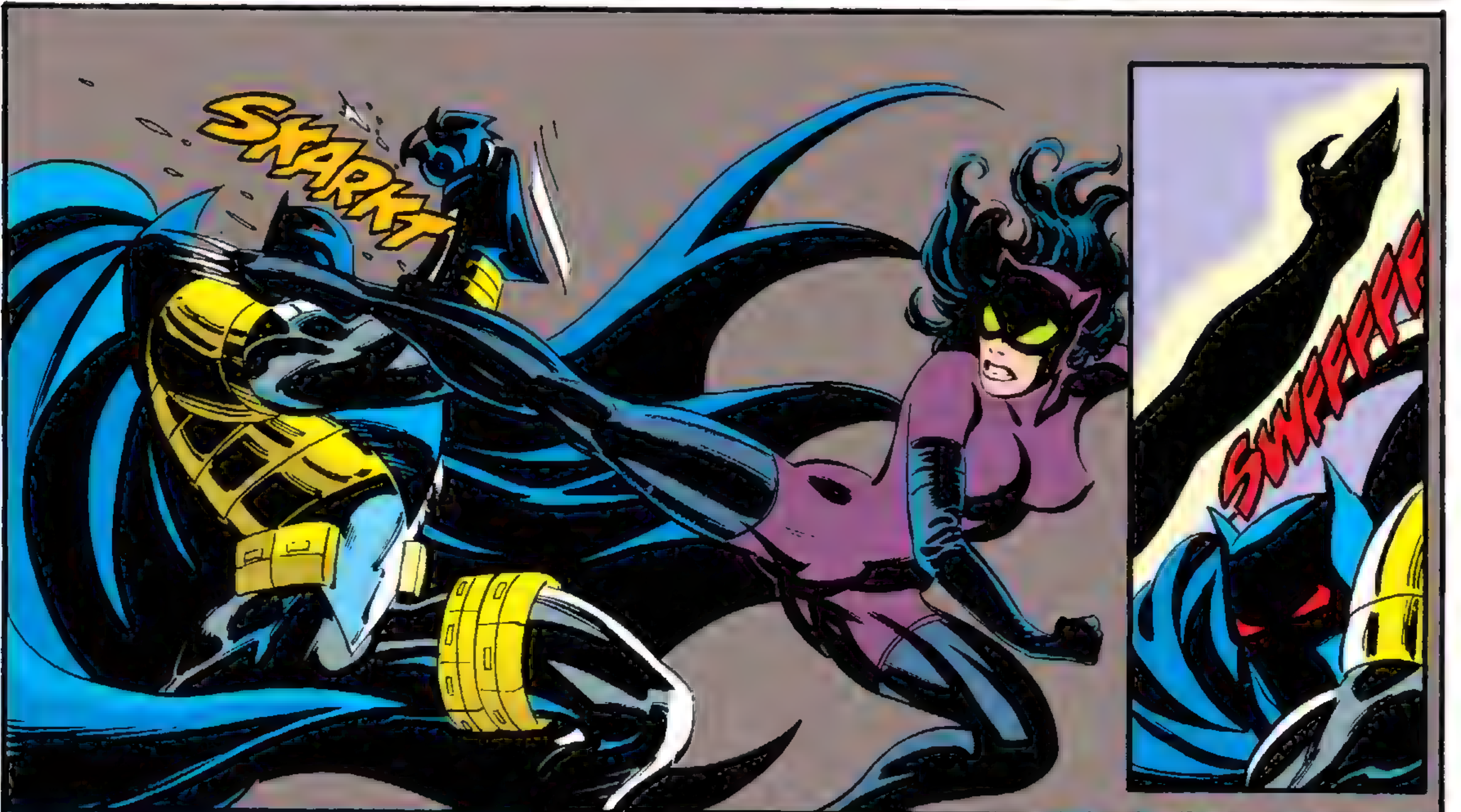
YEAH,
BUT IT STILL
DON'T RING TRUE--
BAD AS SHE IS--
FOR HER TO BE
MIXED UP IN
TERRORISM.

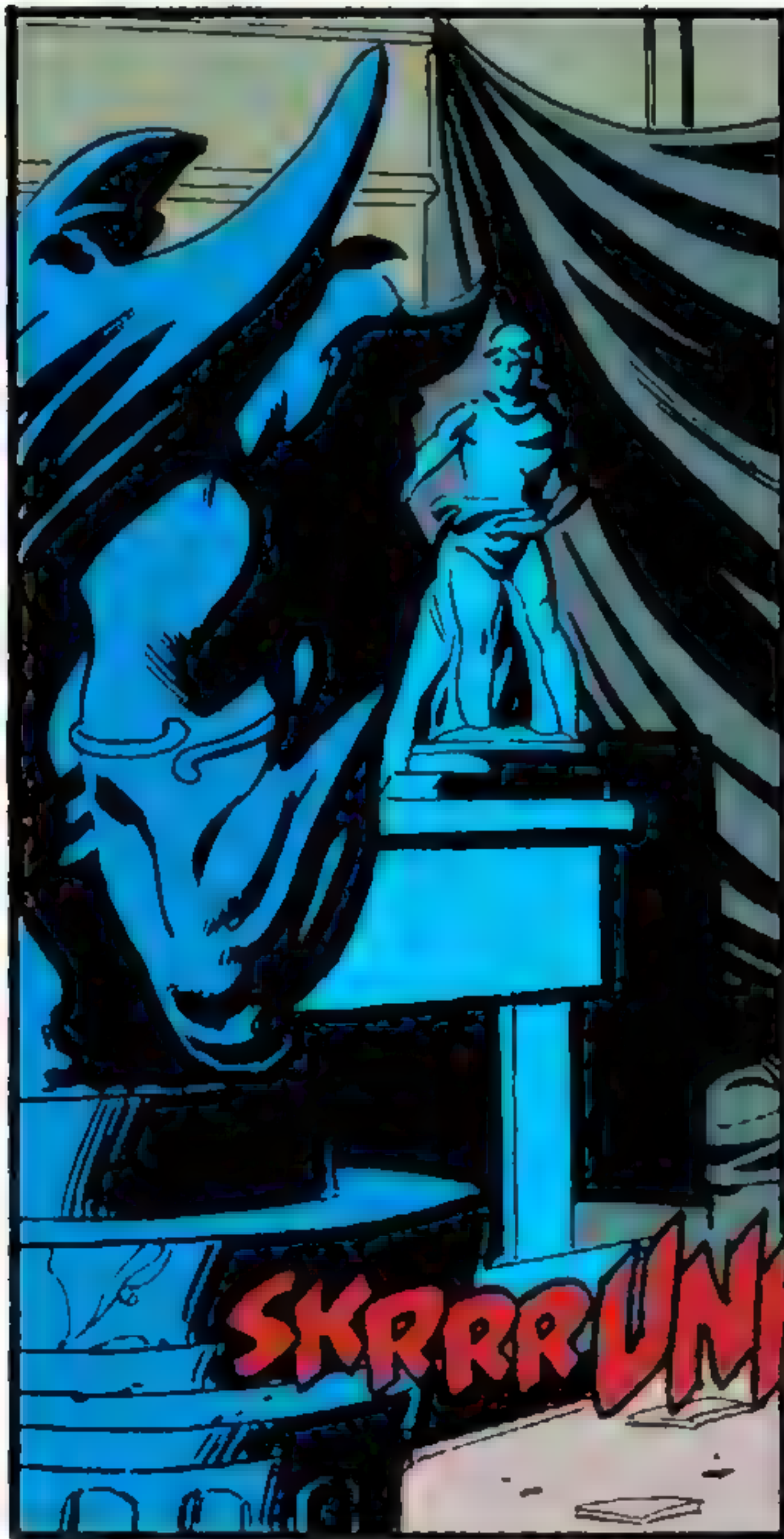


A LOT OF THINGS
AREN'T RINGING TRUE
LATELY--AS IF GOTHAM'S
BEEN TURNED UPSIDE-
DOWN EVER SINCE BANE--
AND IF THE BATMAN
CAN CHANGE THE WAY
HE HAS, MAYBE
CATWOMAN
HAS, TOO.

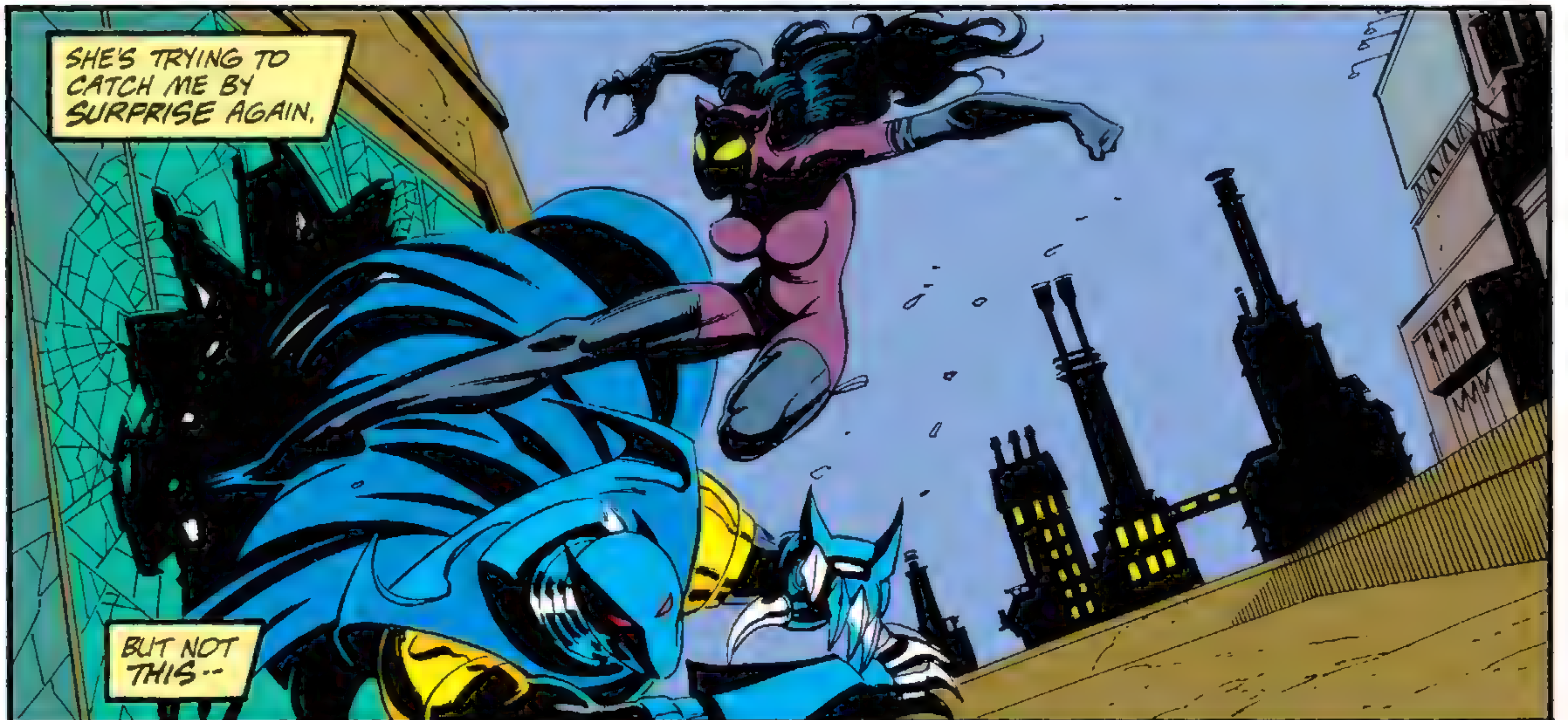
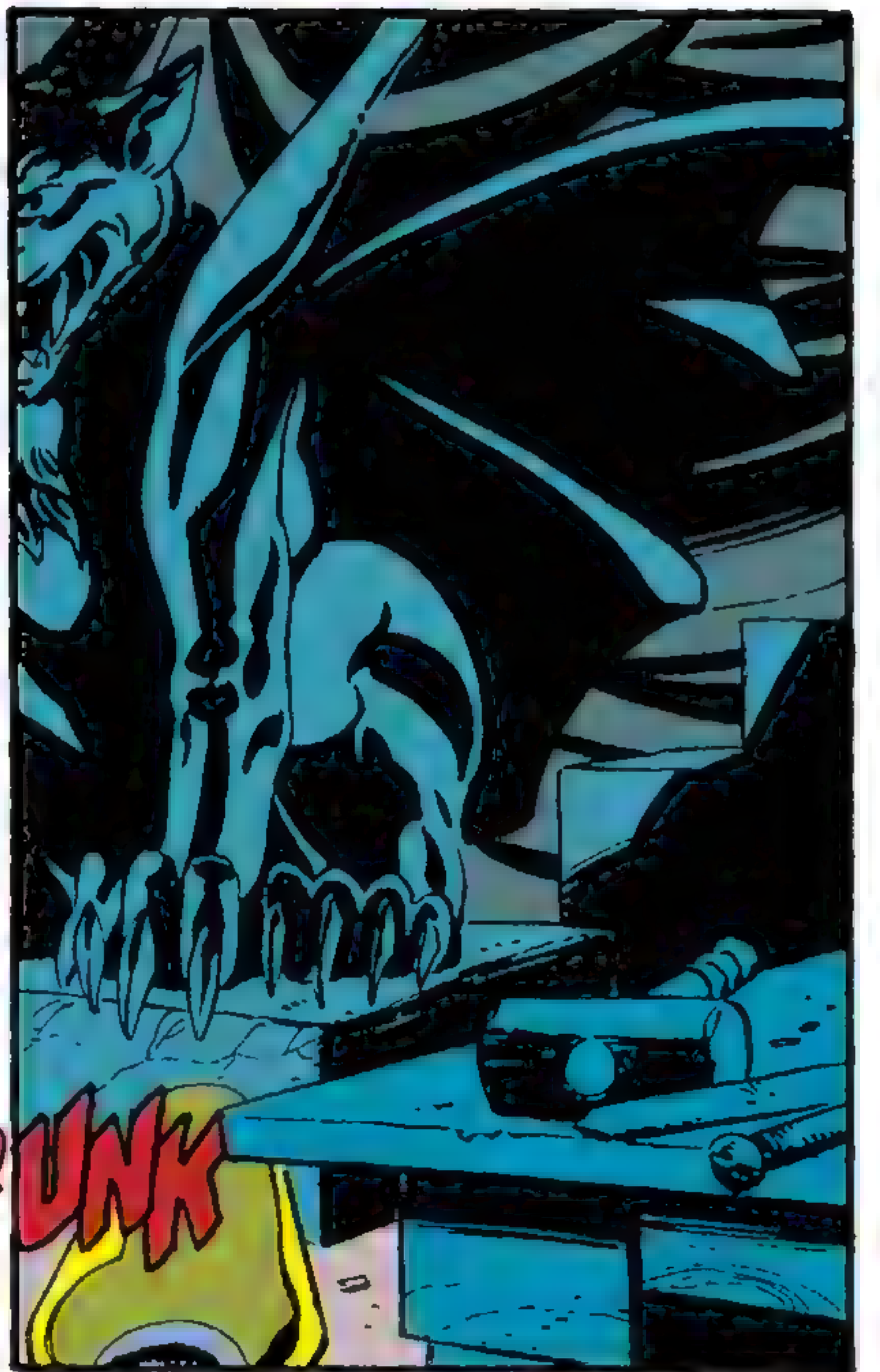
WELL,
IF WE'RE
LUCKY TONIGHT,
MAYBE WE'LL
FIND OUT.







SKRRRUNKRRRRRRUNKRRRRUNK



SHE'S TRYING TO
CATCH ME BY
SURPRISE AGAIN.

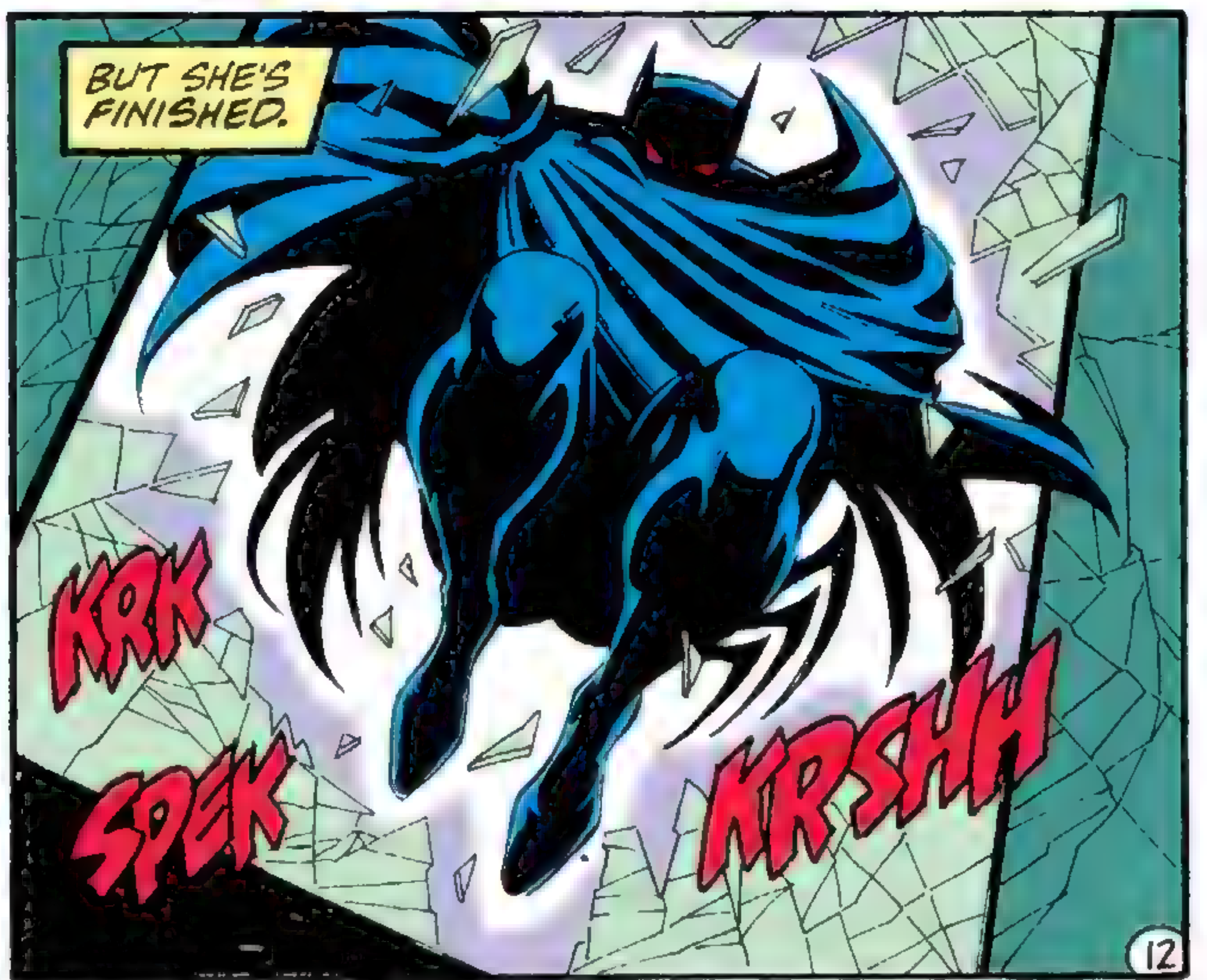
BUT NOT
THIS--



NO-SHE KNEW
I'D DUCK.

SHE WAS
COUNTING ON IT.

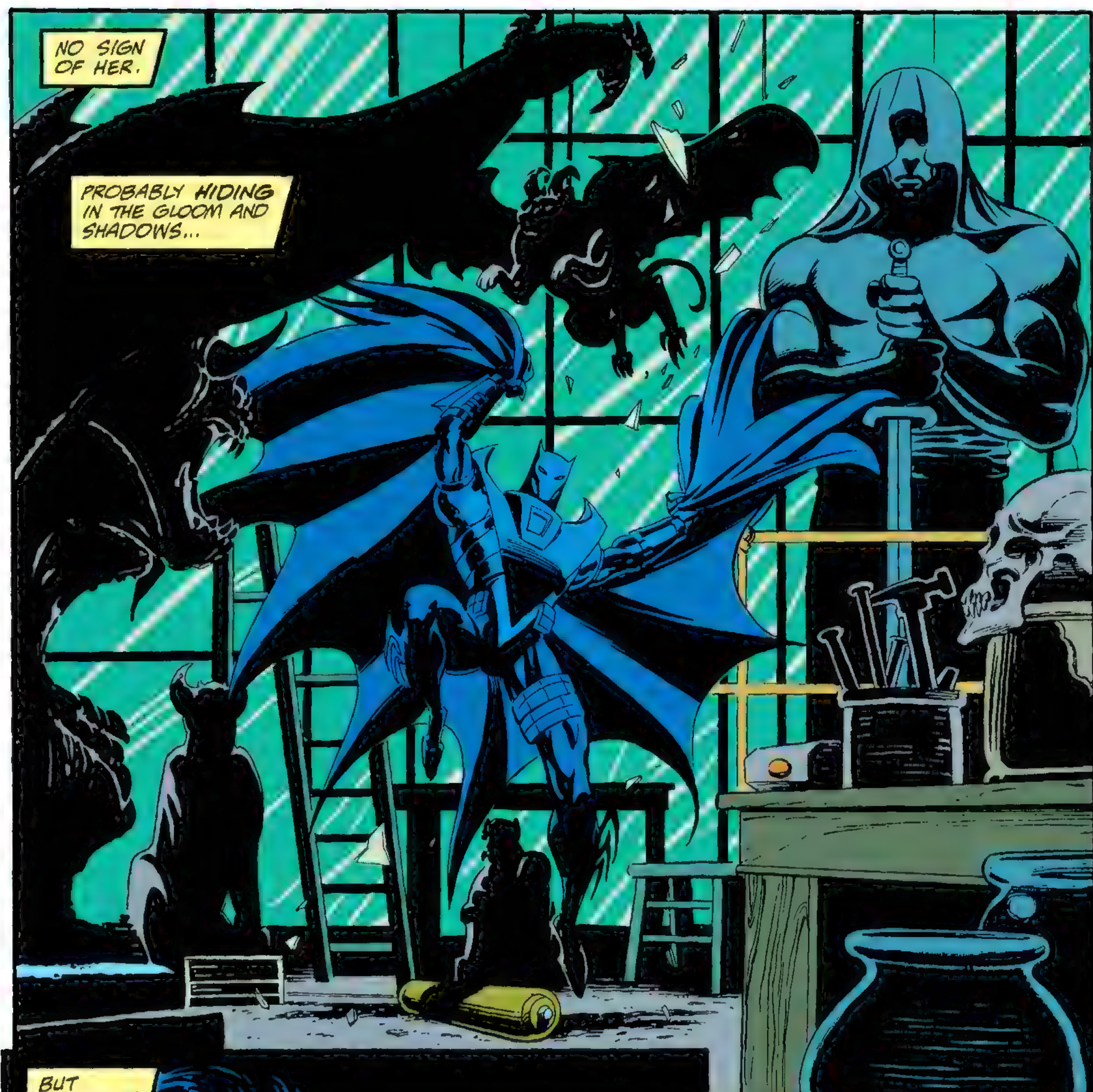
SHE'S
SUPERB.



BUT SHE'S
FINISHED.

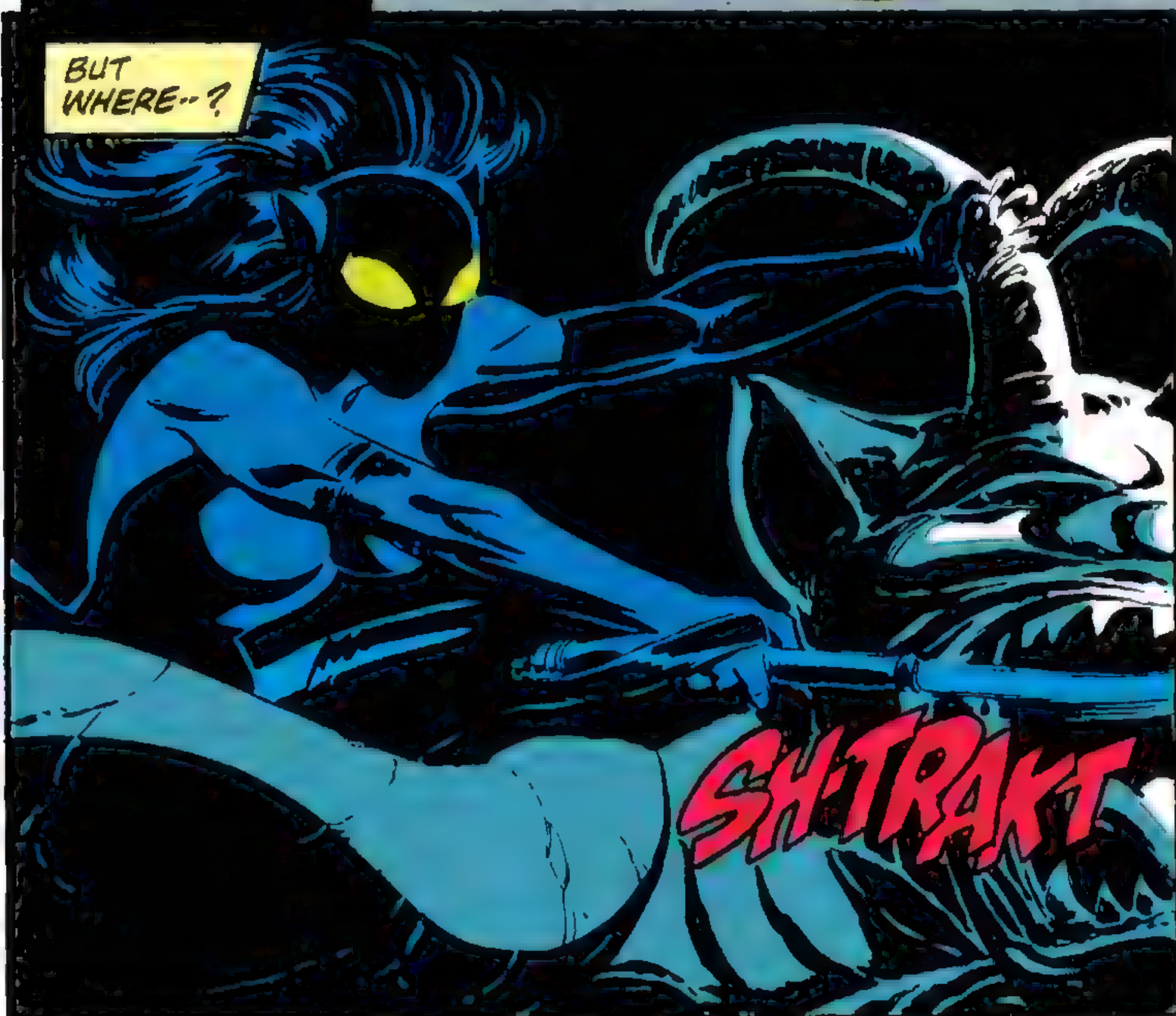
KRK
SPEK

KRSHH



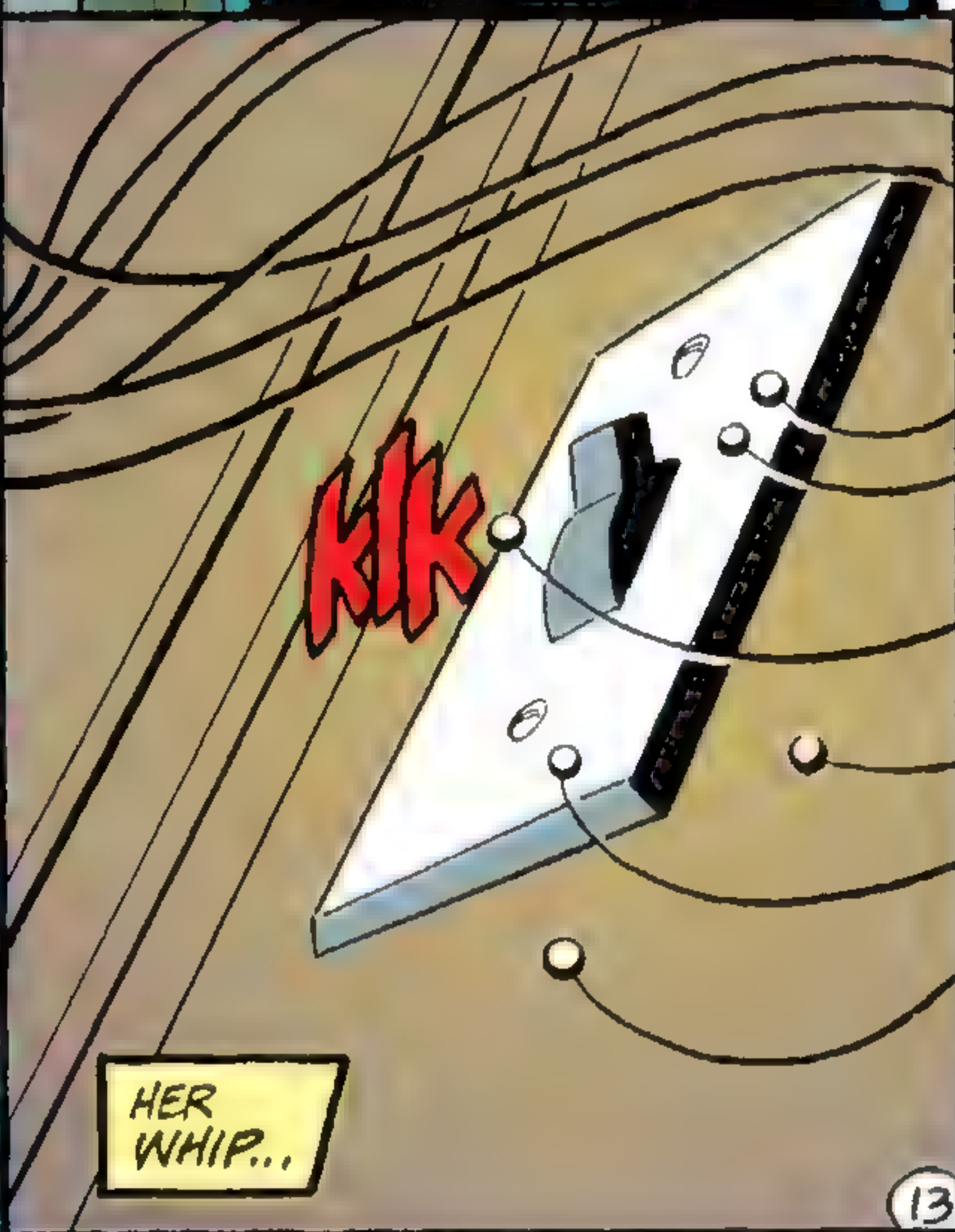
NO SIGN
OF HER.

PROBABLY HIDING
IN THE GLOOM AND
SHADOWS...



BUT
WHERE--?

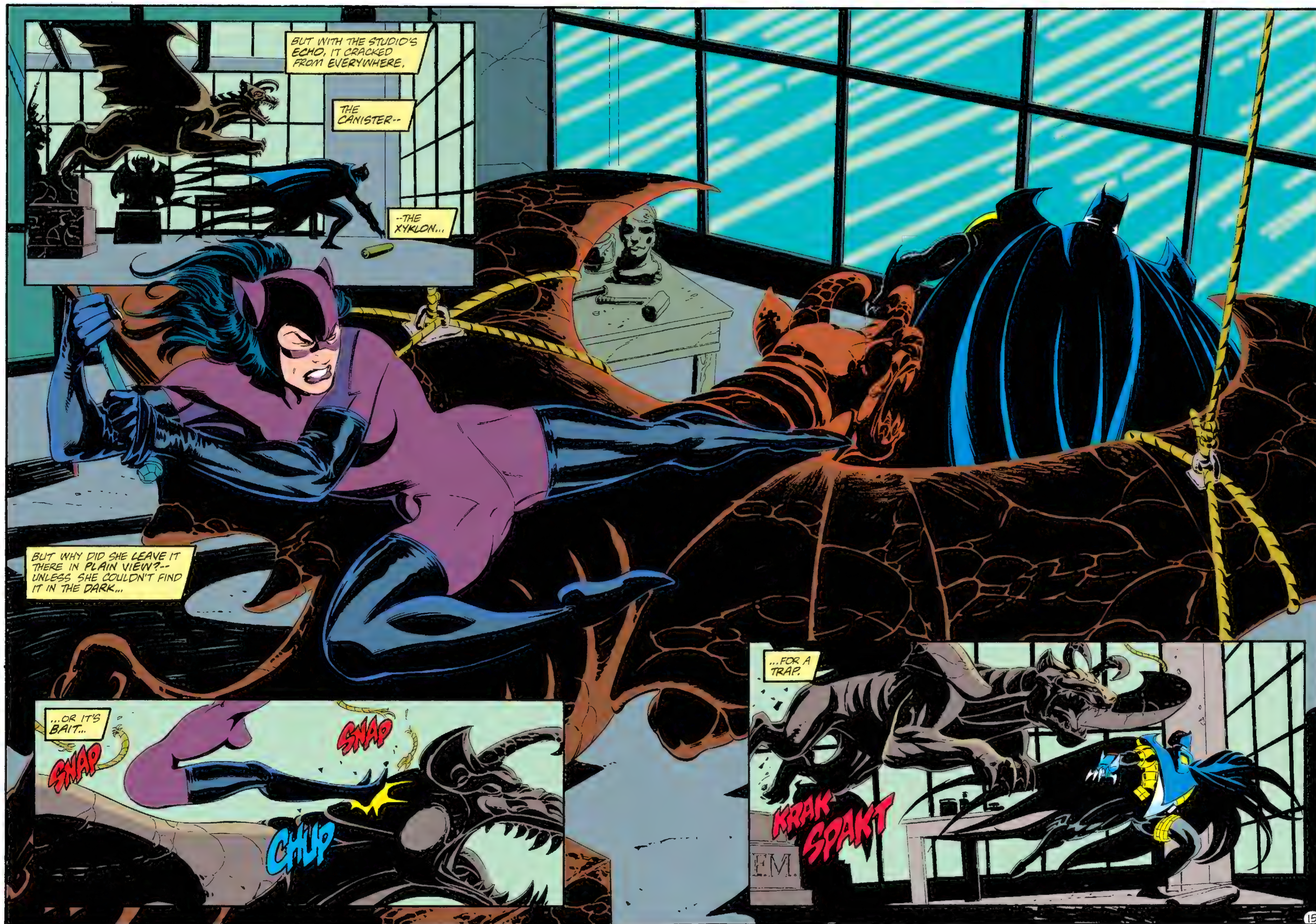
SH-TRAKT

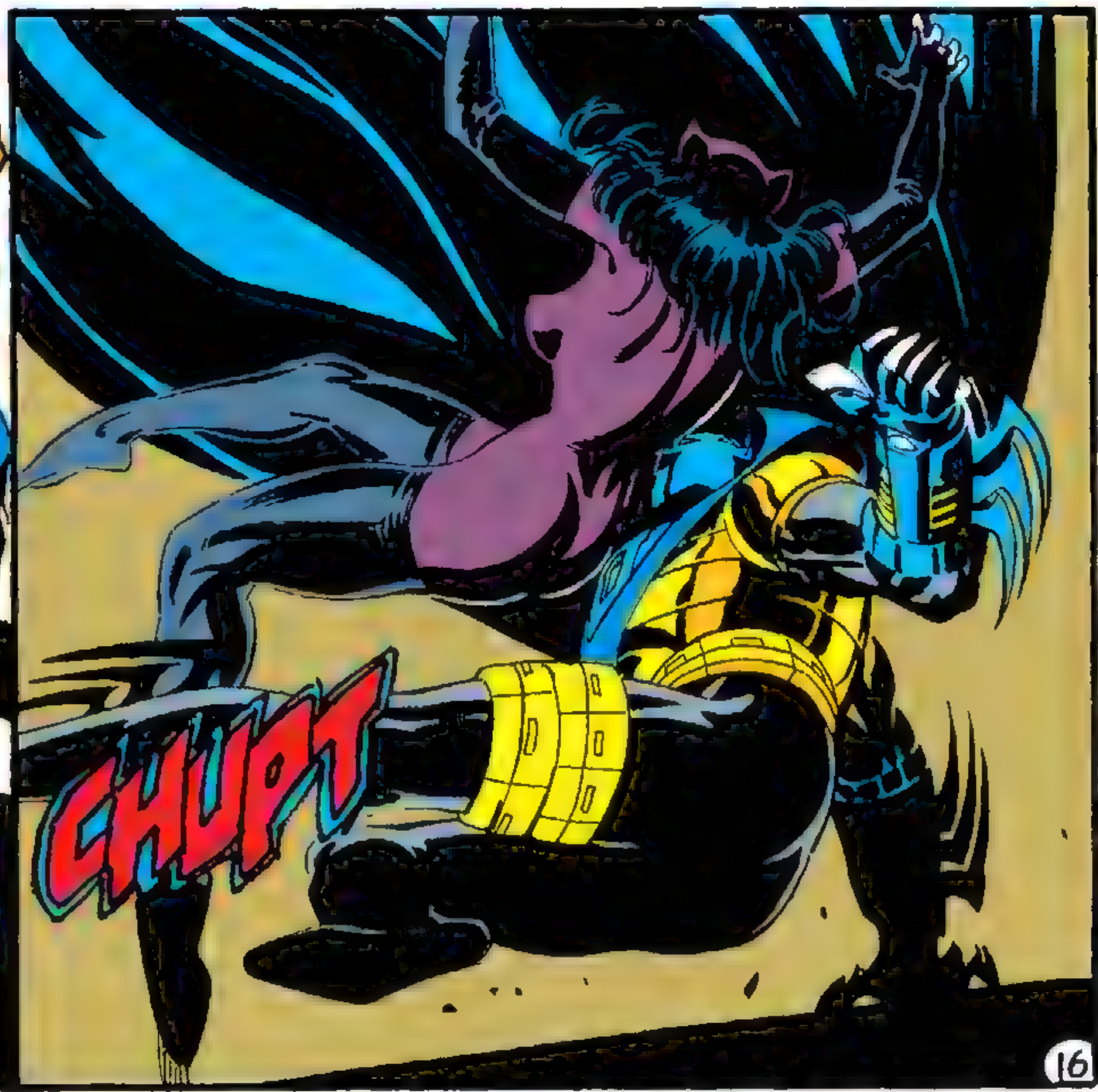


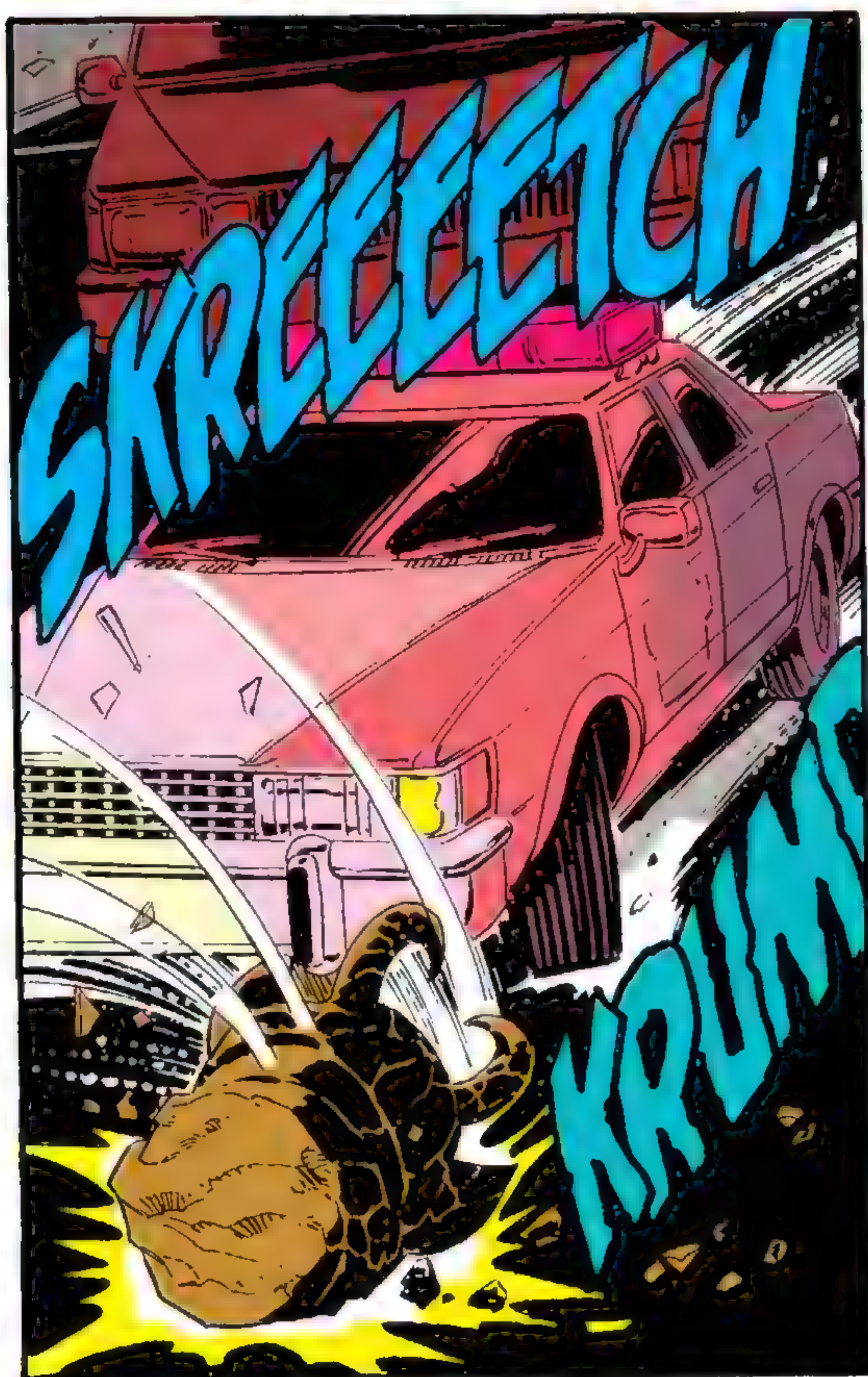
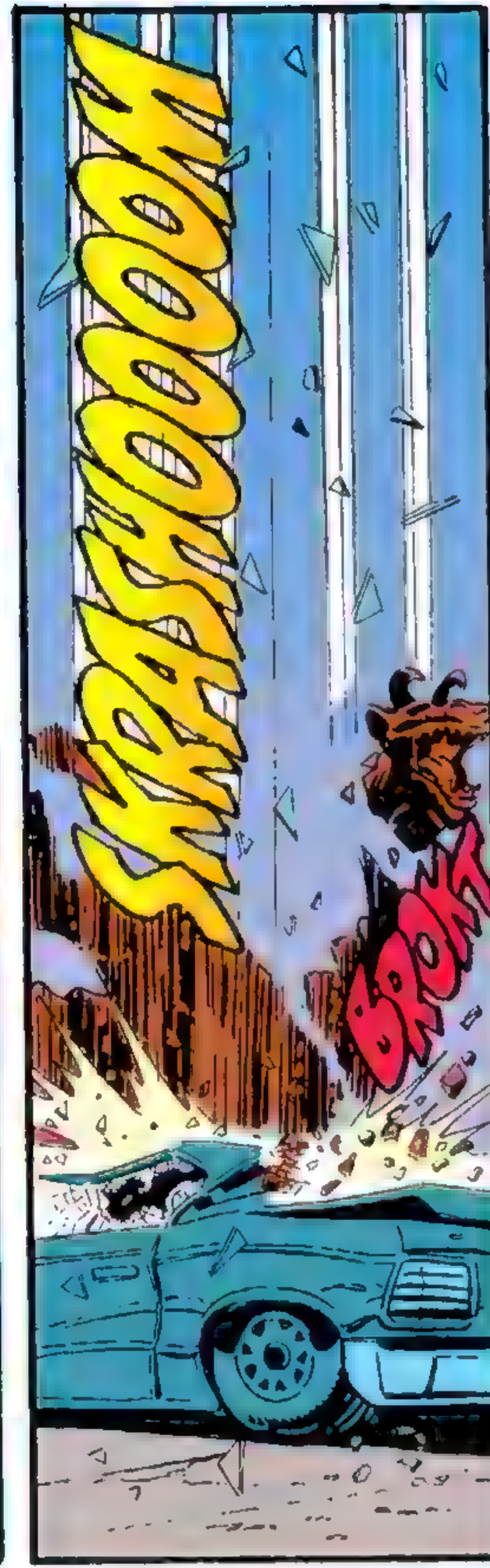
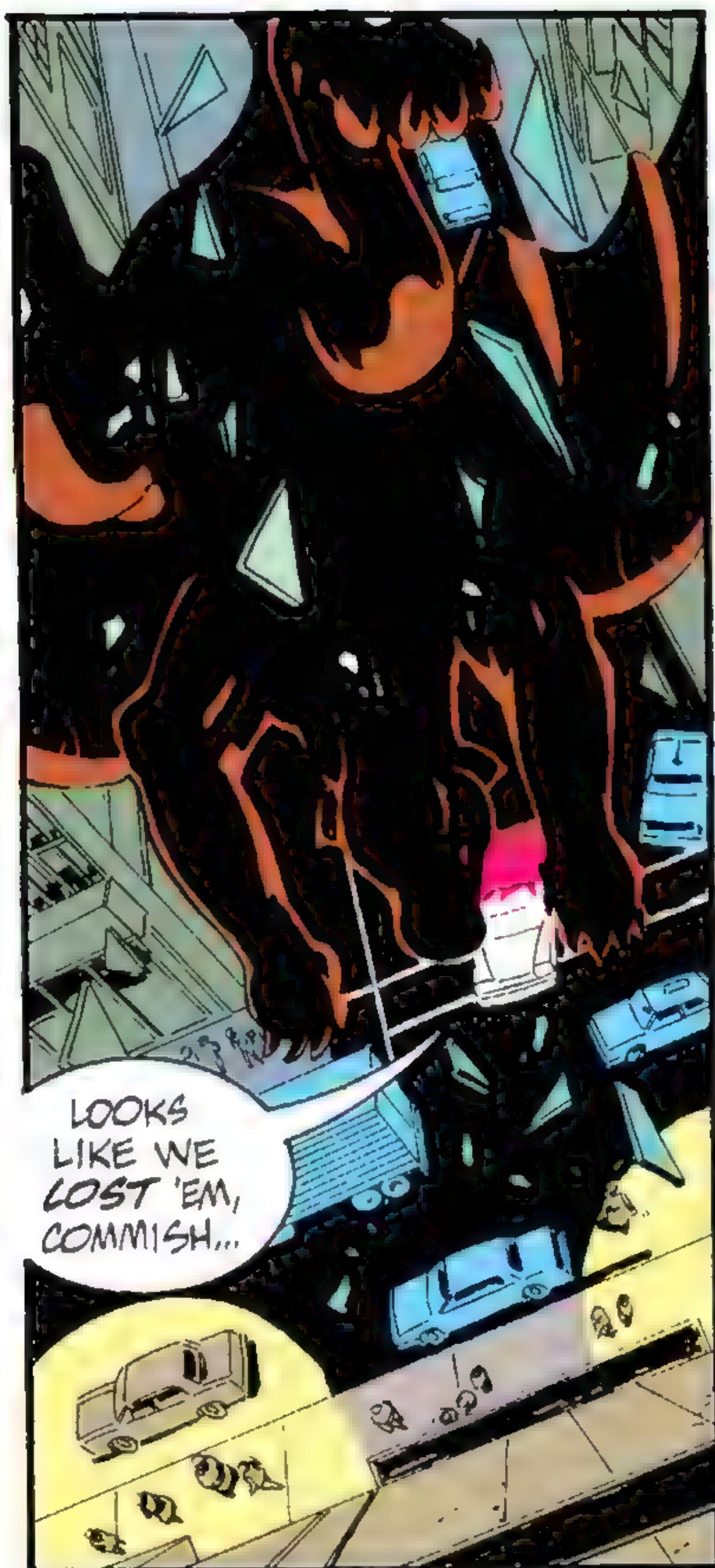
KIK

HER
WHIP...

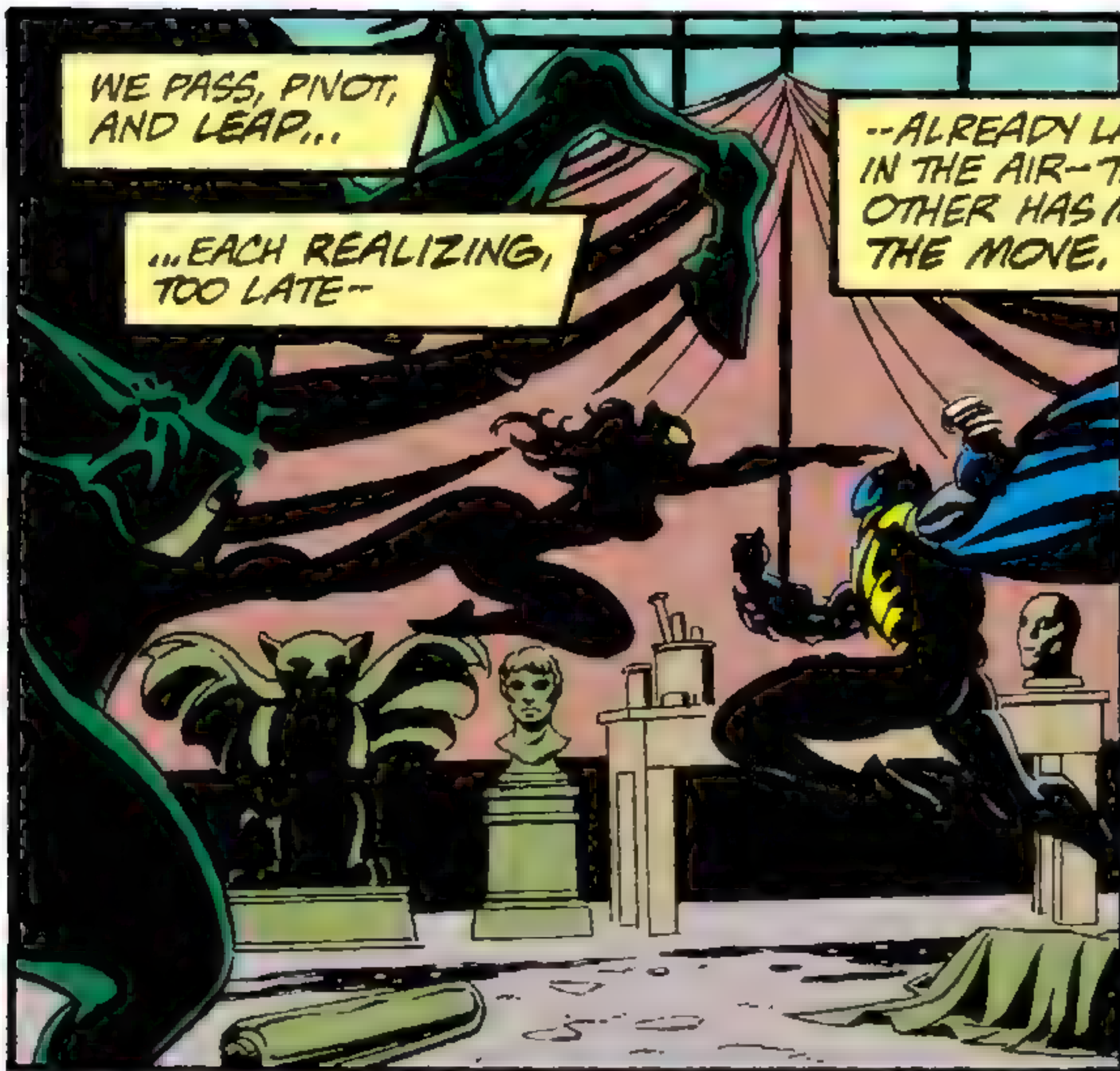
13







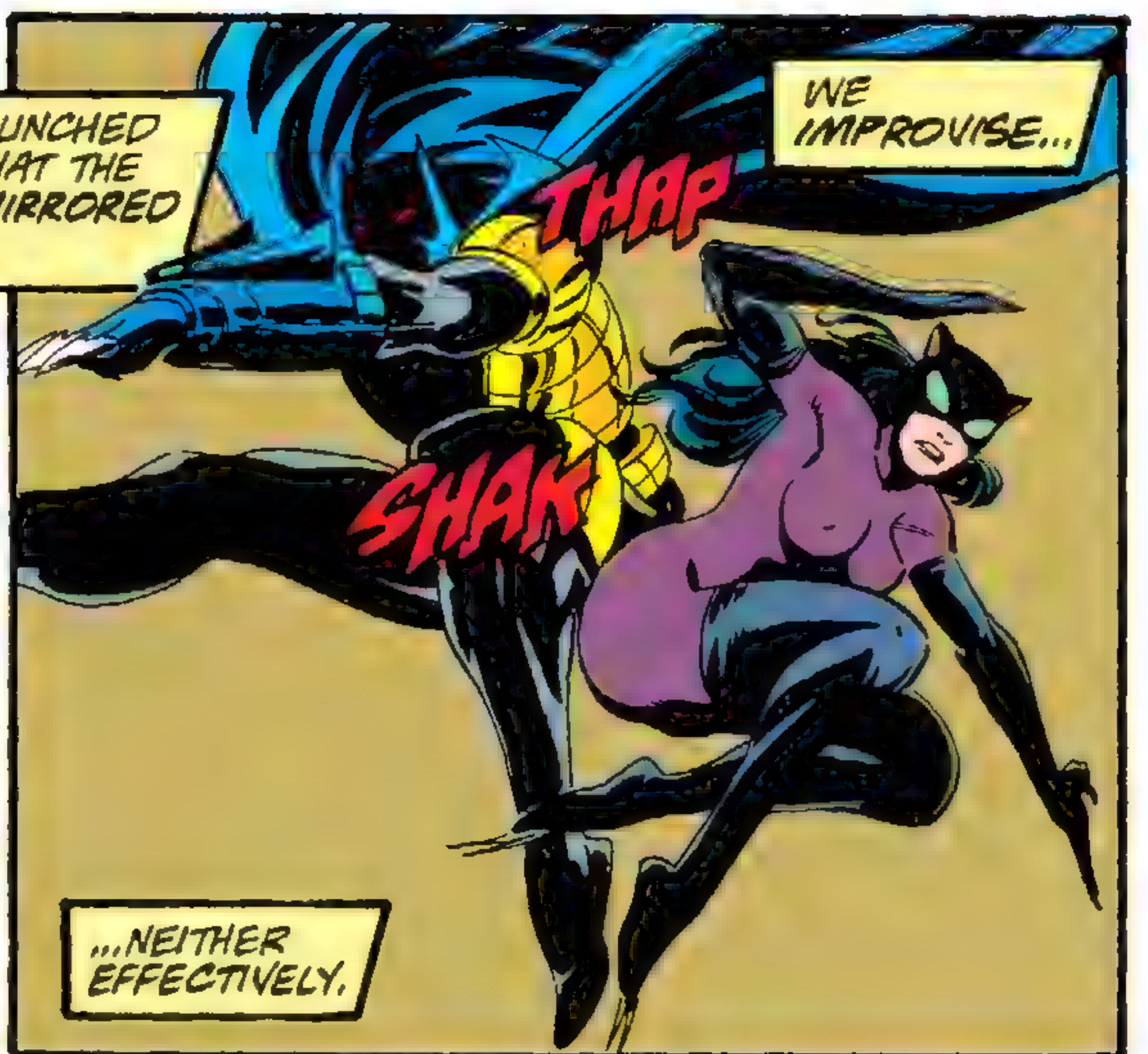




WE PASS, PIVOT,
AND LEAP...

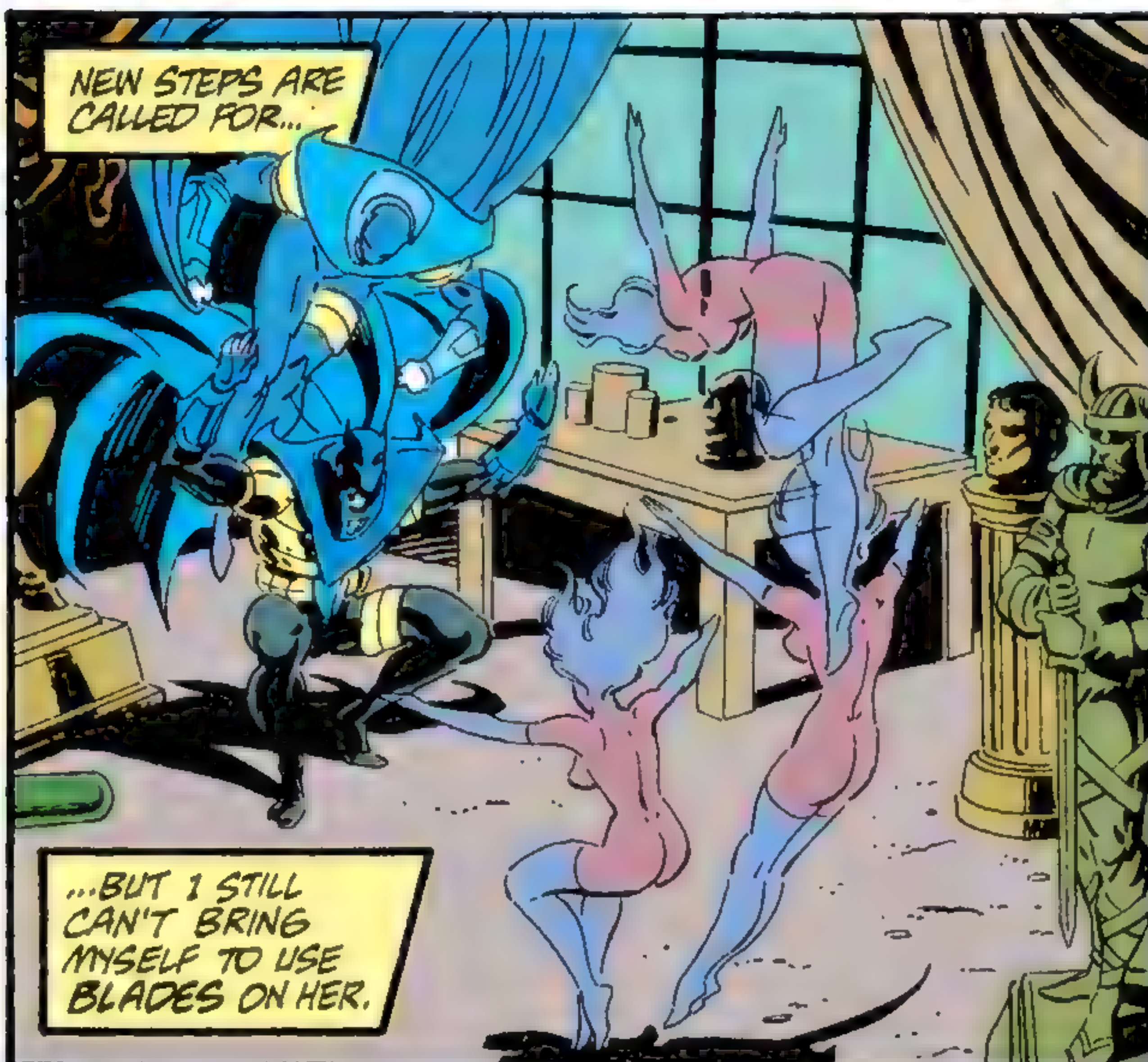
...EACH REALIZING,
TOO LATE--

--ALREADY LAUNCHED
IN THE AIR--THAT THE
OTHER HAS MIRRORED
THE MOVE.



WE
IMPROVISE...

...NEITHER
EFFECTIVELY.

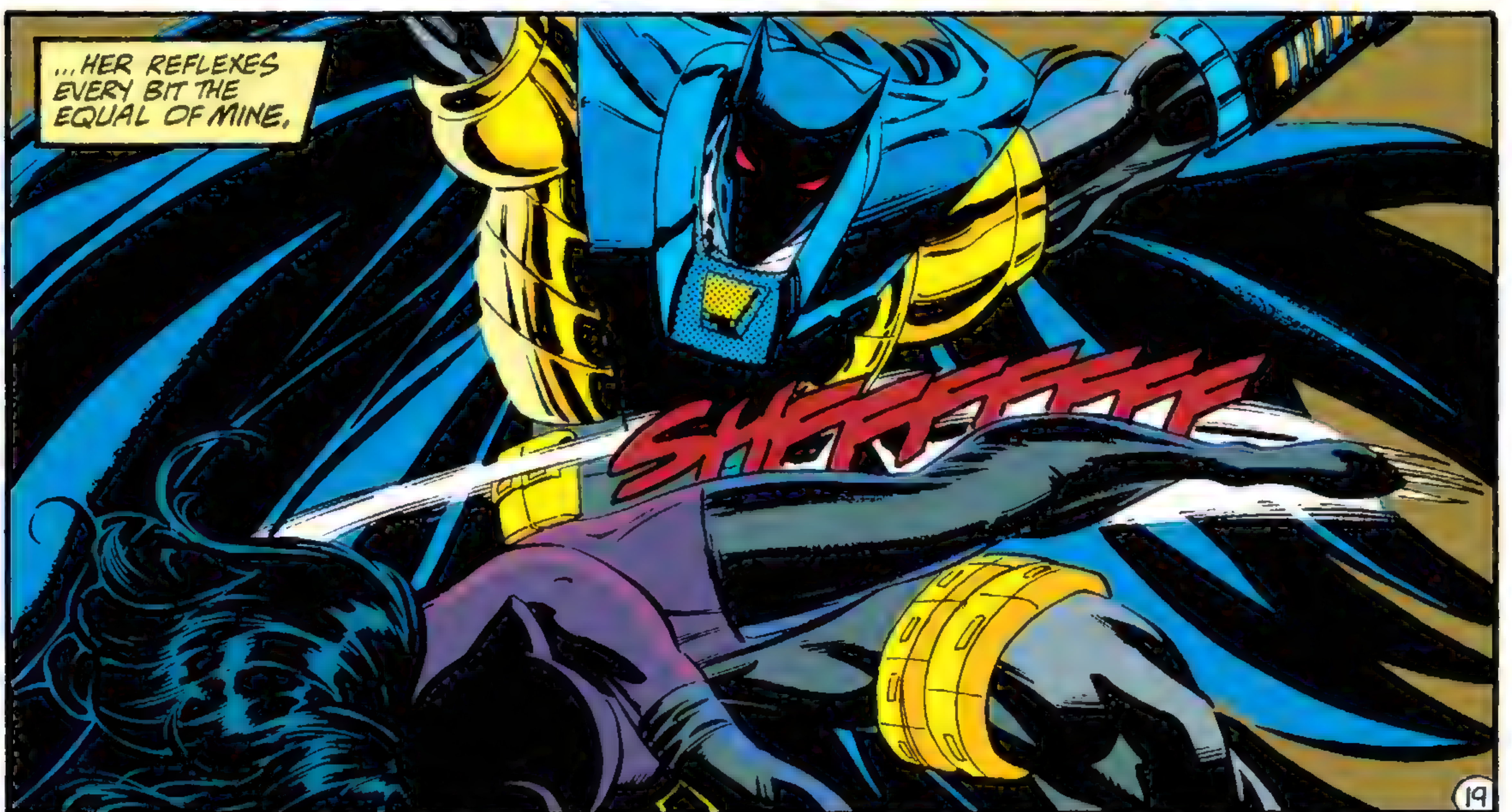


NEW STEPS ARE
CALLED FOR...

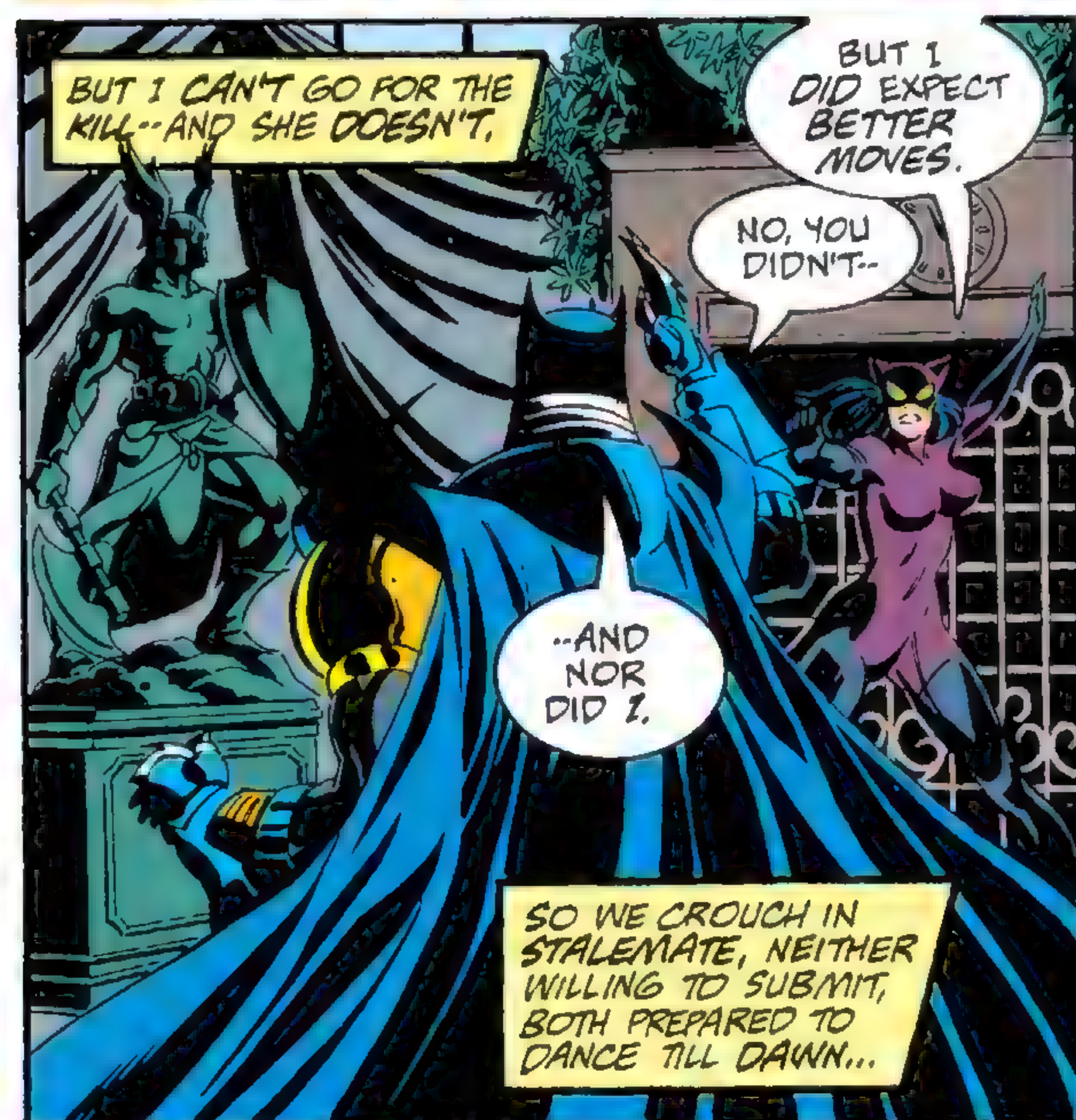
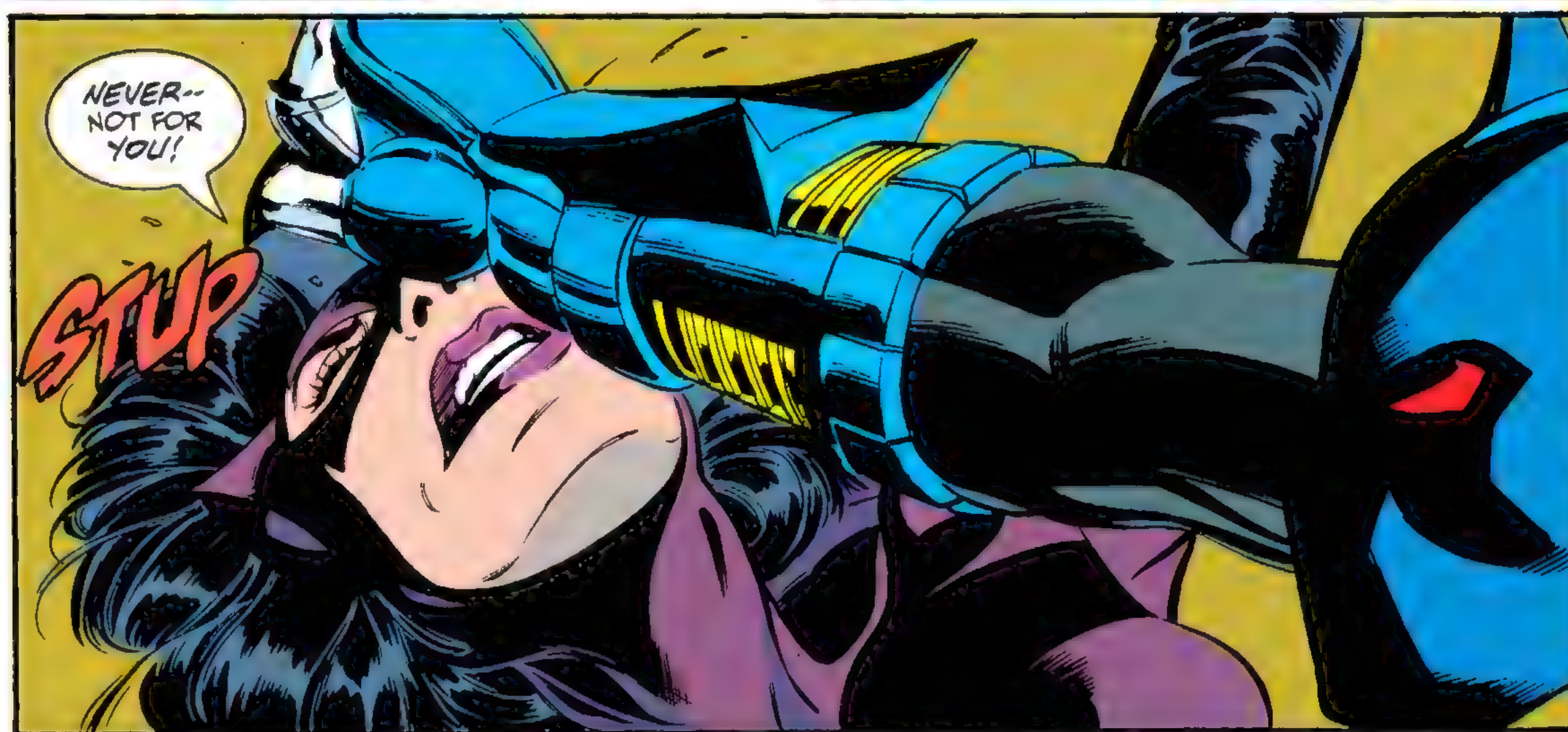
...BUT I STILL
CAN'T BRING
MYSELF TO USE
BLADES ON HER.



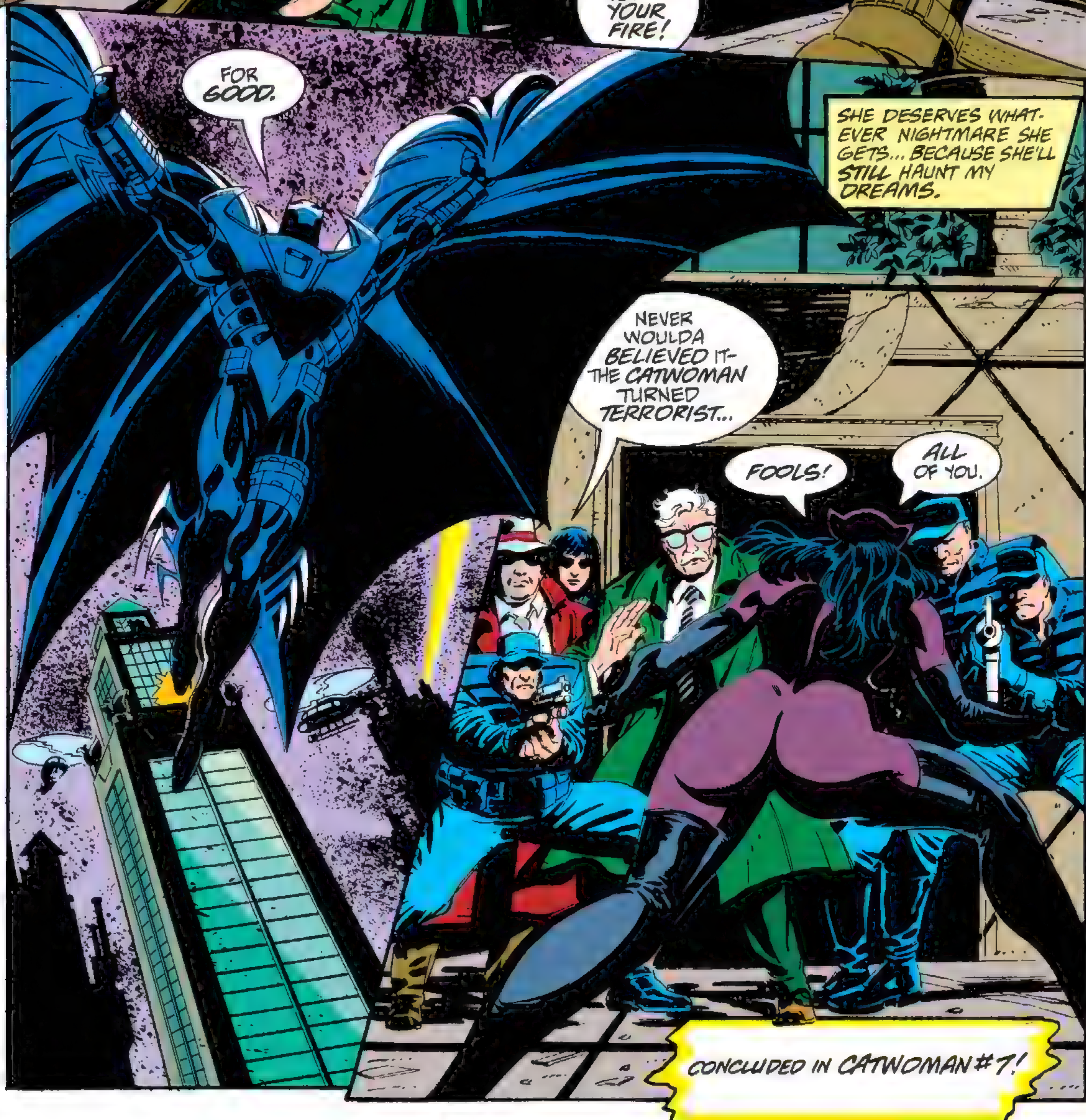
SHE'D PROBABLY
DODGE THEM
ANYWAY...



...HER REFLEXES
EVERY BIT THE
EQUAL OF MINE.









7
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US \$1.50
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UK 70p



KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE



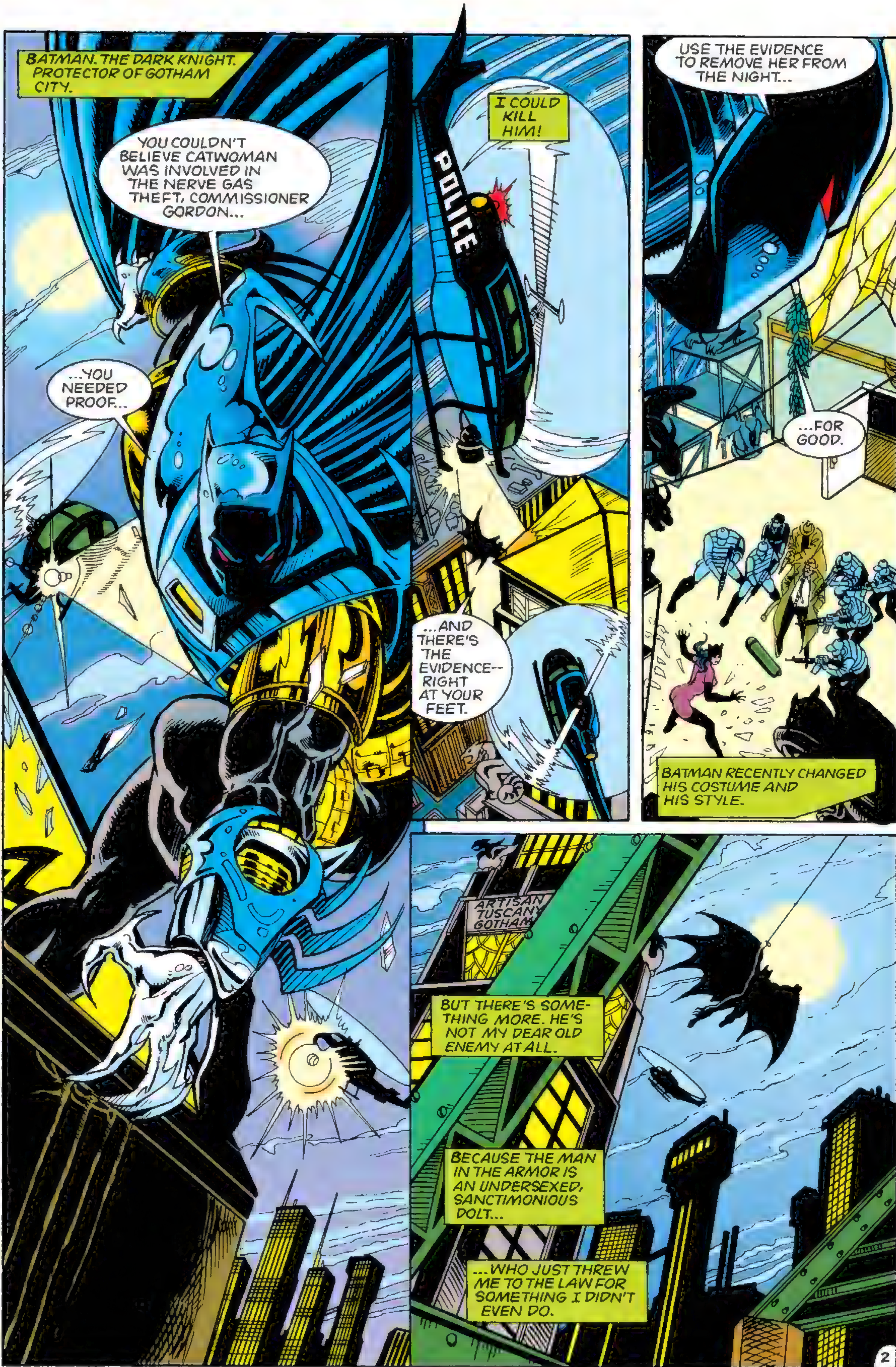
CATWOMAN®

DUFFY
BALENT
GIORDANO

JIM BALENT



WRITER: JO DUFFY
PENCILLER: JIM BALENT
INKER: DICK GIORDANO
LETTERER: BOB PINAHA
COLORIST: BUZZ SETZER
ASSISTANT EDITOR:
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL
EDITOR: DENNIS O'NEIL



BATMAN. THE DARK KNIGHT.
PROTECTOR OF GOTHAM
CITY.

YOU COULDN'T
BELIEVE CATWOMAN
WAS INVOLVED IN
THE NERVE GAS
THEFT, COMMISSIONER
GORDON...

...YOU
NEEDED
PROOF...

I COULD
KILL
HIM!

...AND
THERE'S
THE
EVIDENCE--
RIGHT
AT YOUR
FEET.

USE THE EVIDENCE
TO REMOVE HER FROM
THE NIGHT...

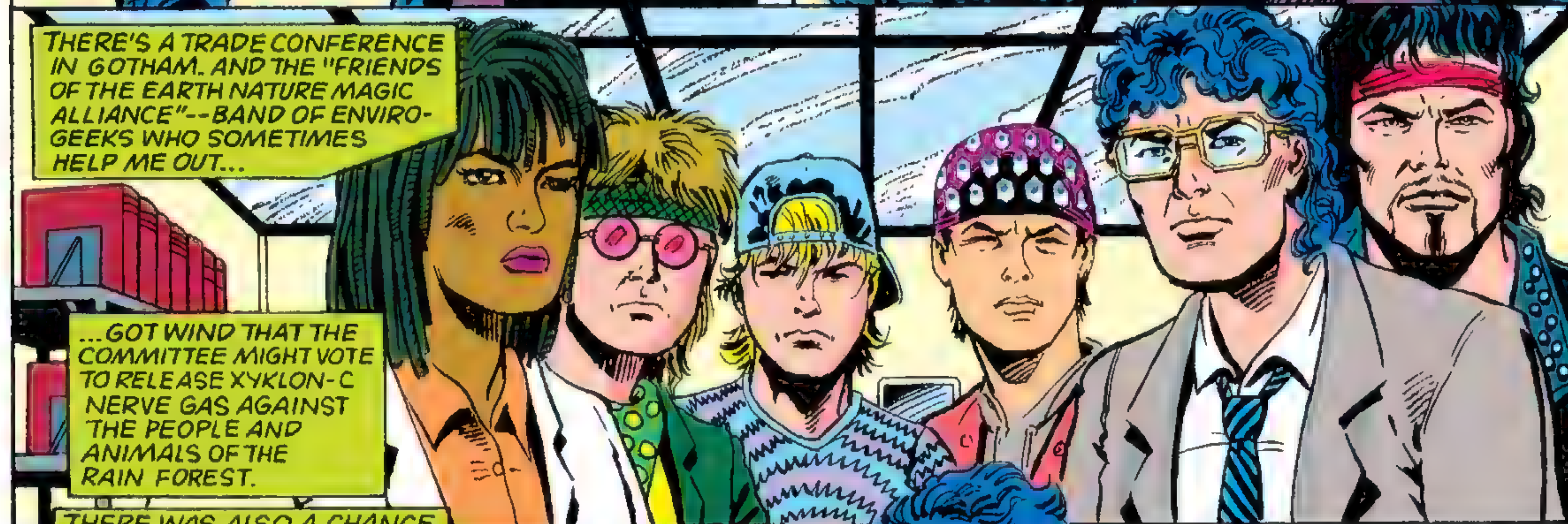
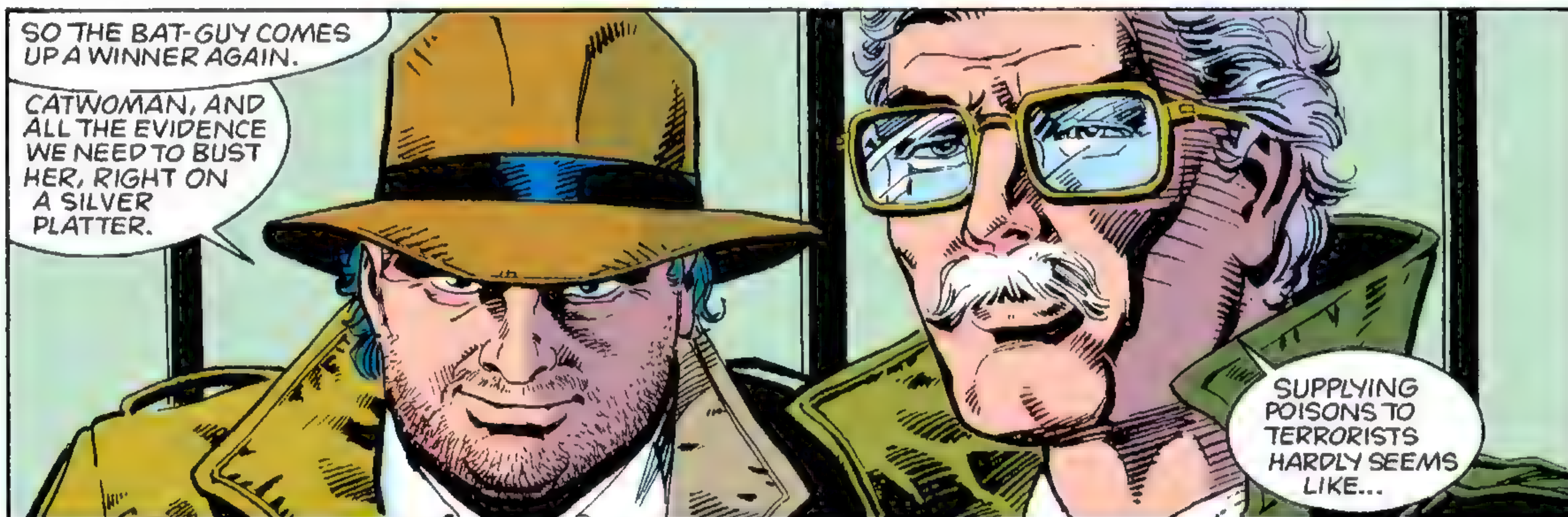
...FOR
GOOD.

BATMAN RECENTLY CHANGED
HIS COSTUME AND
HIS STYLE.

BUT THERE'S SOME-
THING MORE. HE'S
NOT MY DEAR OLD
ENEMY AT ALL.

BECAUSE THE MAN
IN THE ARMOR IS
AN UNDERSEXED,
SANCTIMONIOUS
DOLT...

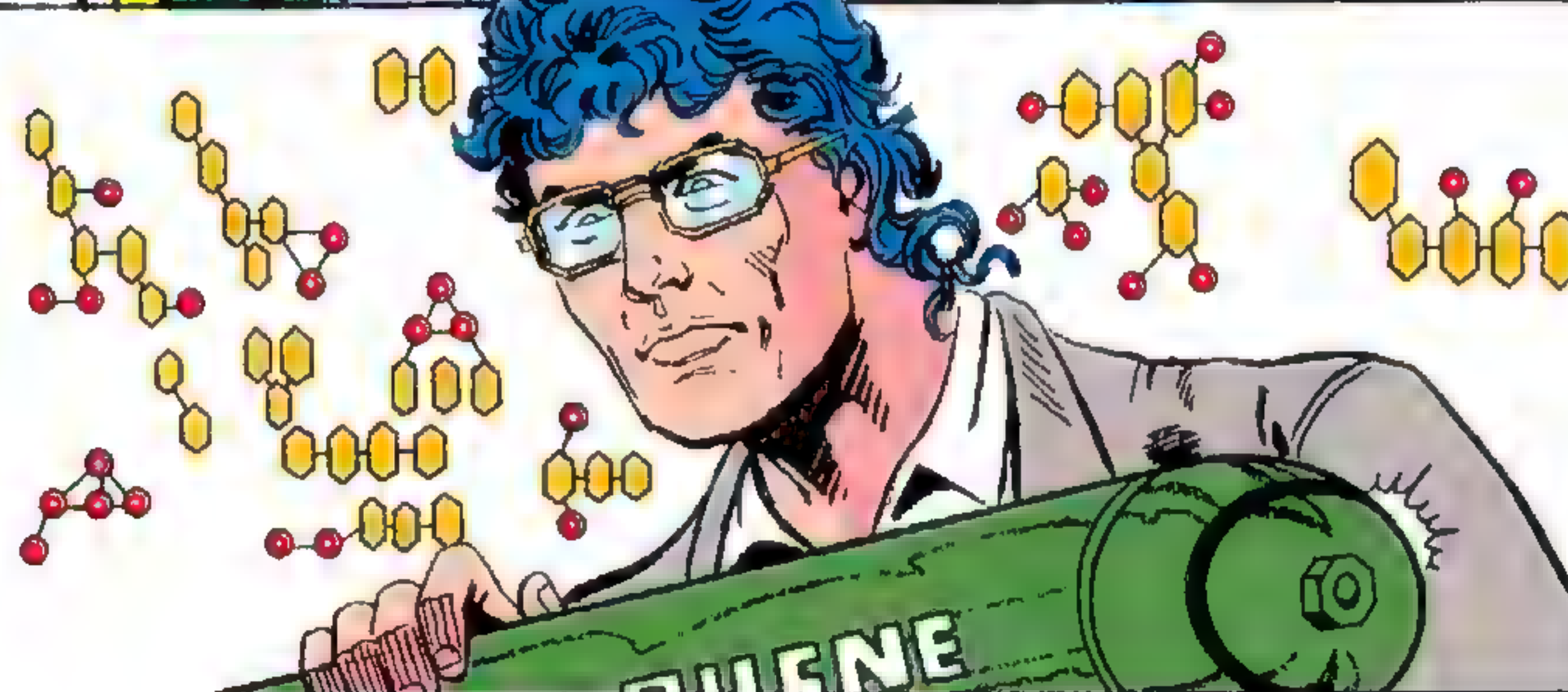
...WHO JUST THREW
ME TO THE LAW FOR
SOMETHING I DIDN'T
EVEN DO.

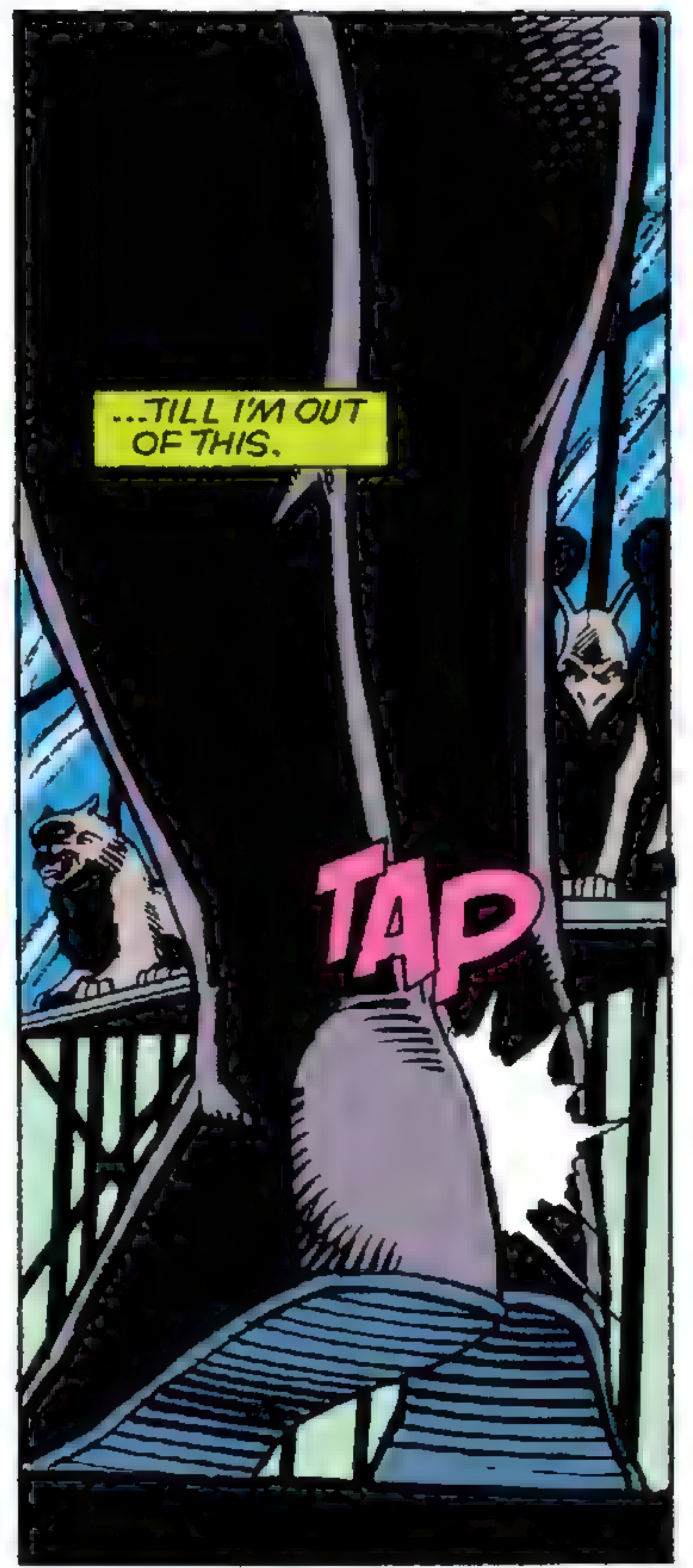
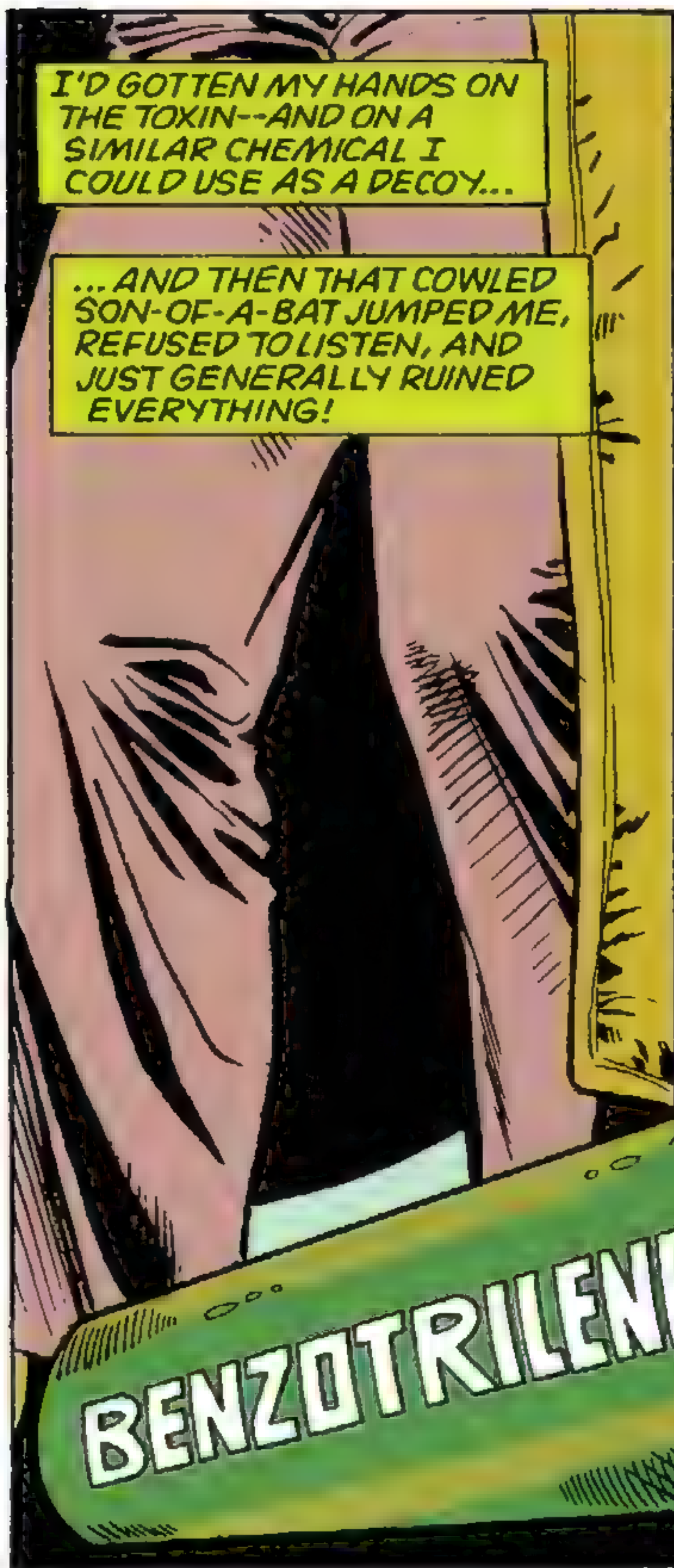


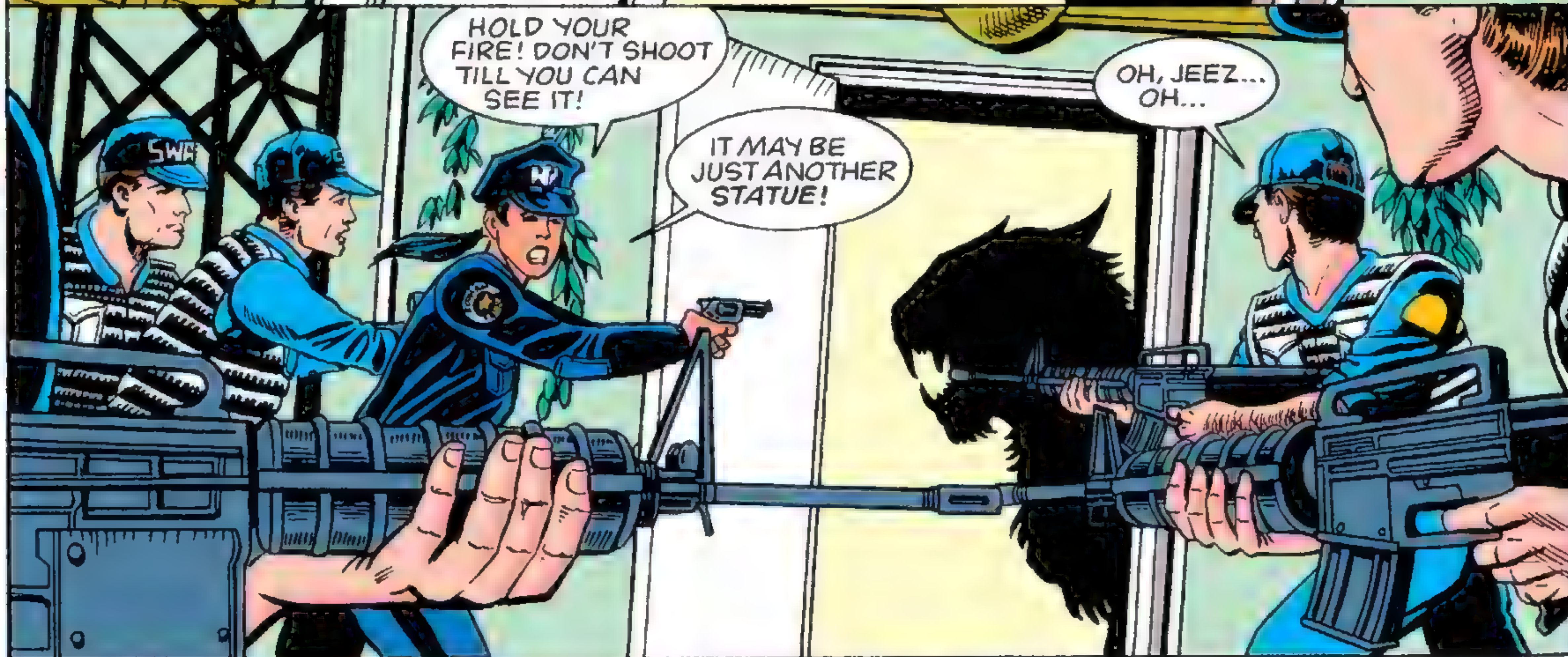
...GOT WIND THAT THE COMMITTEE MIGHT VOTE TO RELEASE XYKLON-C NERVE GAS AGAINST THE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS OF THE RAIN FOREST.

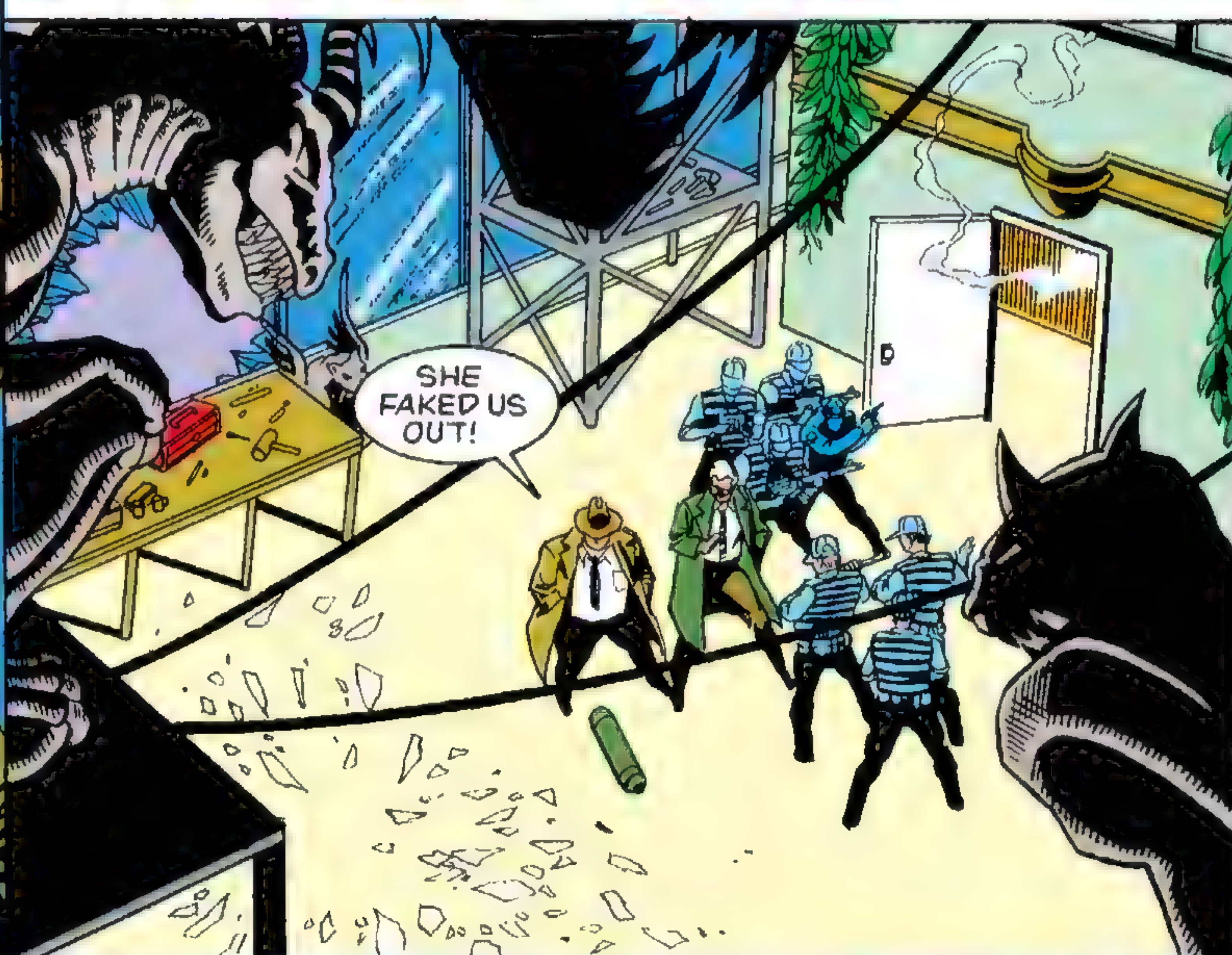
THERE WAS ALSO A CHANCE THE GAS MIGHT BE USED, IN COUNTER STRIKE, AT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF.

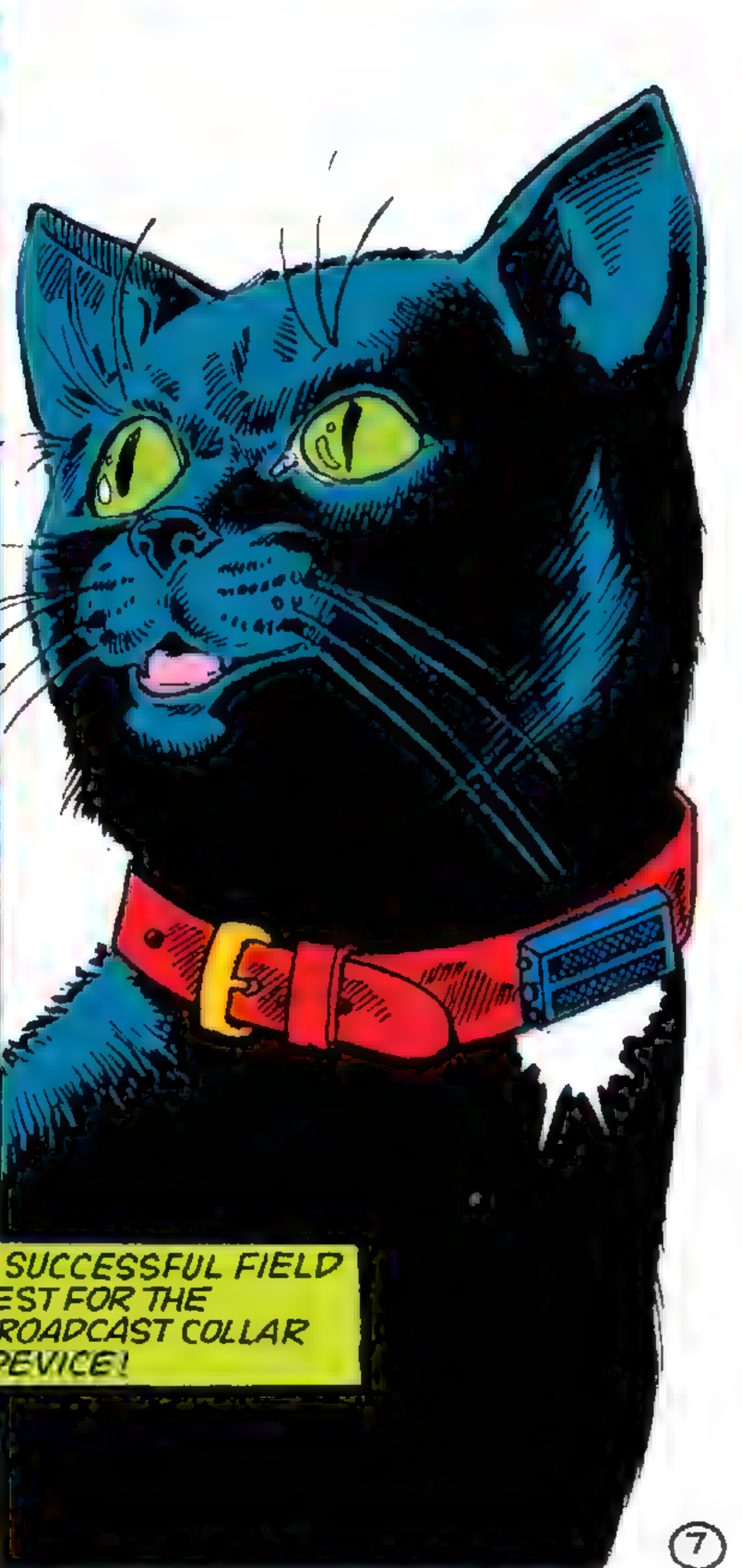
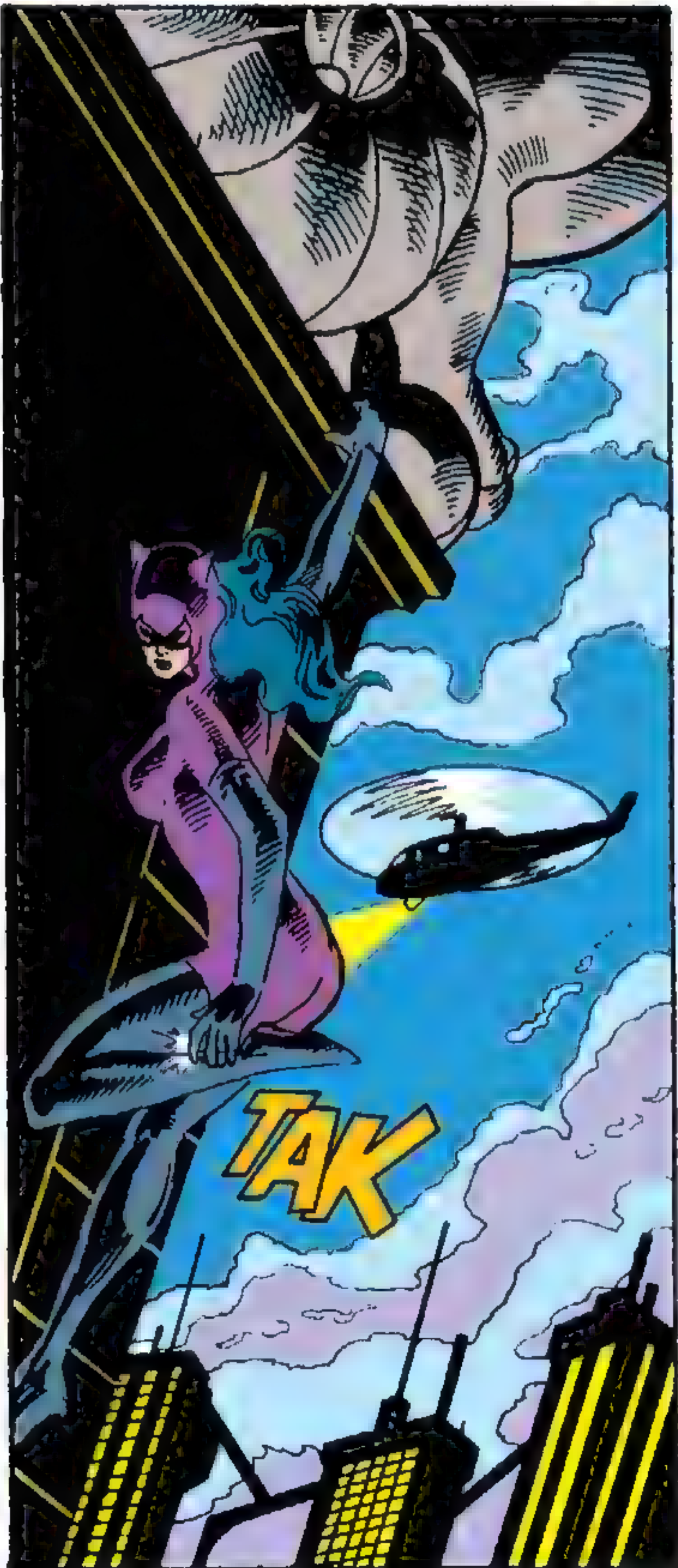
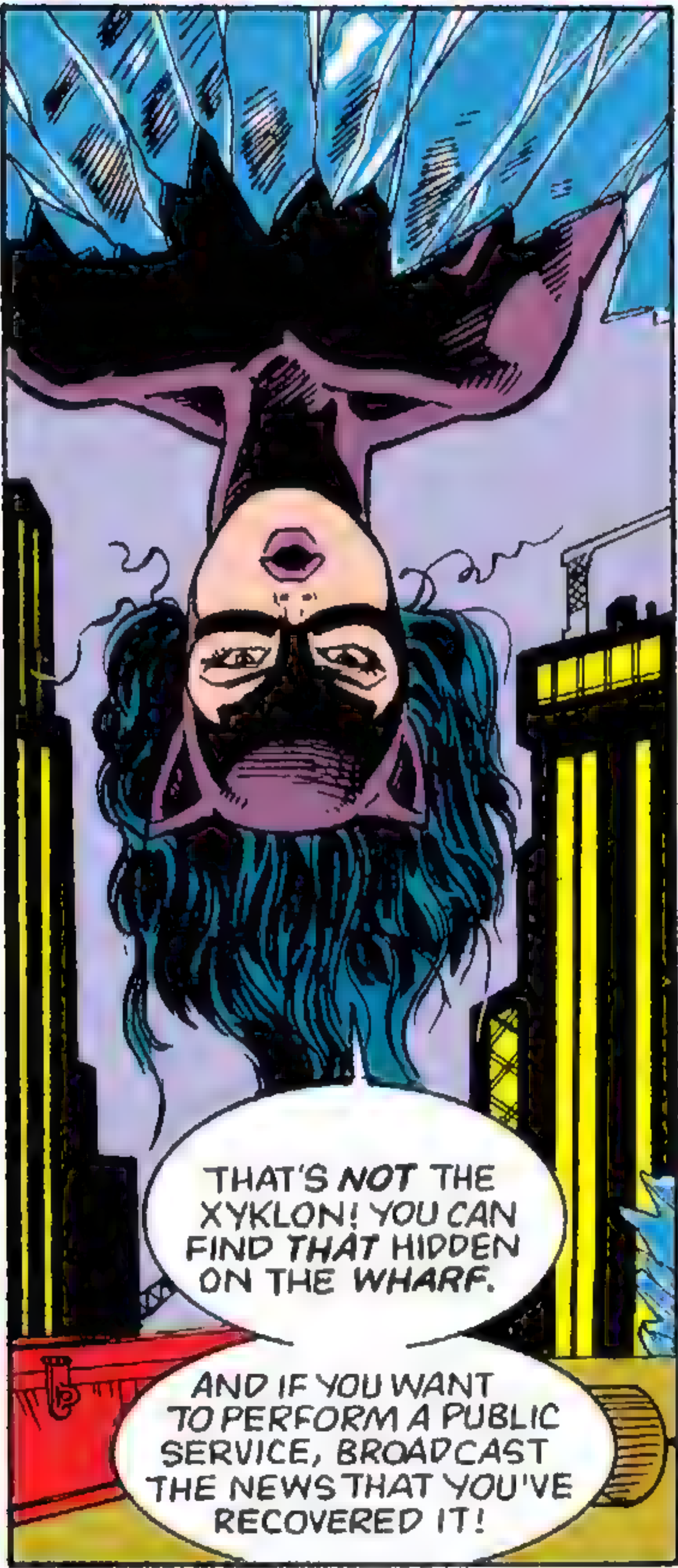
MY FRIEND JOB UNDERHILL--WHO DEVELOPED THE FORMULA WITHOUT CONSIDERING ITS CONSEQUENCES--CONVINCED ME TO ACT.

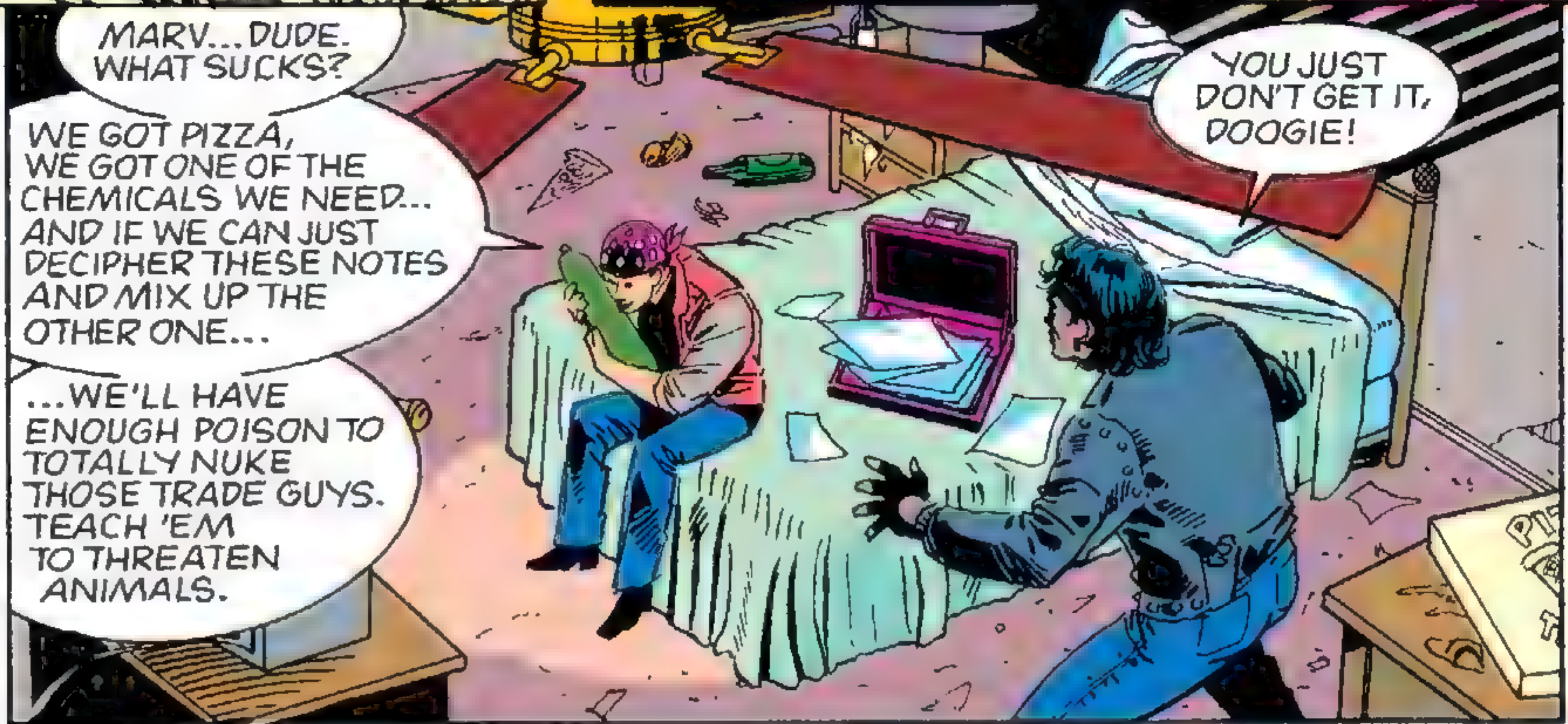
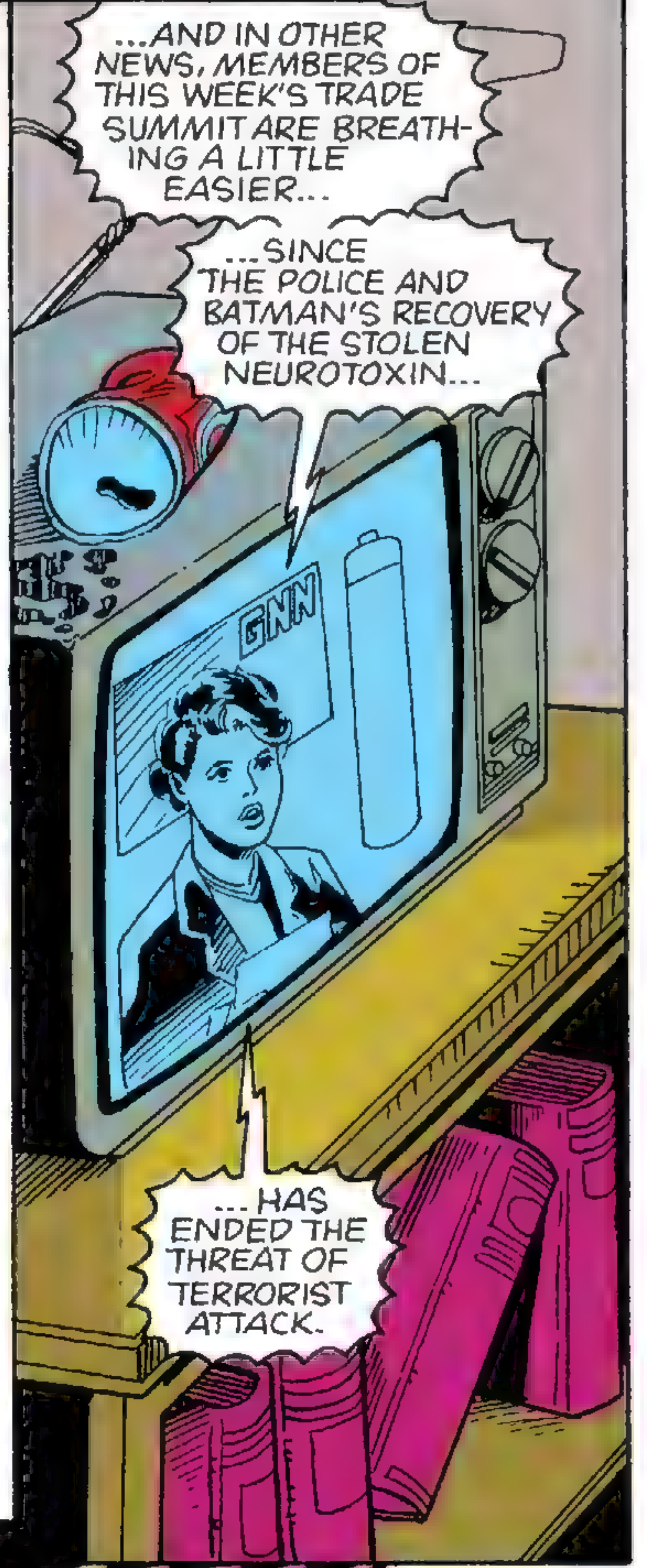


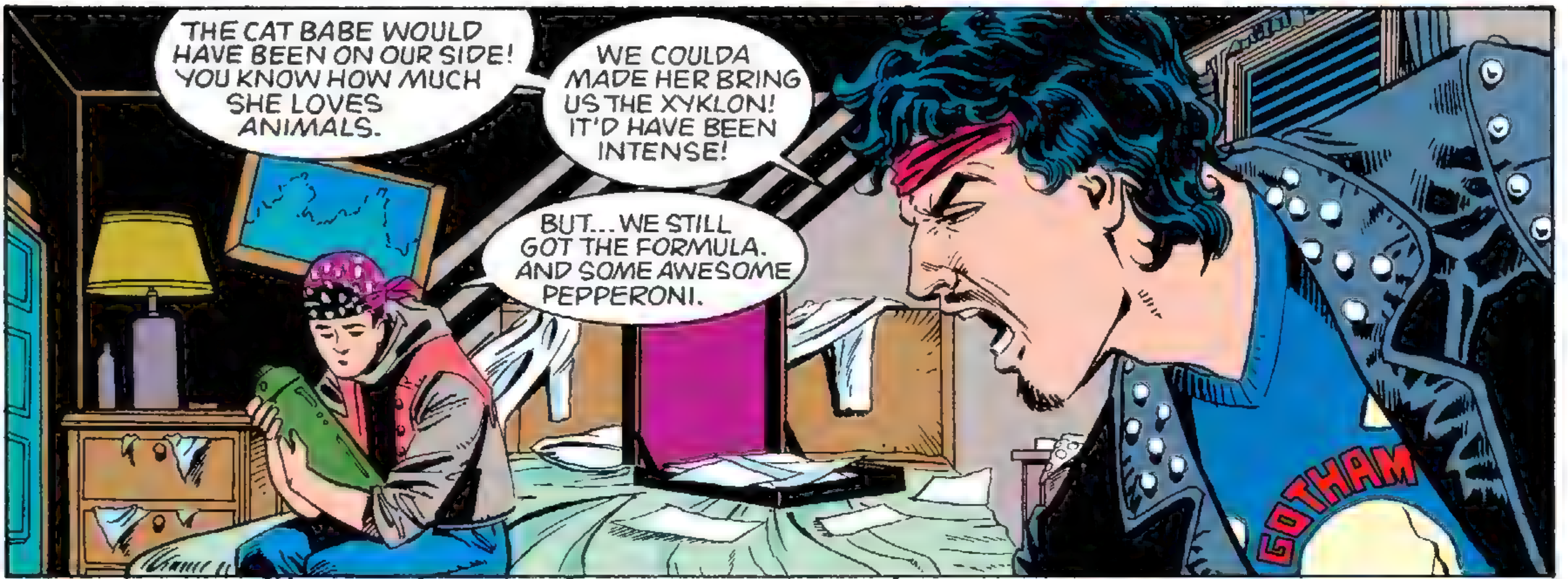








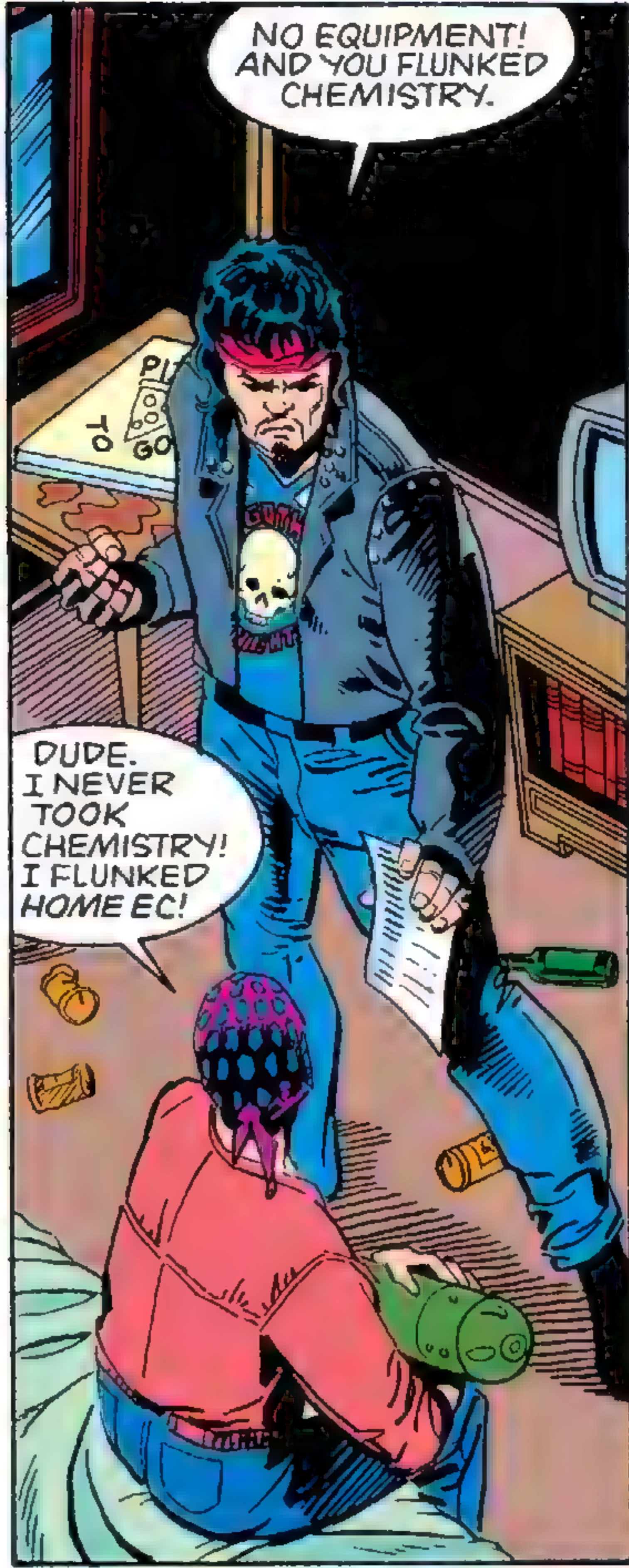




THE CAT BABE WOULD HAVE BEEN ON OUR SIDE! YOU KNOW HOW MUCH SHE LOVES ANIMALS.

WE COULDA MADE HER BRING US THE XYKLON! IT'D HAVE BEEN INTENSE!

BUT... WE STILL GOT THE FORMULA. AND SOME AWESOME PEPPERONI.



NO EQUIPMENT! AND YOU FLUNKED CHEMISTRY.

DUDE. I NEVER TOOK CHEMISTRY! I FLUNKED HOME EC!



WELL... WE COULD ALWAYS ASK PROFESSOR UNDERHILL TO MIX US UP SOME MORE.

HE INVENTED IT IN THE FIRST PLACE...

...SO THE HEARTLESS CAPITALIST TRADE DUDES COULD WIPE OUT THE RAINFOREST...

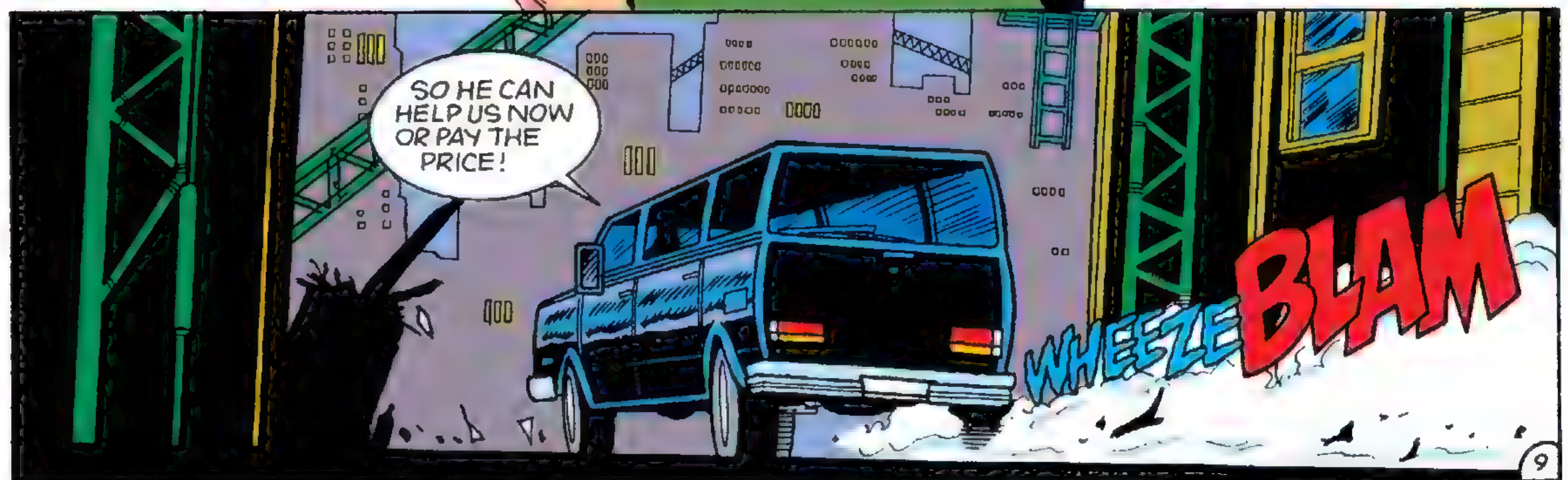


...NOT THAT HE KNEW WHY THEY WANTED IT!

THAT'S IT! DOOGIE! YOU'RE BRILLIANT...!

I AM...?

THIS IS ALL UNDERHILL'S FAULT! HE BETRAYED THE PLANET!



SO HE CAN HELP US NOW OR PAY THE PRICE!

WHEEZE **BLAM**



JOB, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

I HAVE TO, VALENTINE. HEAVEN FORGIVE ME, THAT TOXIN IS MY CREATION.



I CAN'T LET IT BE USED AGAINST ANY LIVING CREATURE!

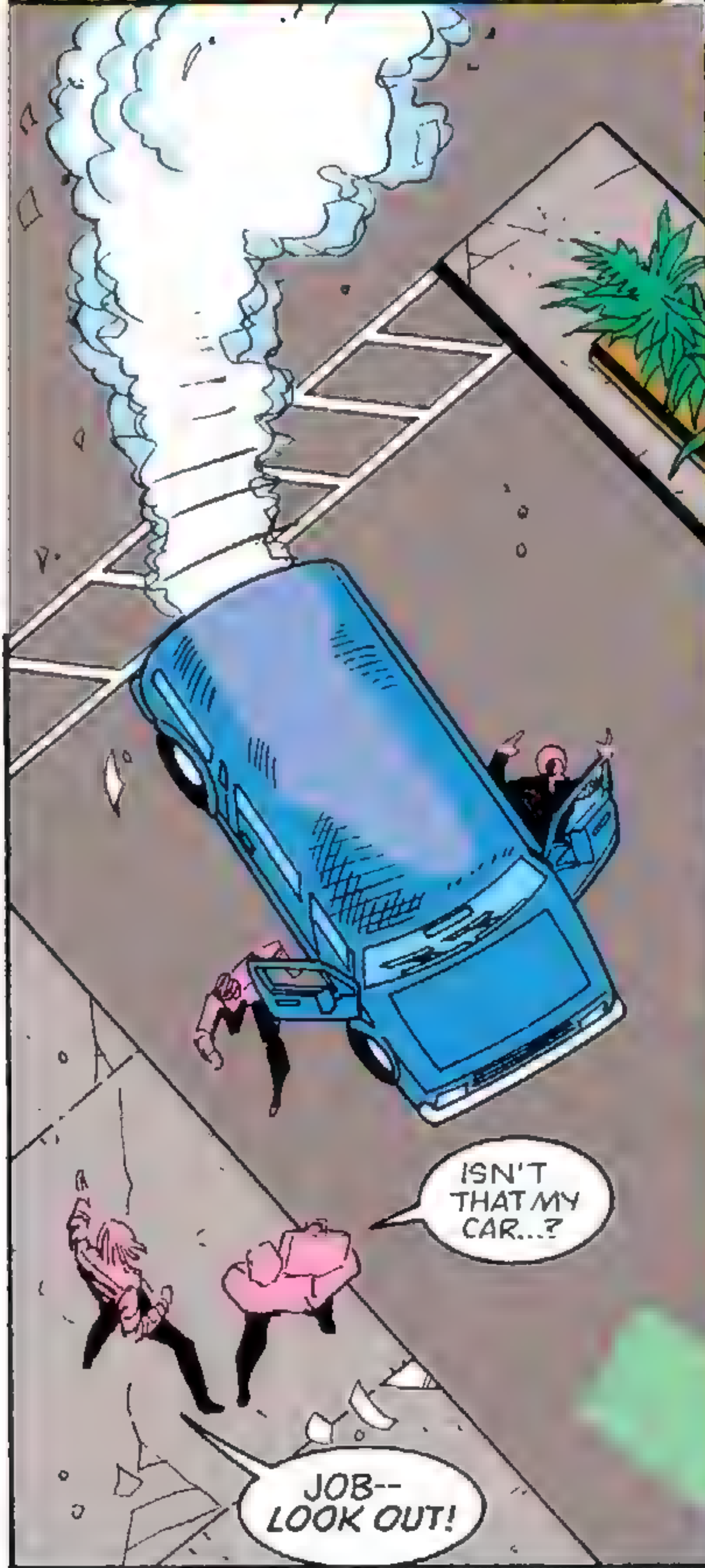
I HAVE TO MAKE THE CONFERENCE SEE REASON.

WITH SECURITY AS TIGHT AS IT IS, WE MAY NOT EVEN GET IN.



AND YOU'LL HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU NEVER SURRENDERED THE XYKLON-C FORMULA...

...OR GAVE THEM THE CHEMICAL THAT ACTIVATES IT.



ISN'T THAT MY CAR...?

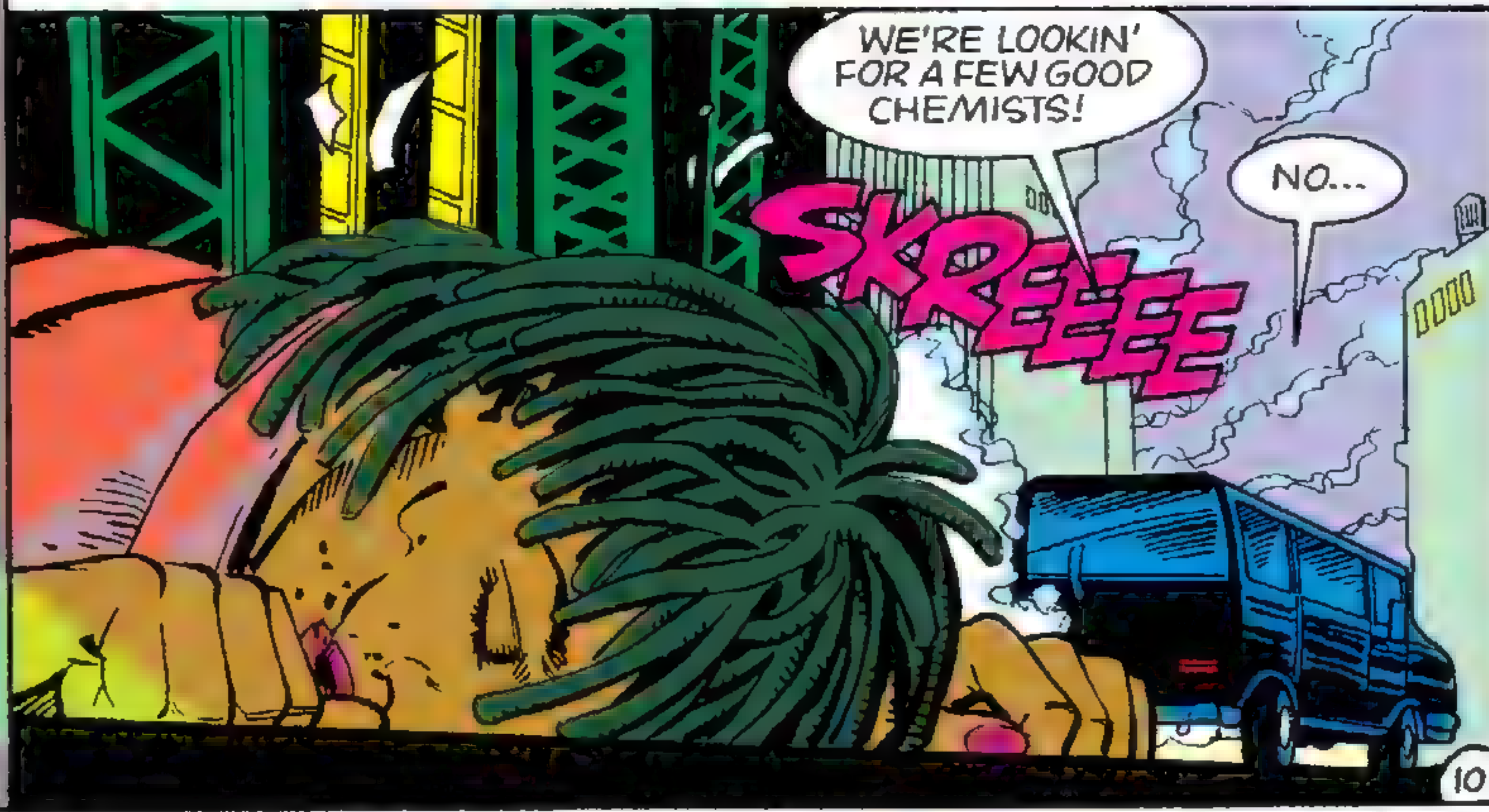
JOB-- LOOK OUT!



EAT FIST, VALENTINE!

DOOGIE, I--!

IN YOU COME, PROF! UNCLE MARV WANTS YOU!



WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR A FEW GOOD CHEMISTS!

NO...

SKREEEE

IT SHINES ABOVE
THE GOTHAM
NIGHT.

...THE POLICE CAN SUMMON
THE MAN BEHIND THE COWL.

CITIZEN AND CRIMINAL
ALIKE LIVE BENEATH
THE CONSTANT REMINDER
THAT WHENEVER THEY
NEED HIM...

WHEN THE WEATHER'S GOOD,
AND THEIR DARK KNIGHT IS
AT HAND, THE SYSTEM
WORKS...

...SIMPLE, ELEGANT
AND FOOLPROOF.

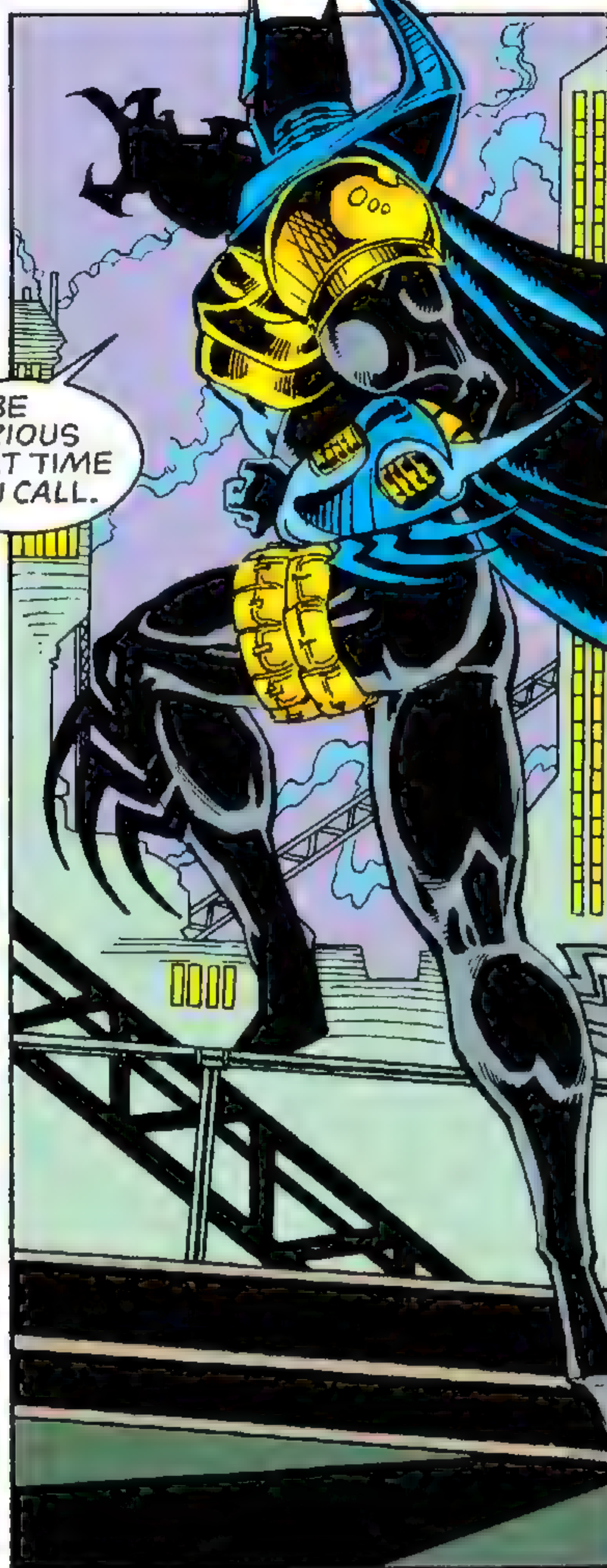
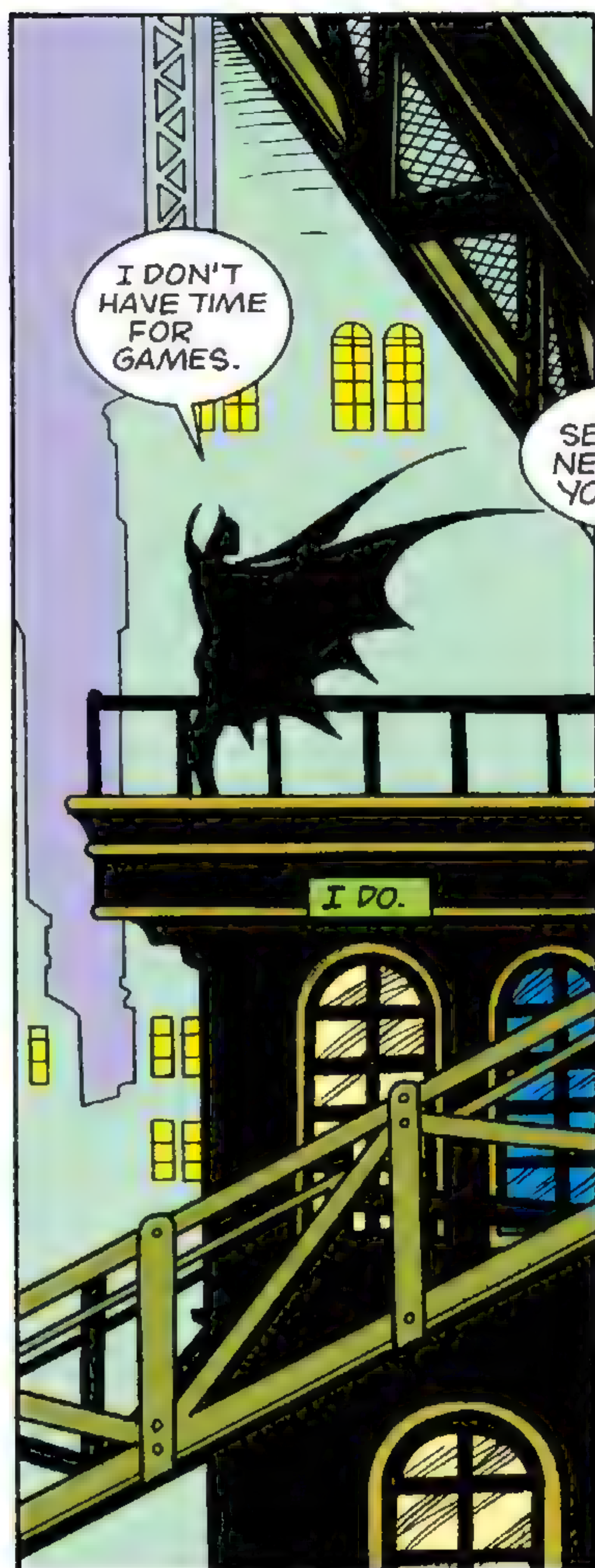
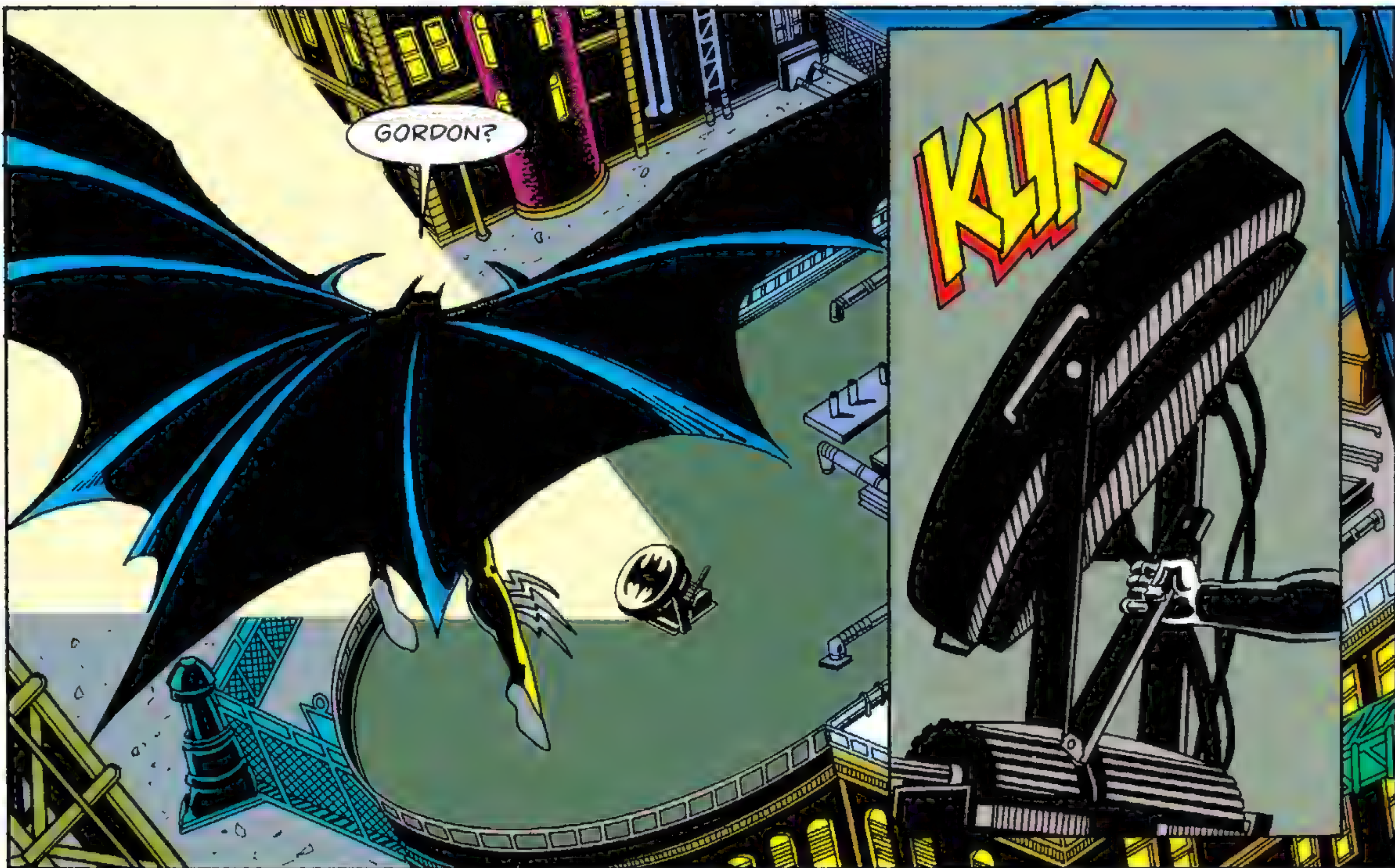
LINE LAUNCH
AND ENGAGE.
NINETY-SEVEN
DEGREES,
SIXTEEN
METERS.

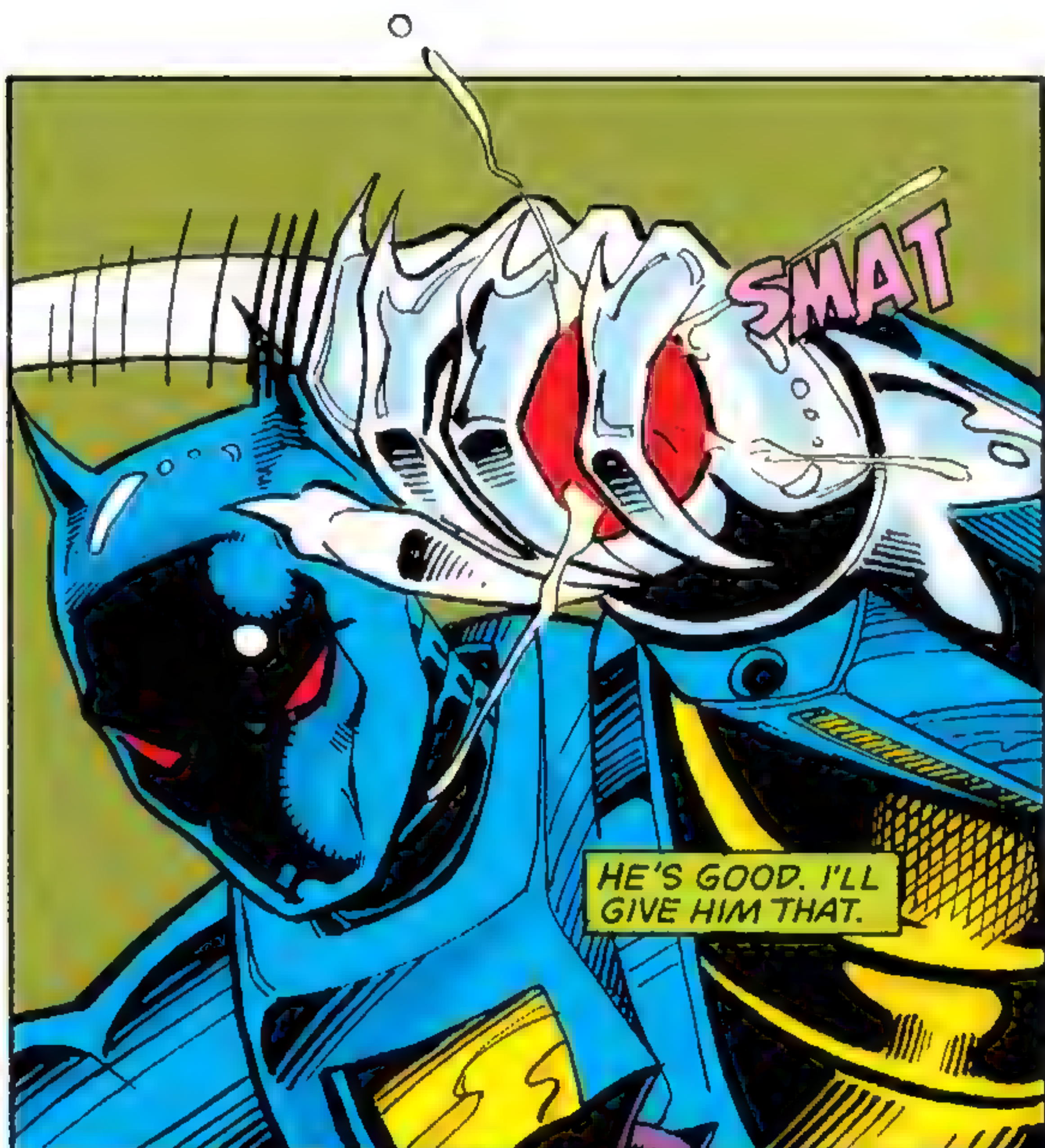
SIR... IS
SOMETHING
WRONG?

WHY?

THE BAT SIGNAL.
USUALLY, WHEN IT'S
LIT, YOU STAY UPSTAIRS
TILL HE COMES.

BUT...
I HAVEN'T
USED IT!





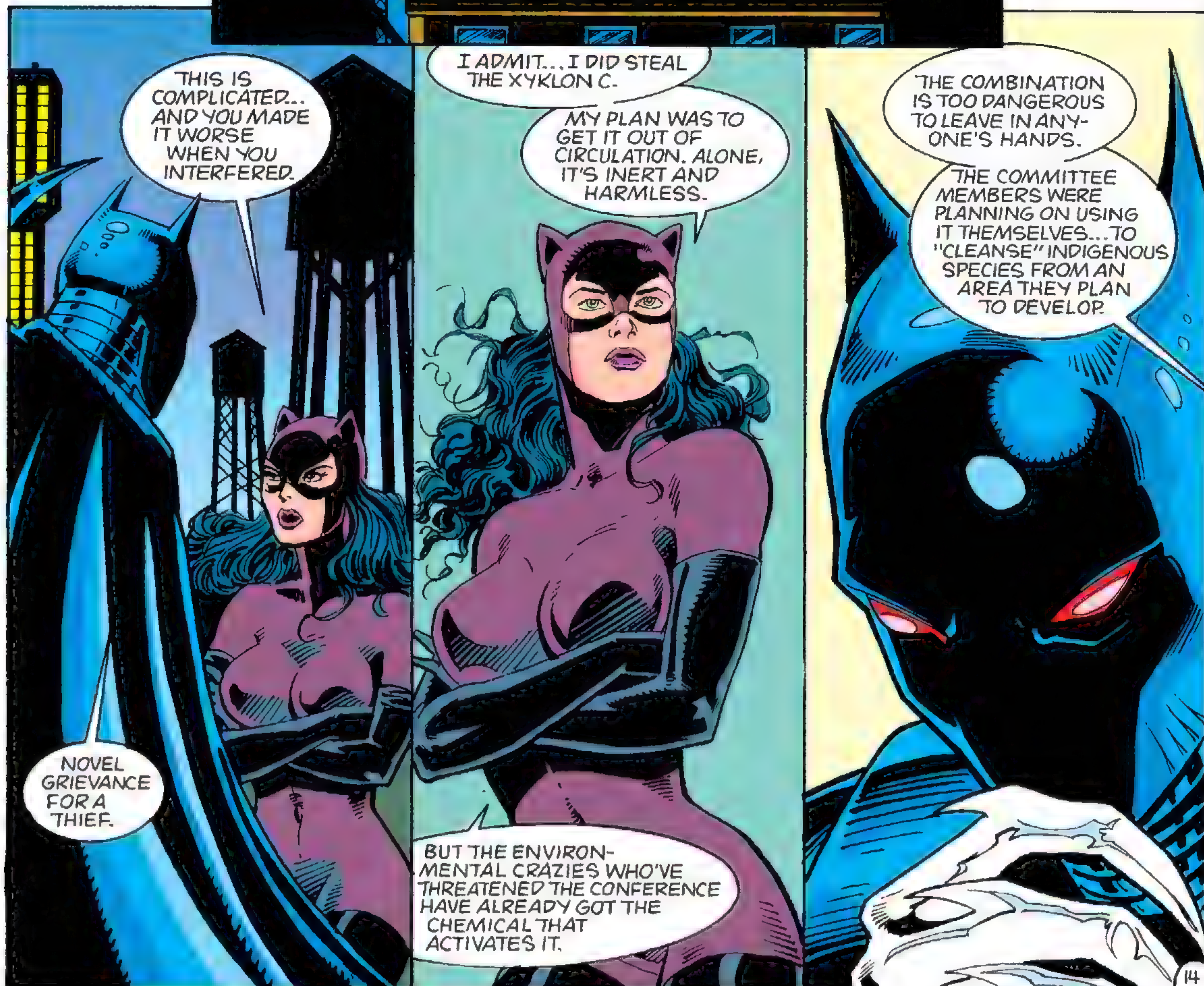
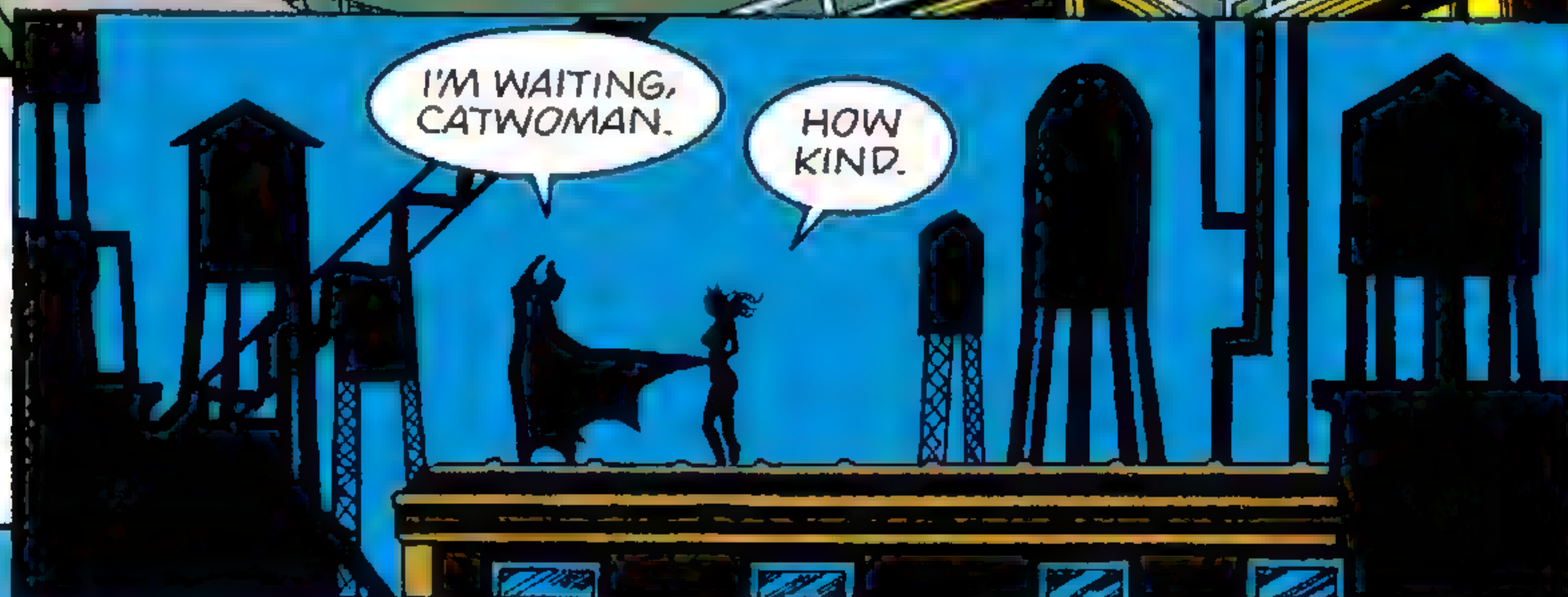
...CONVINCING HIS ROOKIE SUCCESSOR TO SEE REASON.

BUT IF HE TRUSTED YOU WITH HIS REPUTATION AND ALL HIS TOYS...

...YOU MUST BE GOOD. AND YOU'RE PROBABLY SMARTER THAN I TOOK YOU FOR. SO PLEASE NOTE...

...THAT YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE I CALLED YOU, AND THAT I'M PRESENTLY NEITHER FLEEING, NOR STEALING, NOR HARMING A LIVING SOUL.







I THOUGHT I COULD THWART
EVERYONE'S PLANS... BUT I WAS
OUTMANEUVERED.

THE TERRORISTS
HAVE KIDNAPPED A MAN
WHO CAN SYNTHESIZE
MORE TOXINS.

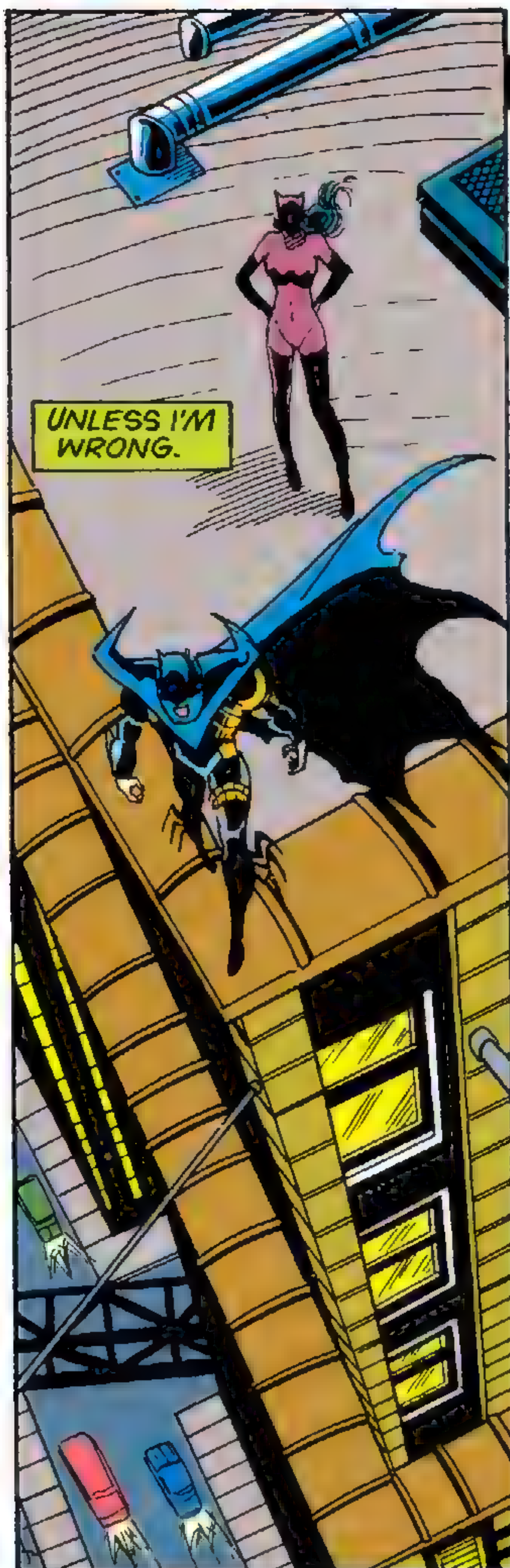
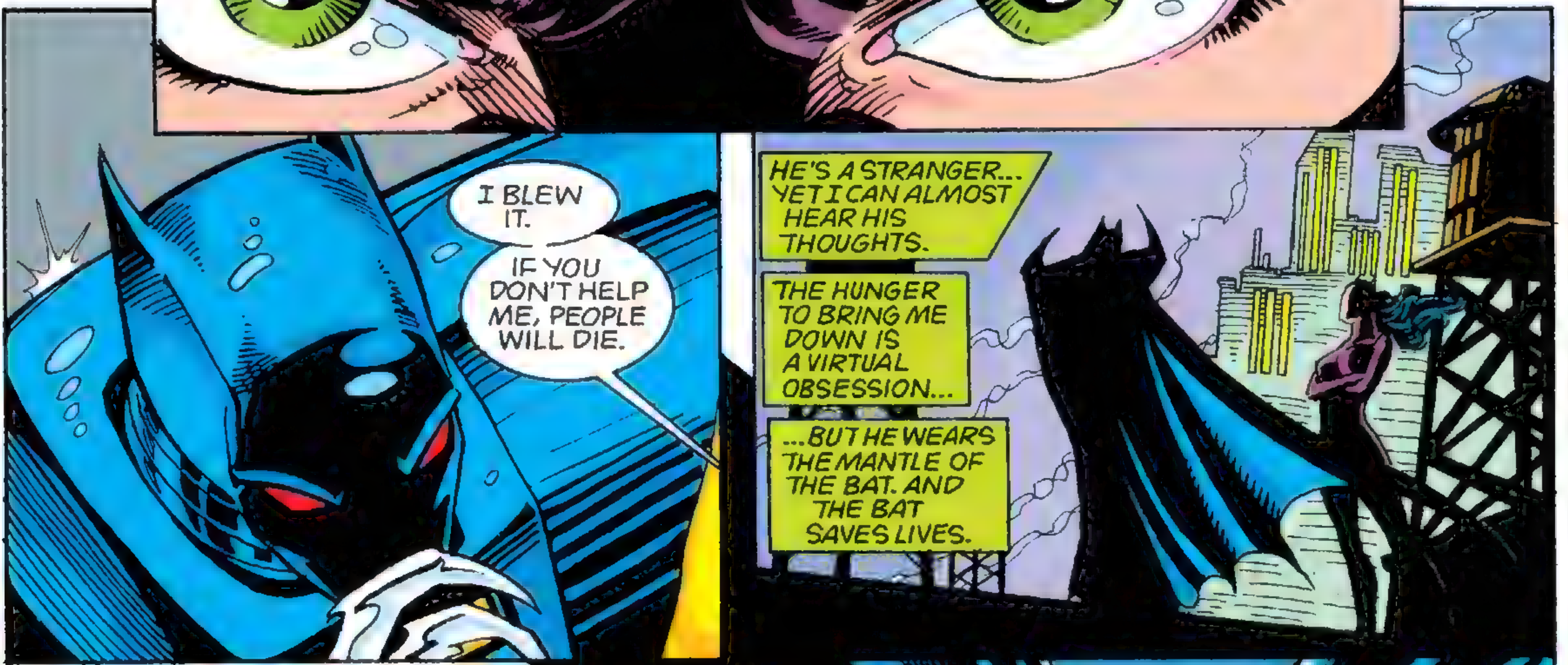
I BLEW
IT.

IF YOU
DON'T HELP
ME, PEOPLE
WILL DIE.

HE'S A STRANGER...
YET I CAN ALMOST
HEAR HIS
THOUGHTS.

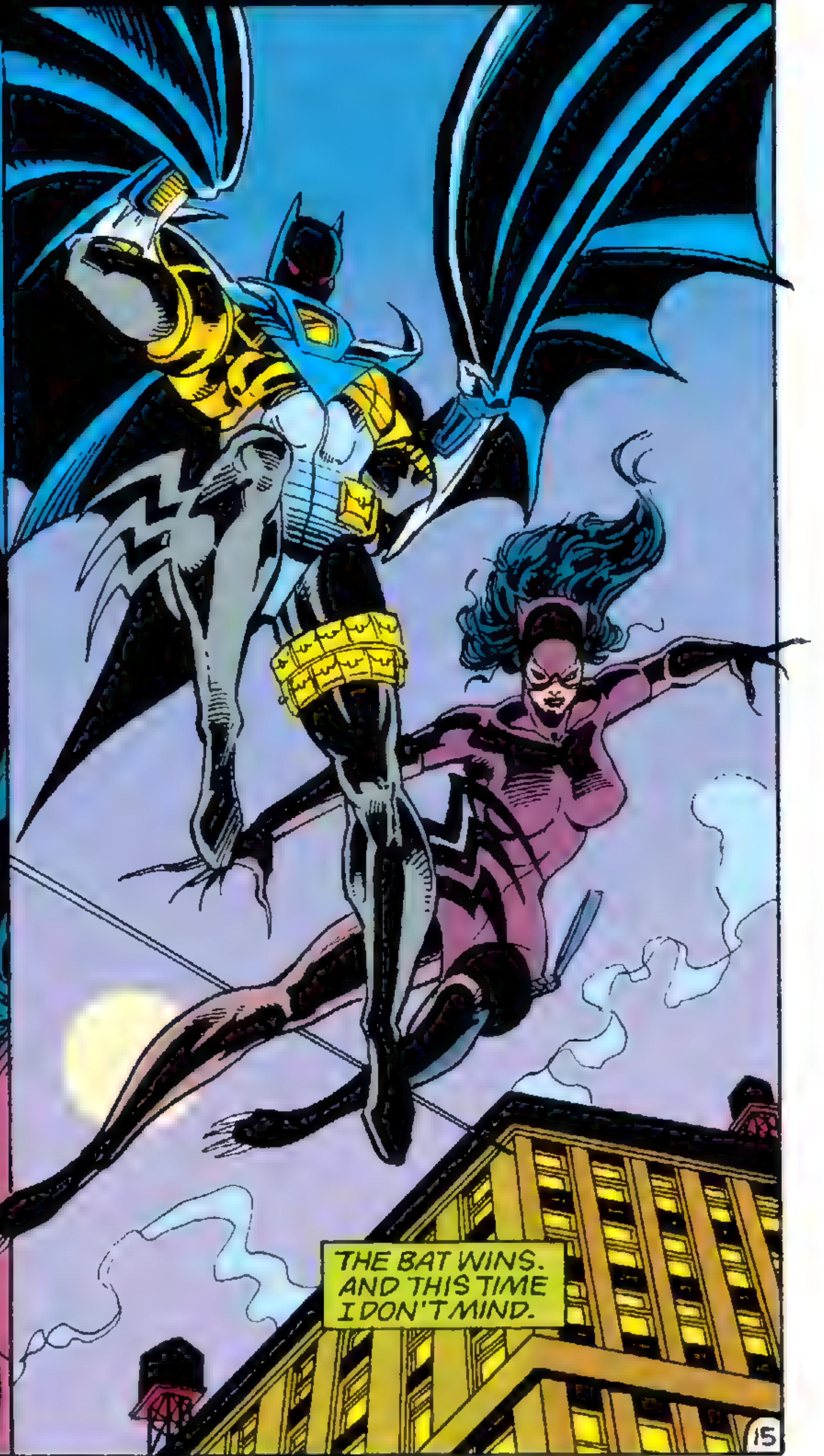
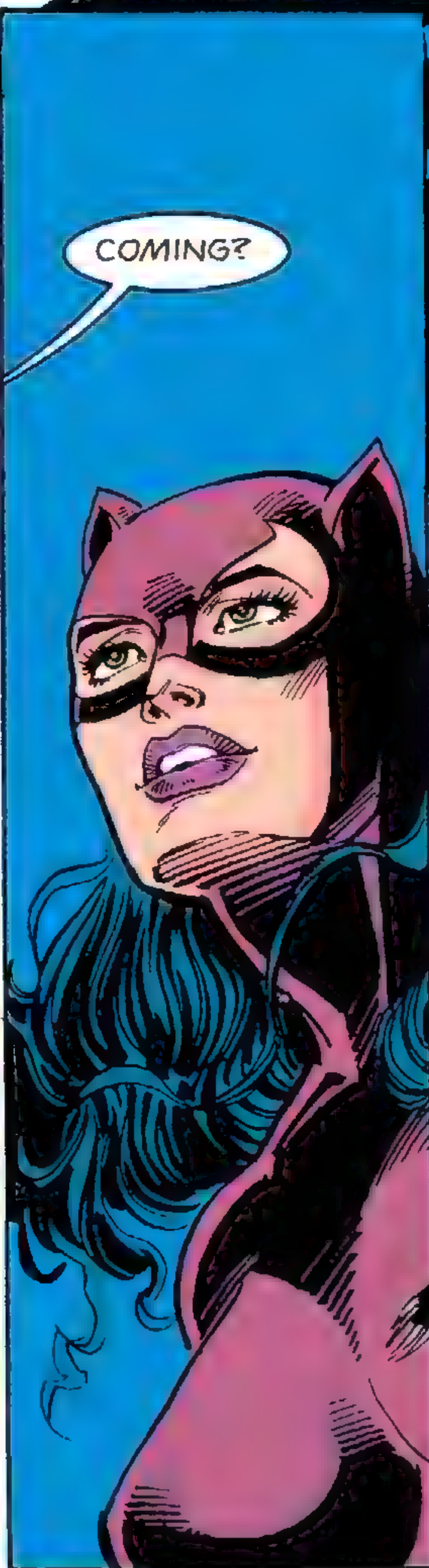
THE HUNGER
TO BRING ME
DOWN IS
A VIRTUAL
OBSESSION...

...BUT HE WEARS
THE MANTLE OF
THE BAT. AND
THE BAT
SAVES LIVES.

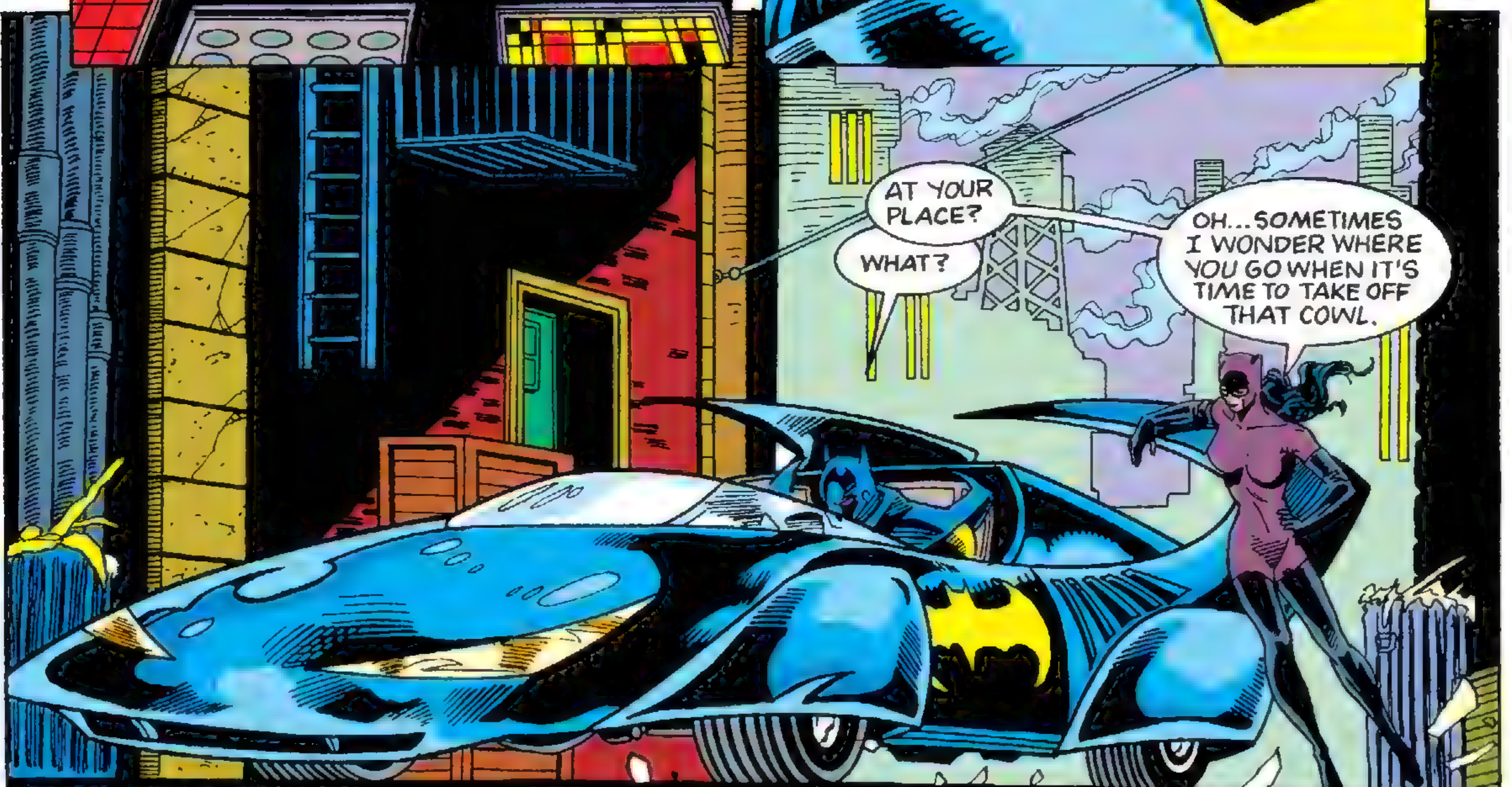


UNLESS I'M
WRONG.

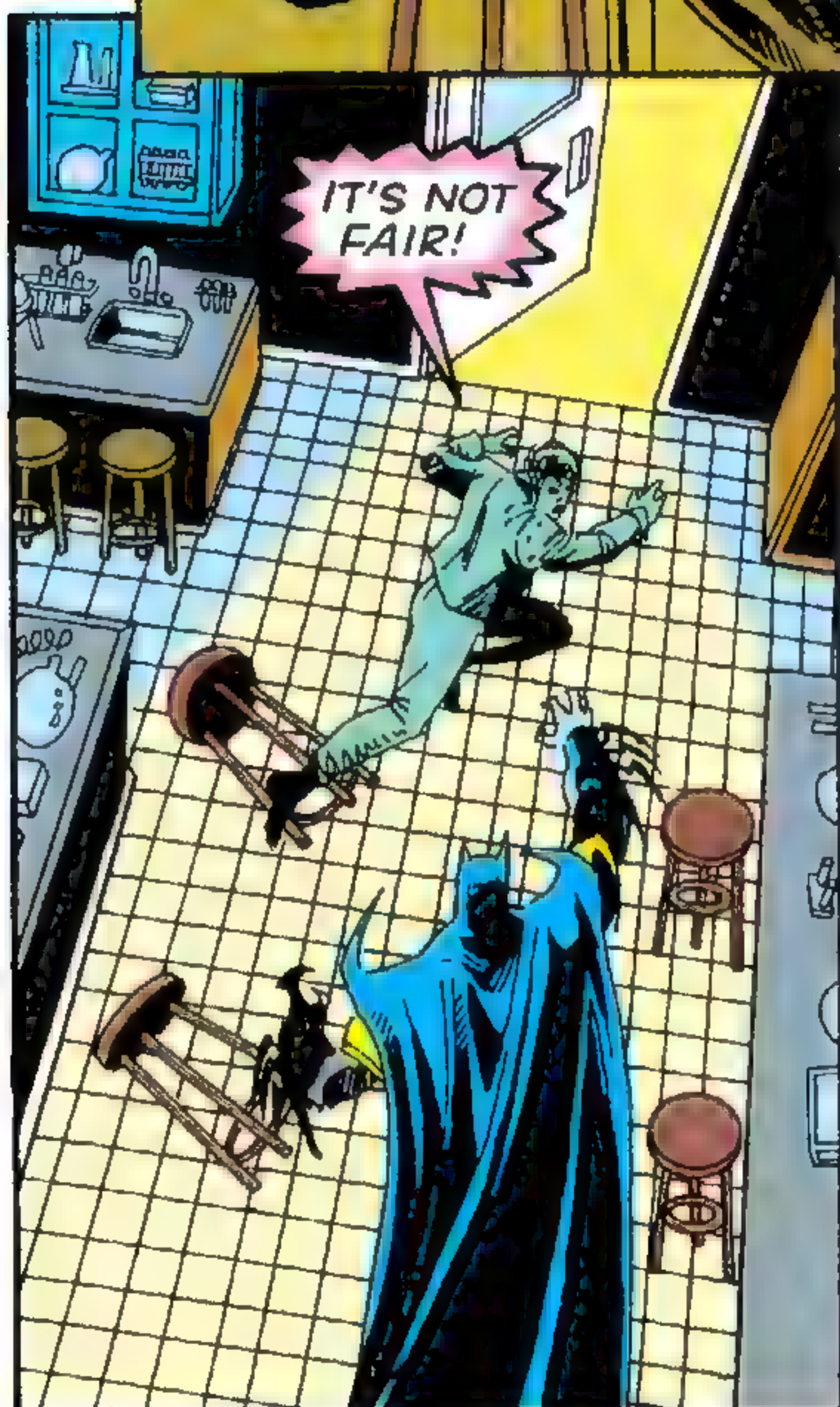
COMING?

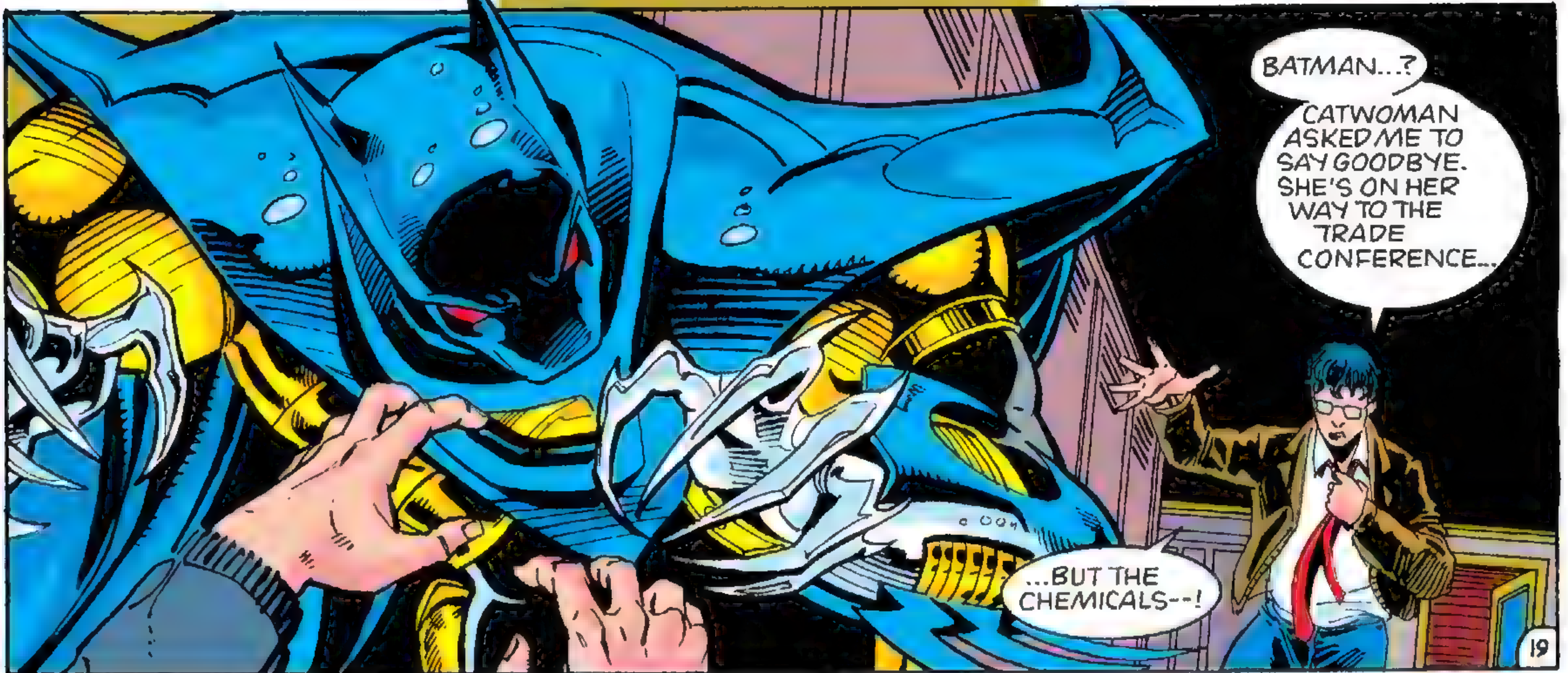
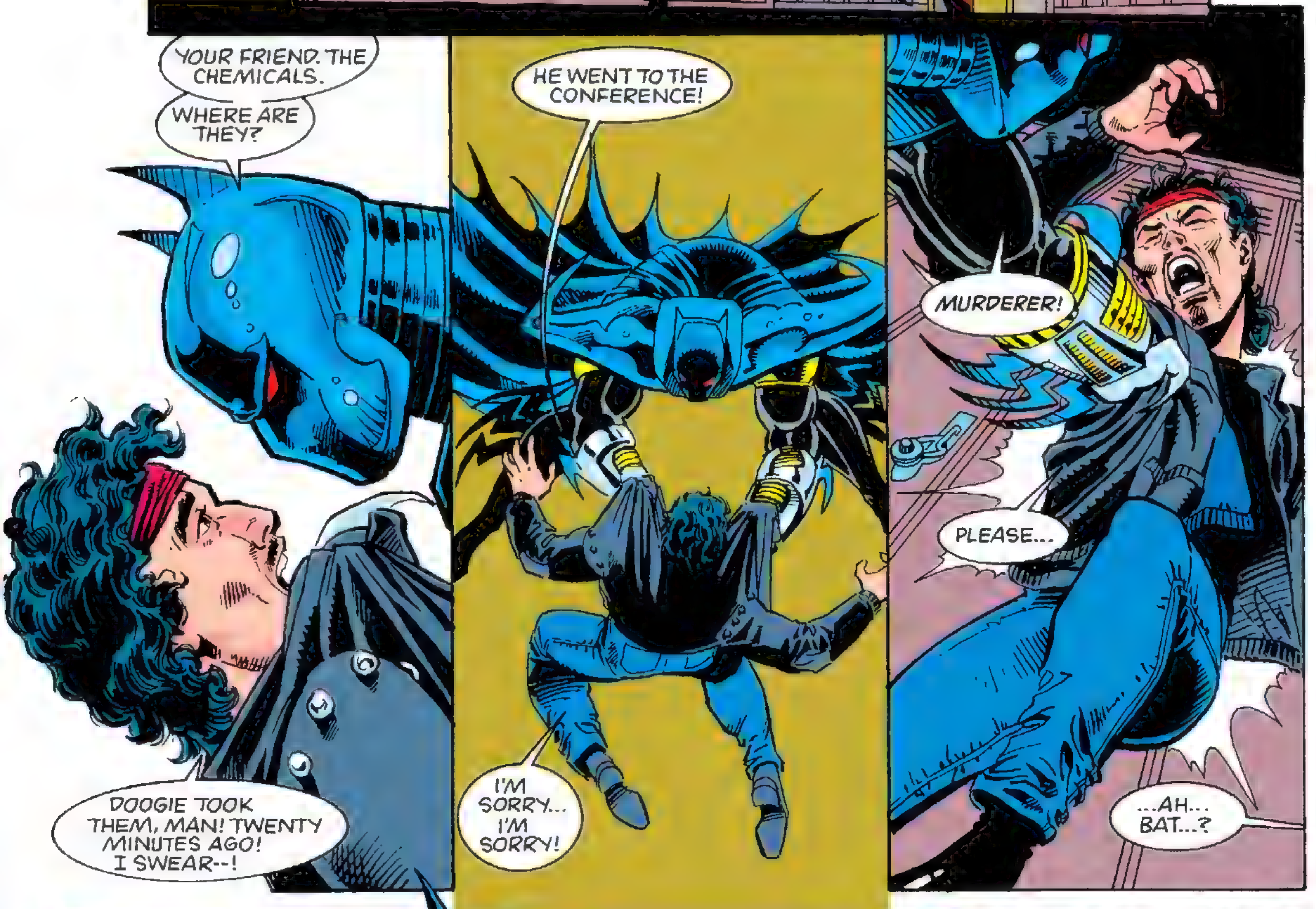


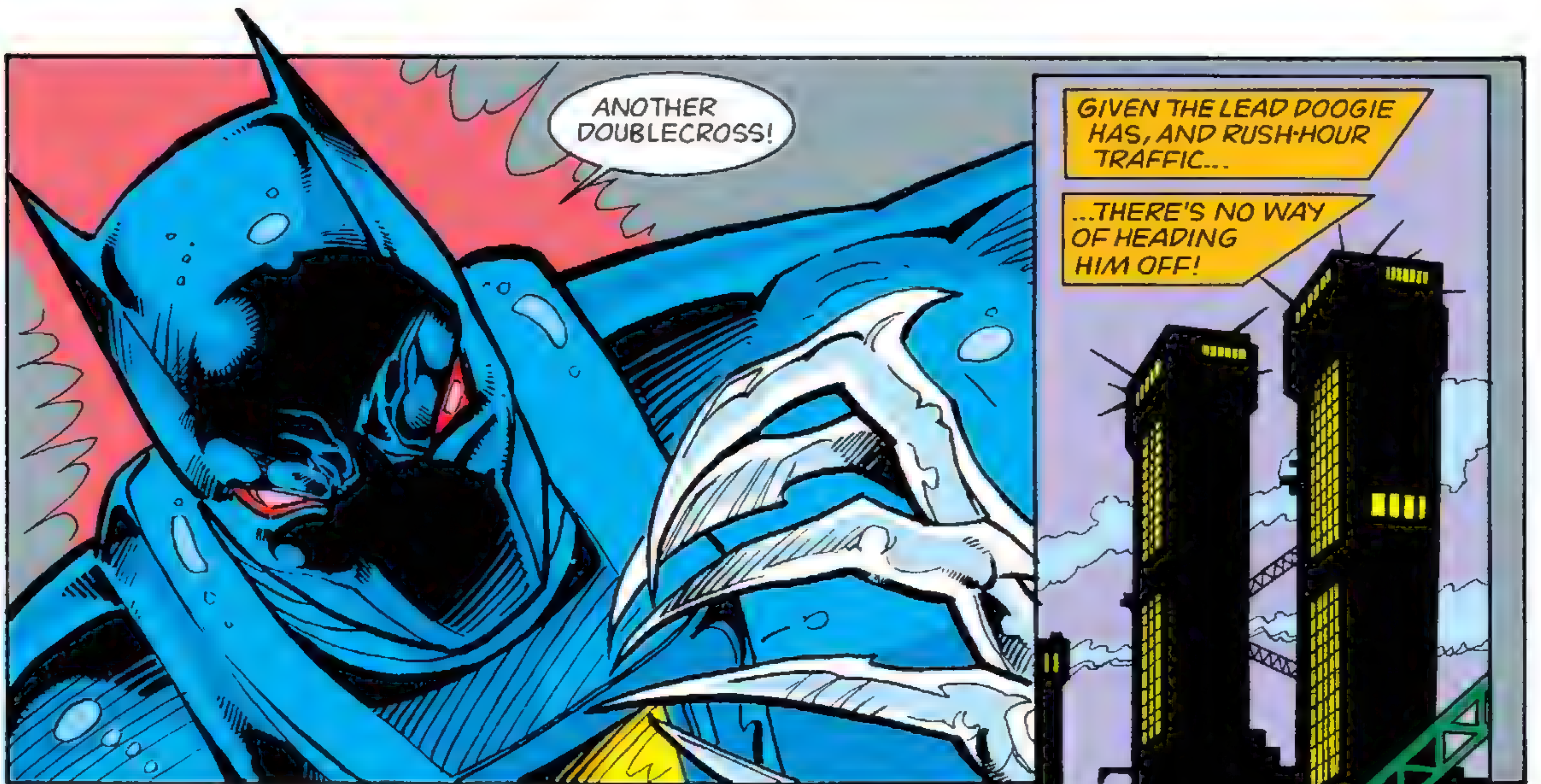
THE BAT WINS.
AND THIS TIME
I DON'T MIND.







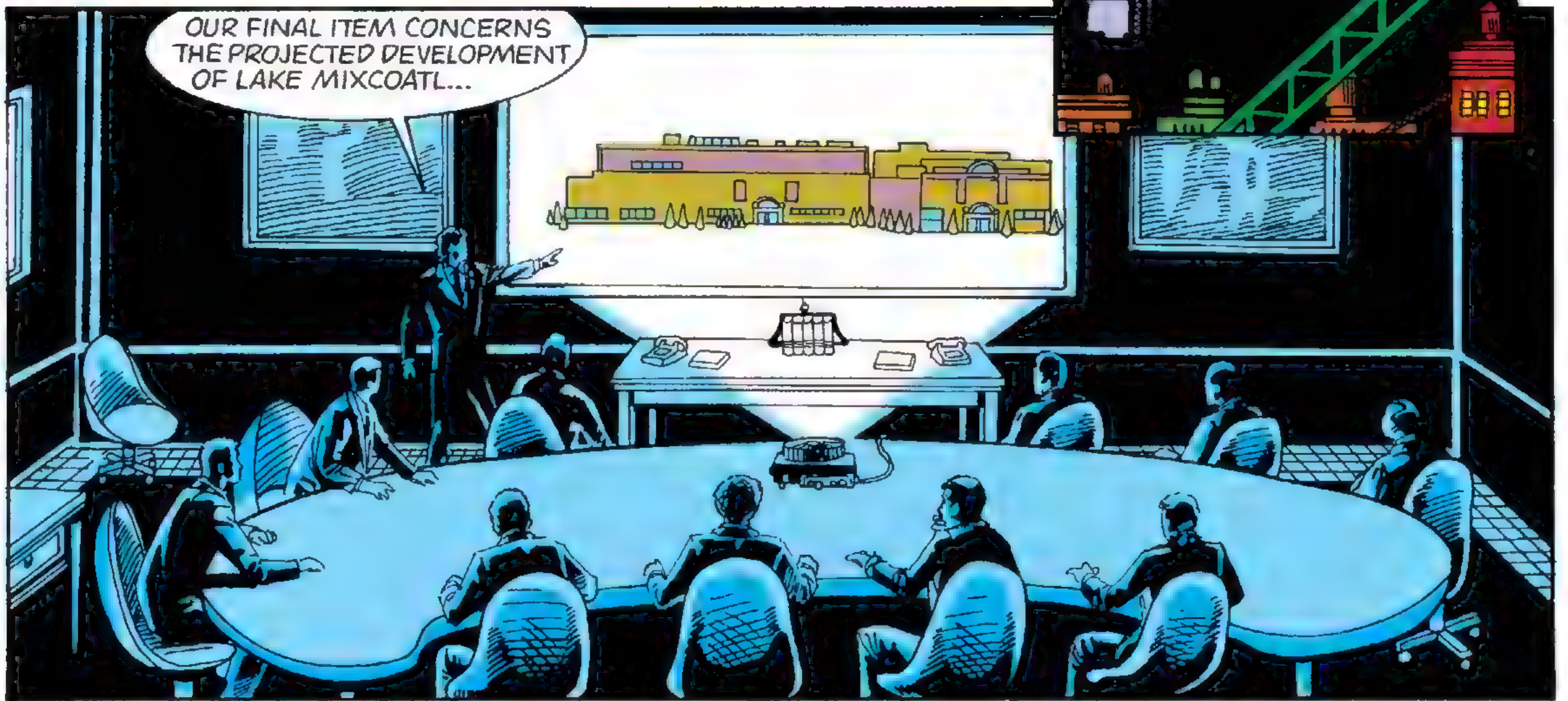




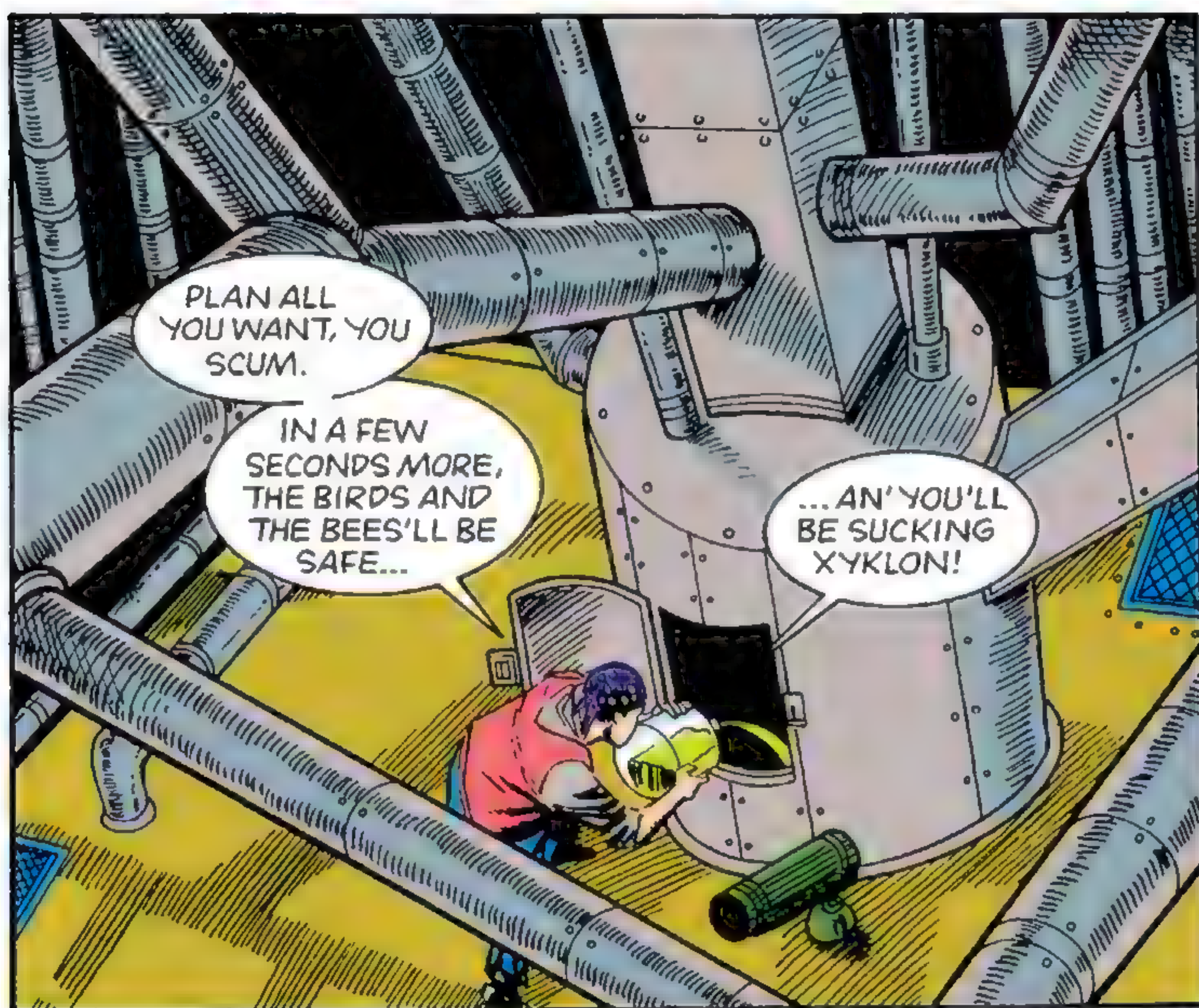
ANOTHER
DOUBLECROSS!

GIVEN THE LEAD DOOGIE
HAS, AND RUSH-HOUR
TRAFFIC...

...THERE'S NO WAY
OF HEADING
HIM OFF!



OUR FINAL ITEM CONCERNS
THE PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT
OF LAKE MIXCOATL...



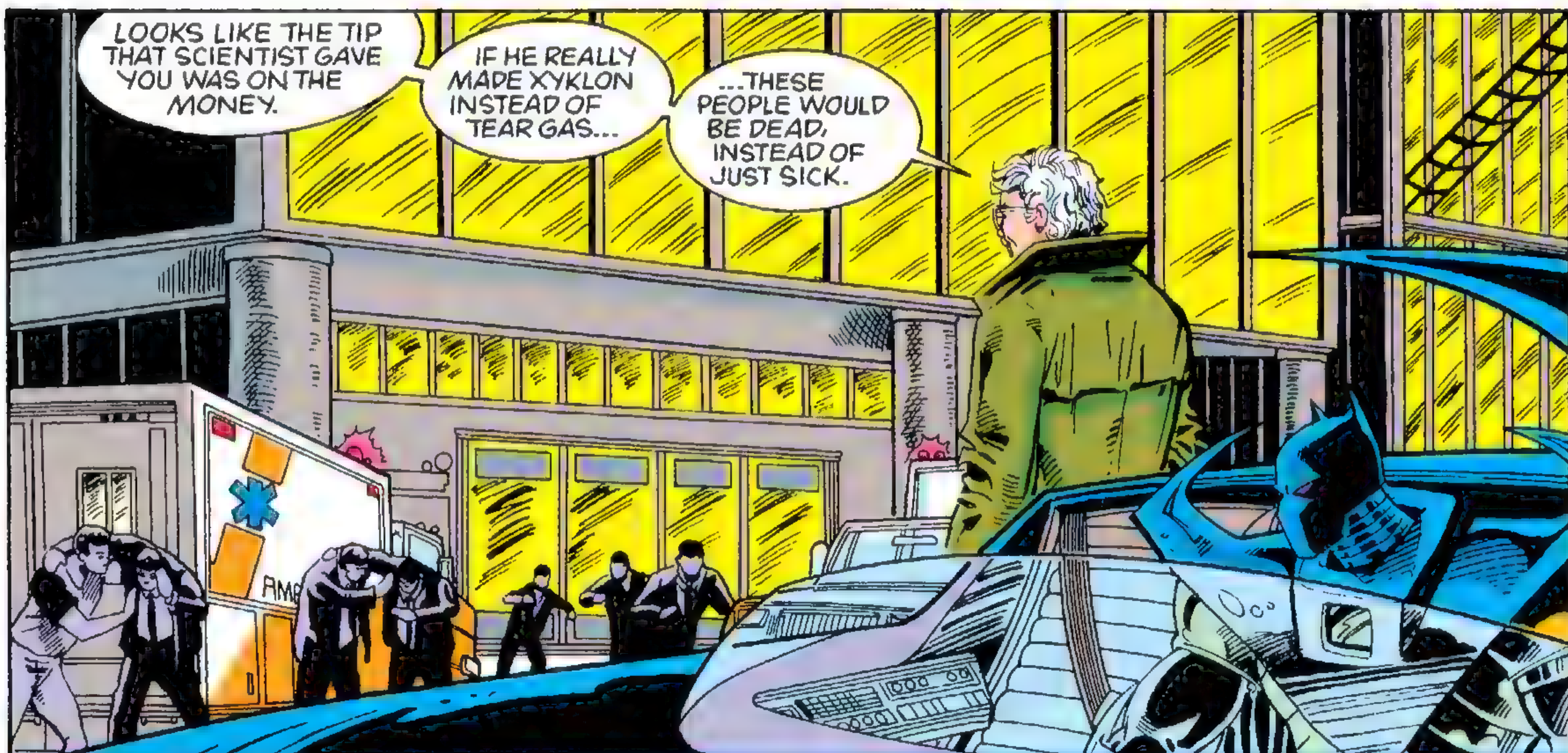
PLAN ALL
YOU WANT, YOU
SCUM.

IN A FEW
SECONDS MORE,
THE BIRDS AND
THE BEES'LL BE
SAFE...

...AN' YOU'LL
BE SUCKING
XYKLON!



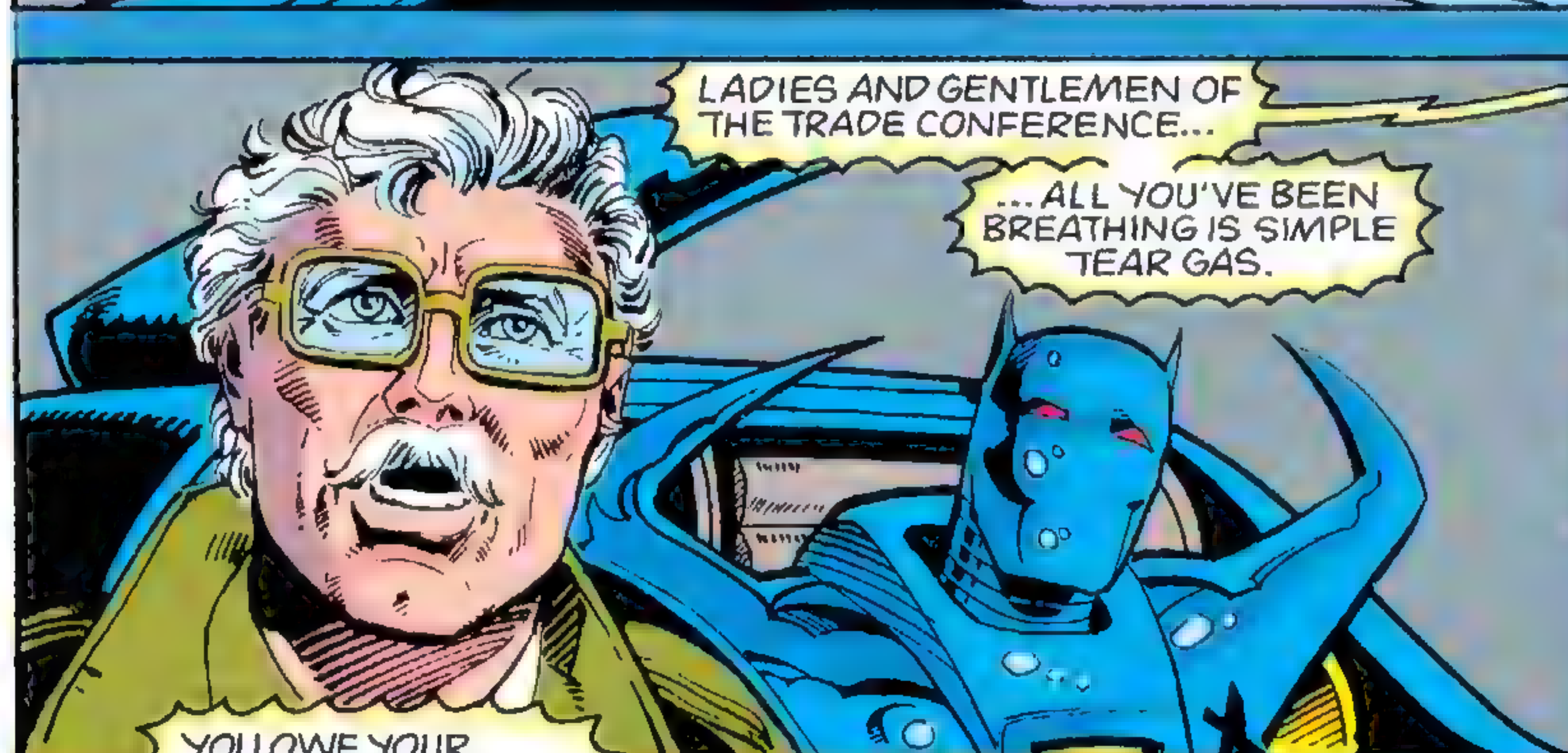
YEAH!
GO, GAS!
GO!



LOOKS LIKE THE TIP
THAT SCIENTIST GAVE
YOU WAS ON THE
MONEY.

IF HE REALLY
MADE XYKLON
INSTEAD OF
TEAR GAS...

...THESE
PEOPLE WOULD
BE DEAD,
INSTEAD OF
JUST SICK.

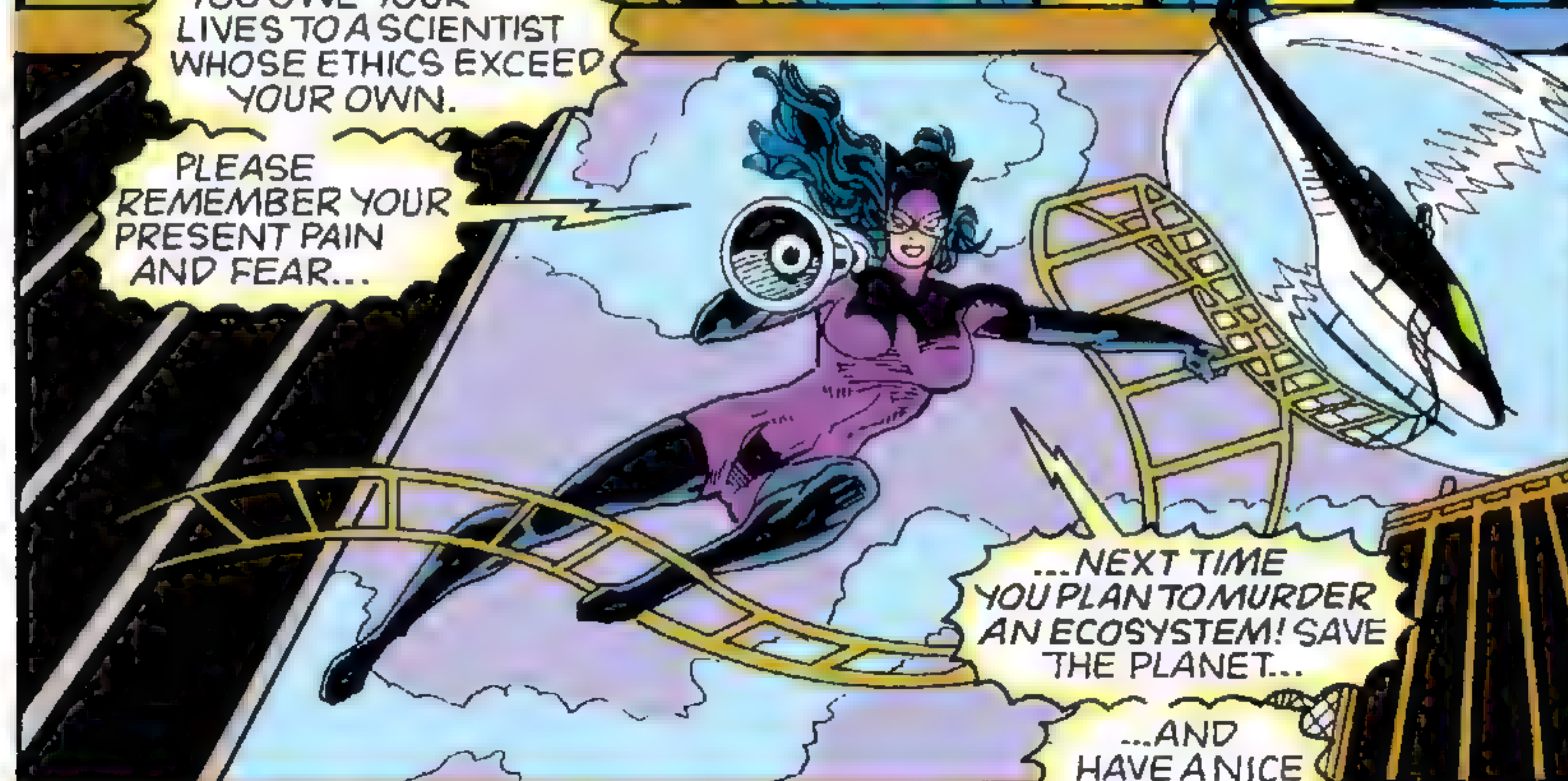


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF
THE TRADE CONFERENCE...

... ALL YOU'VE BEEN
BREATHING IS SIMPLE
TEAR GAS.

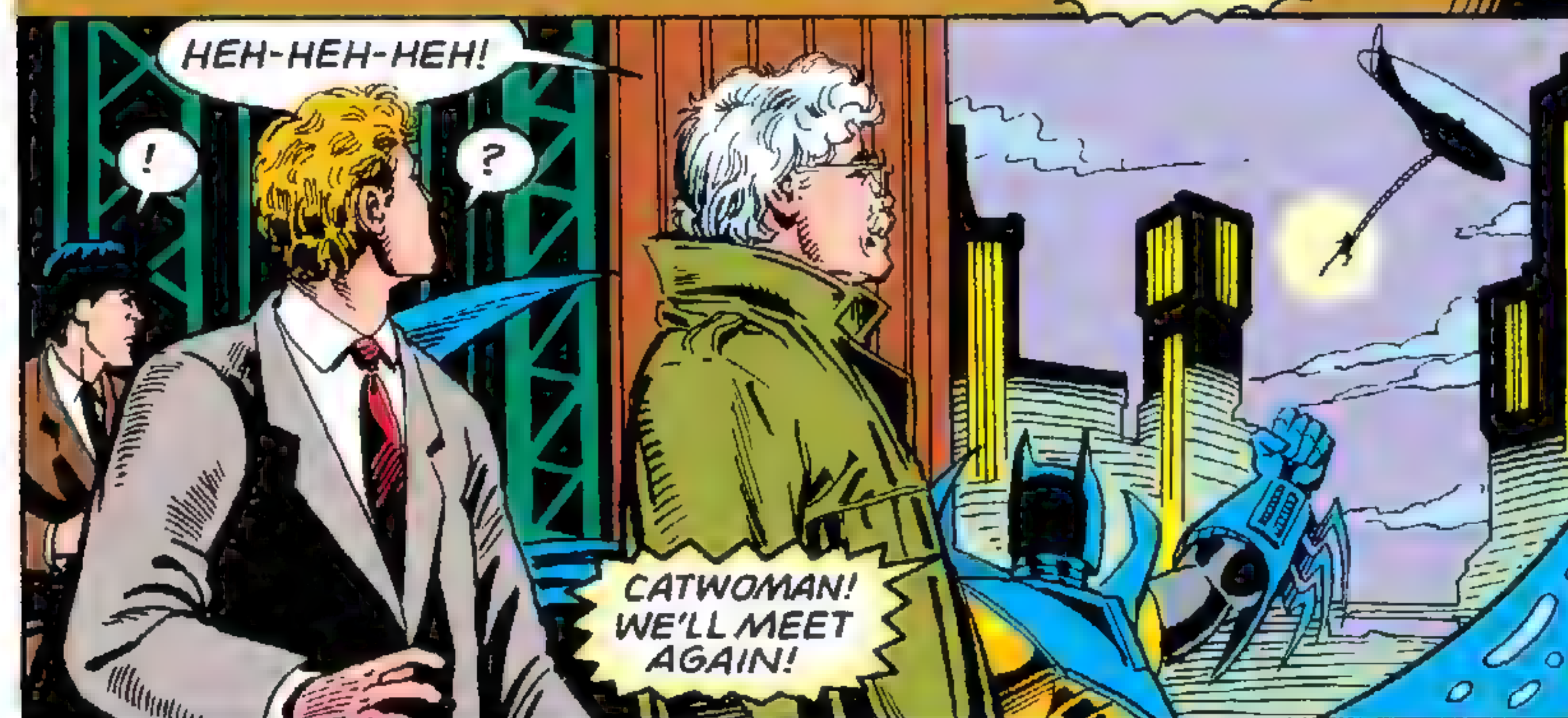
YOU OWE YOUR
LIVES TO A SCIENTIST
WHOSE ETHICS EXCEED
YOUR OWN.

PLEASE
REMEMBER YOUR
PRESENT PAIN
AND FEAR...



...NEXT TIME
YOU PLAN TO MURDER
AN ECOSYSTEM! SAVE
THE PLANET...

...AND
HAVE A NICE
DAY!



HEH-HEH-HEH!

!

?

CATWOMAN!
WE'LL MEET
AGAIN!



OF COURSE
WE WILL,
BATMAN.

IN YOUR DREAMS.

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR



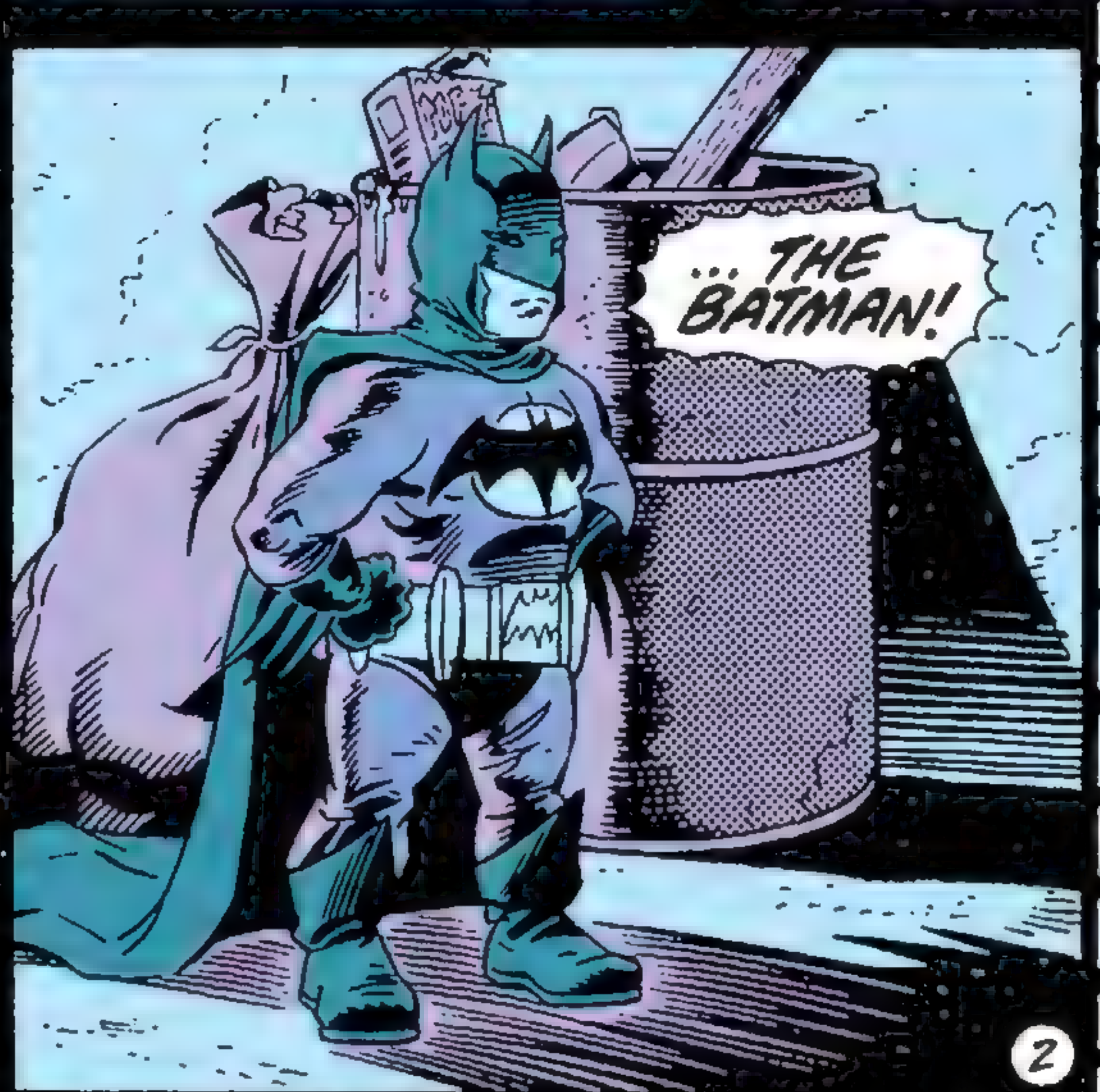
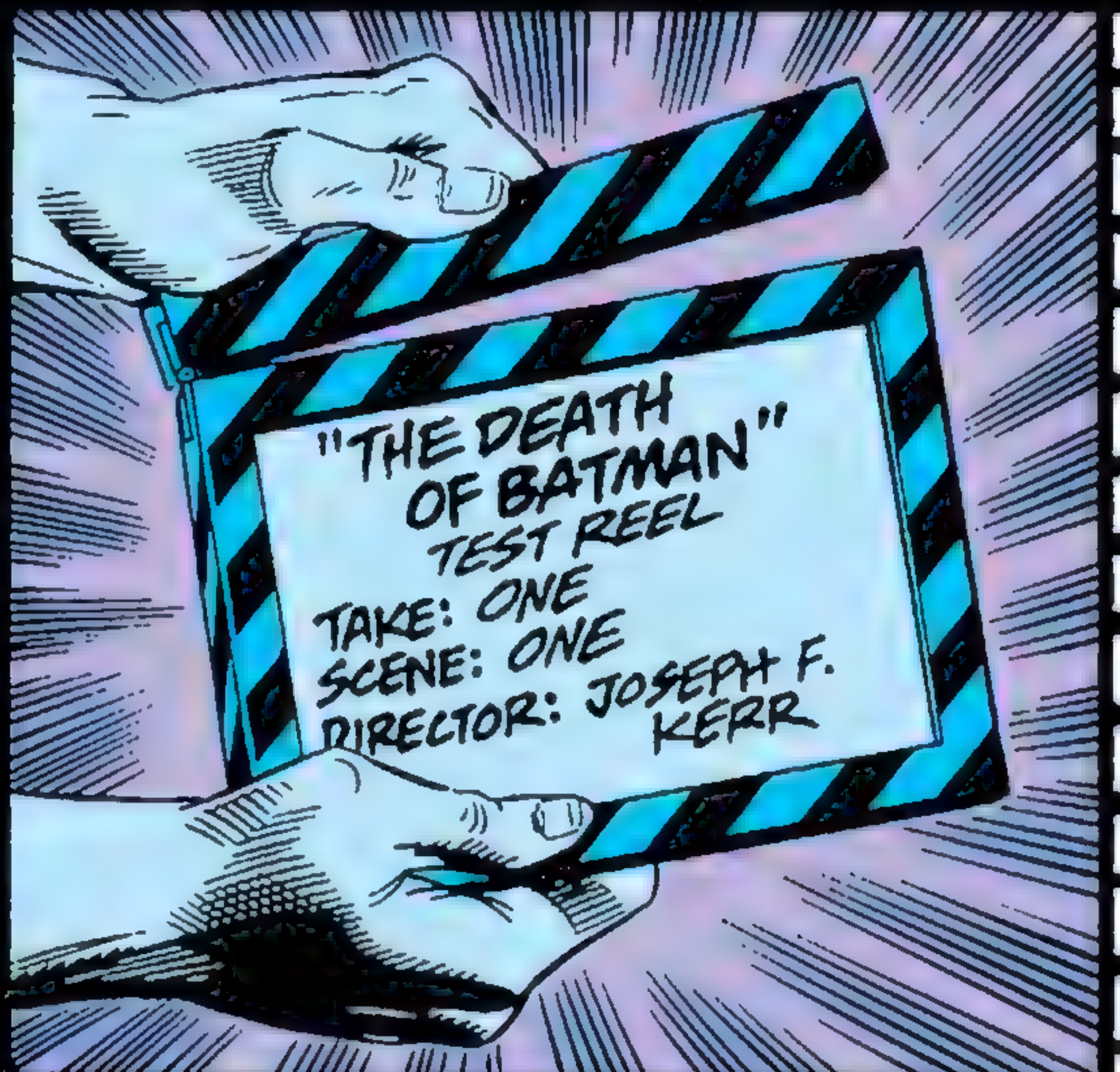
A PICTURE'S
WORTH A THOUSAND
WORDS, RIGHT?

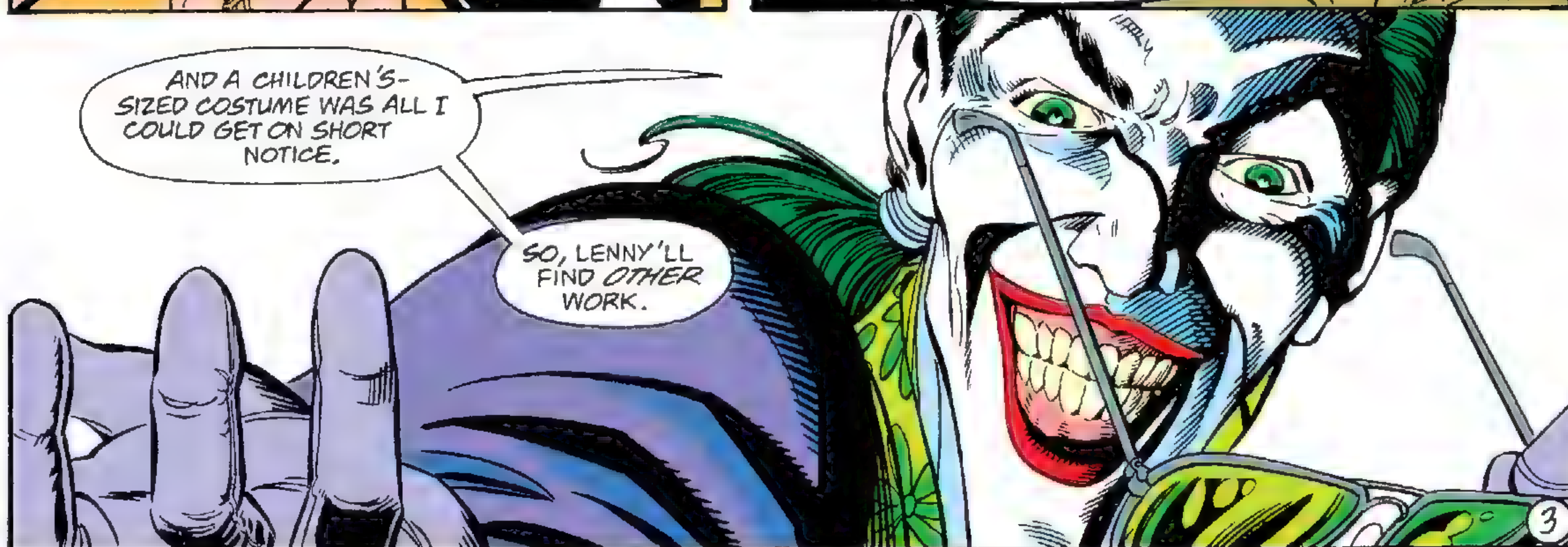
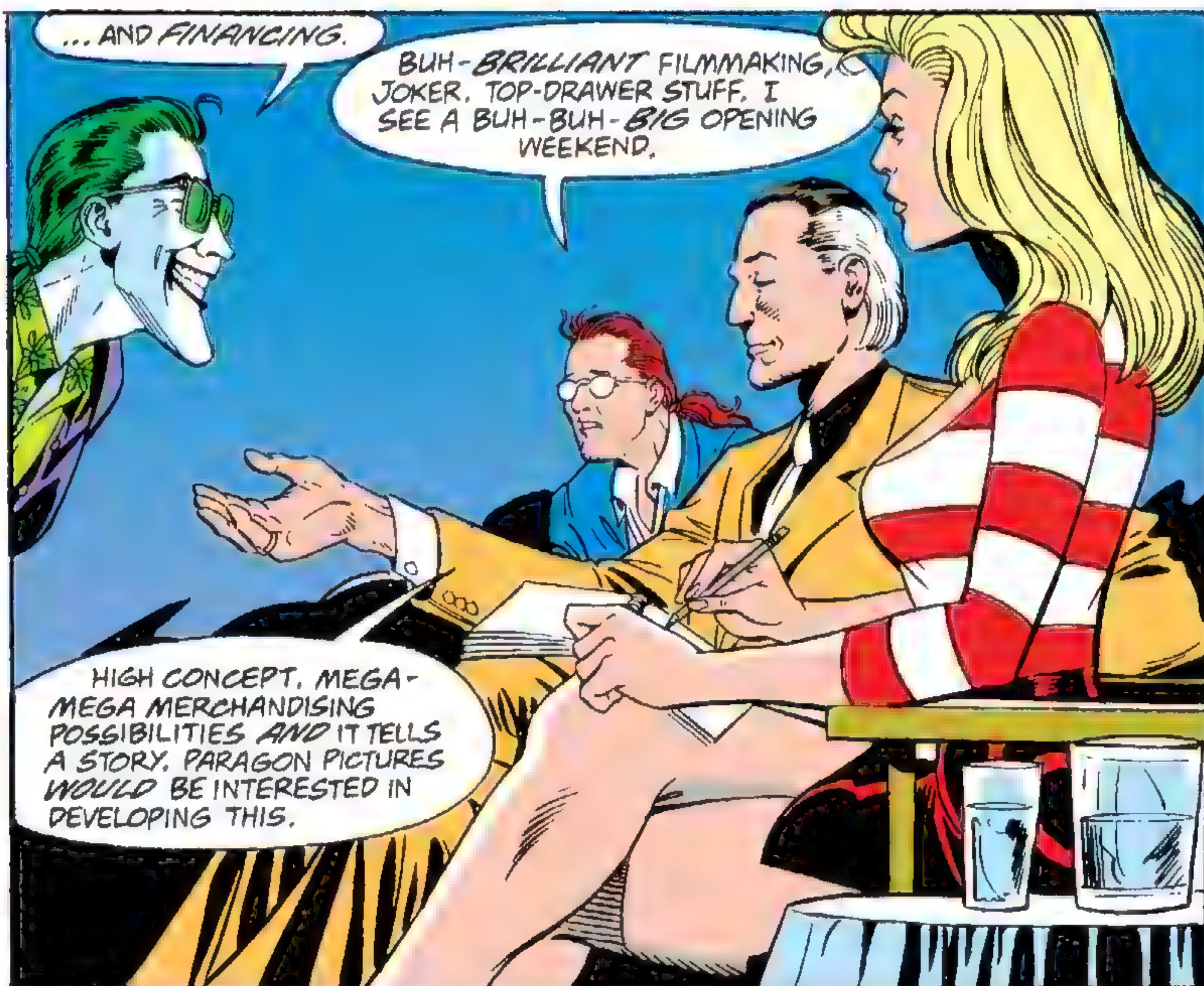
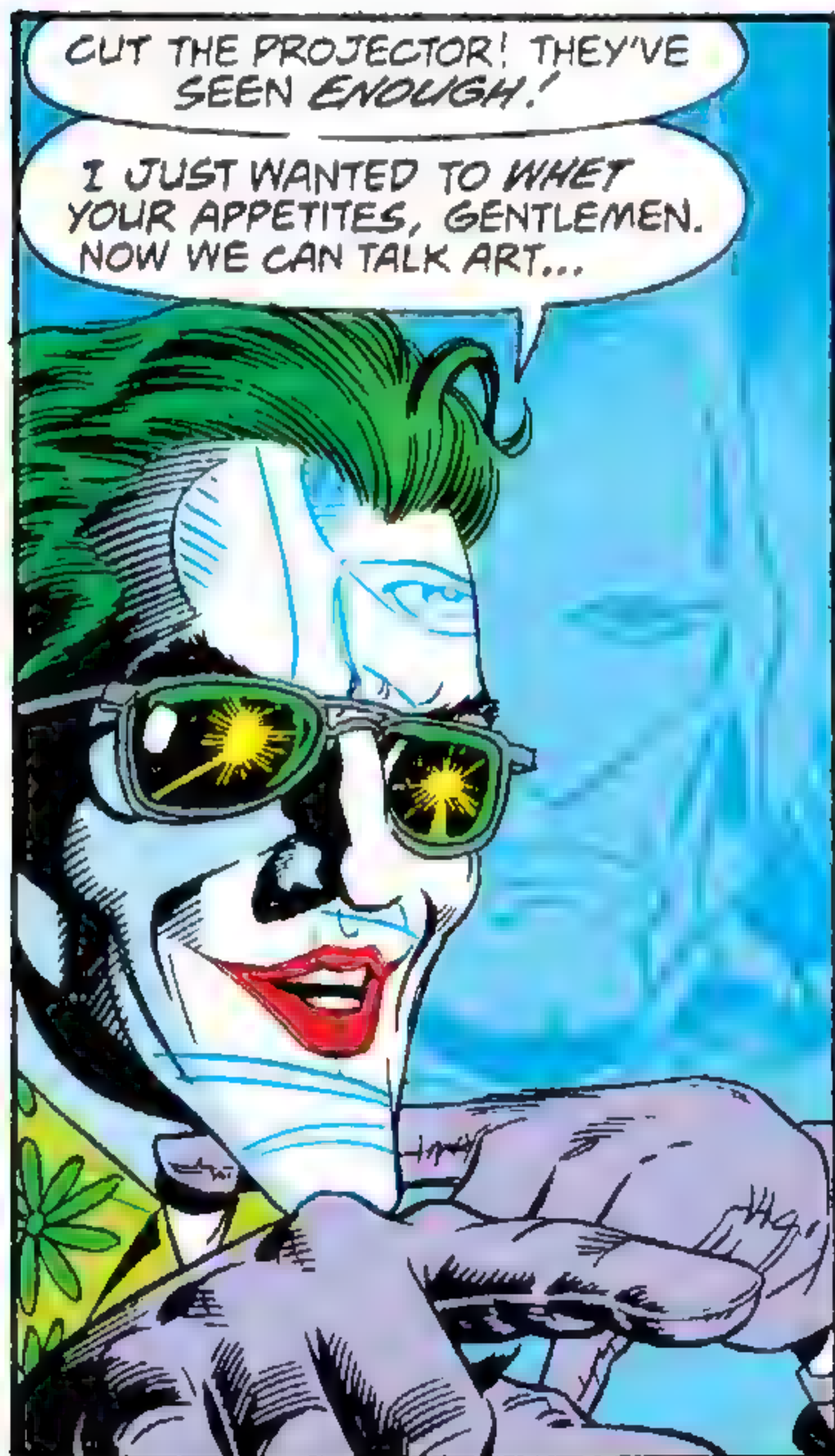
SO RATHER THAN
GO THROUGH THE
TREATMENTS AND HYPE
I'LL JUST *SHOW* YOU
WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT.

ROLL THE
TEST REEL,
BAY-BAY.

J. KERR

CHUCK DIXON, GRAHAM NOLAN, SCOTT HANNA
writer penciller inker
ADRIENNE ROY, JOHN COSTANZA, DARREN VINCENZO
colorist letterer asst. editor
SCOTT PETERSON, BATMAN created by
editor BOB KANE







MR. ZEDMORE! THIS MAN'S TALKING ABOUT KILLING THE BATMAN. FOR REAL!

HE'S A HOMICIDAL MANIAC! HE'S DANGEROUS! HE'S A CRIMINAL!

THIS IS THE MOVIE BUSINESS, BERKOWITZ. YOU JUST LISTED THE MAN'S ASSETS.

WHEN CAN WE START SHOOTING FOOTAGE, JOKER?

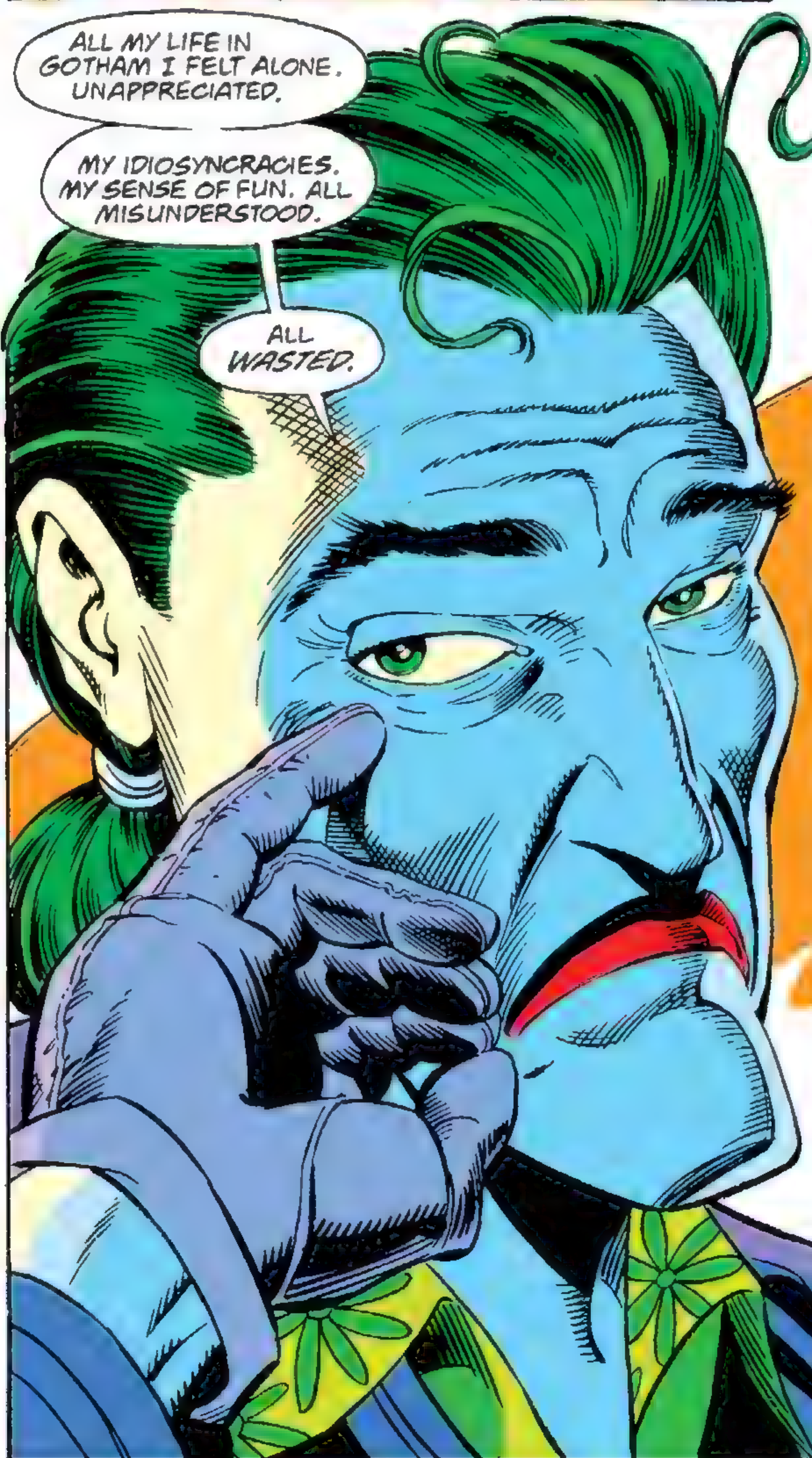


AS SOON AS CASTING IS COMPLETED, MR. ZEDMORE.

LURENE WILL HAVE CONTRACTS FAXED TO YOU BY MORNING.

EXCUSE ME FOR SOUNDING MAUDLIN, MR. ZEDMORE...

CALL ME BARRY.



ALL MY LIFE IN GOTHAM I FELT ALONE. UNAPPRECIATED.

MY IDIOSYNCRASIES. MY SENSE OF FUN. ALL MISUNDERSTOOD.

ALL WASTED.



AND TO THINK THAT ALL THESE YEARS...

I'VE SIMPLY BEEN IN THE WRONG TOWN.

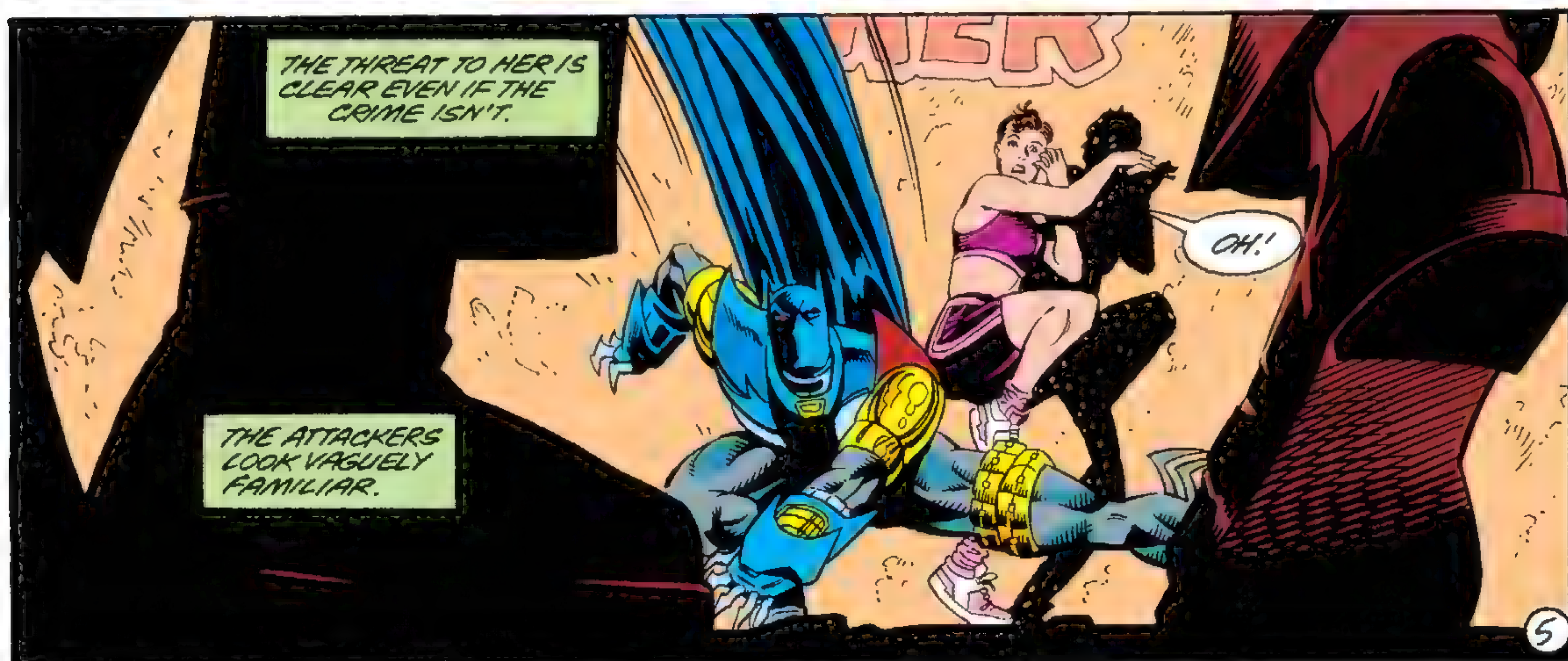
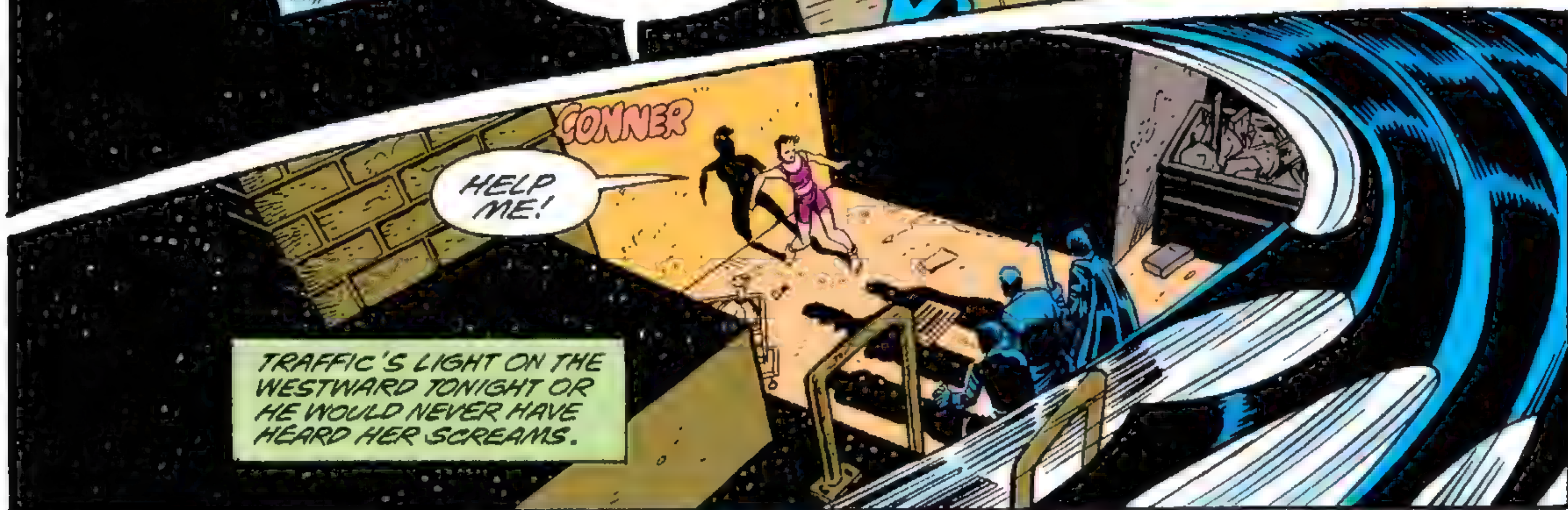
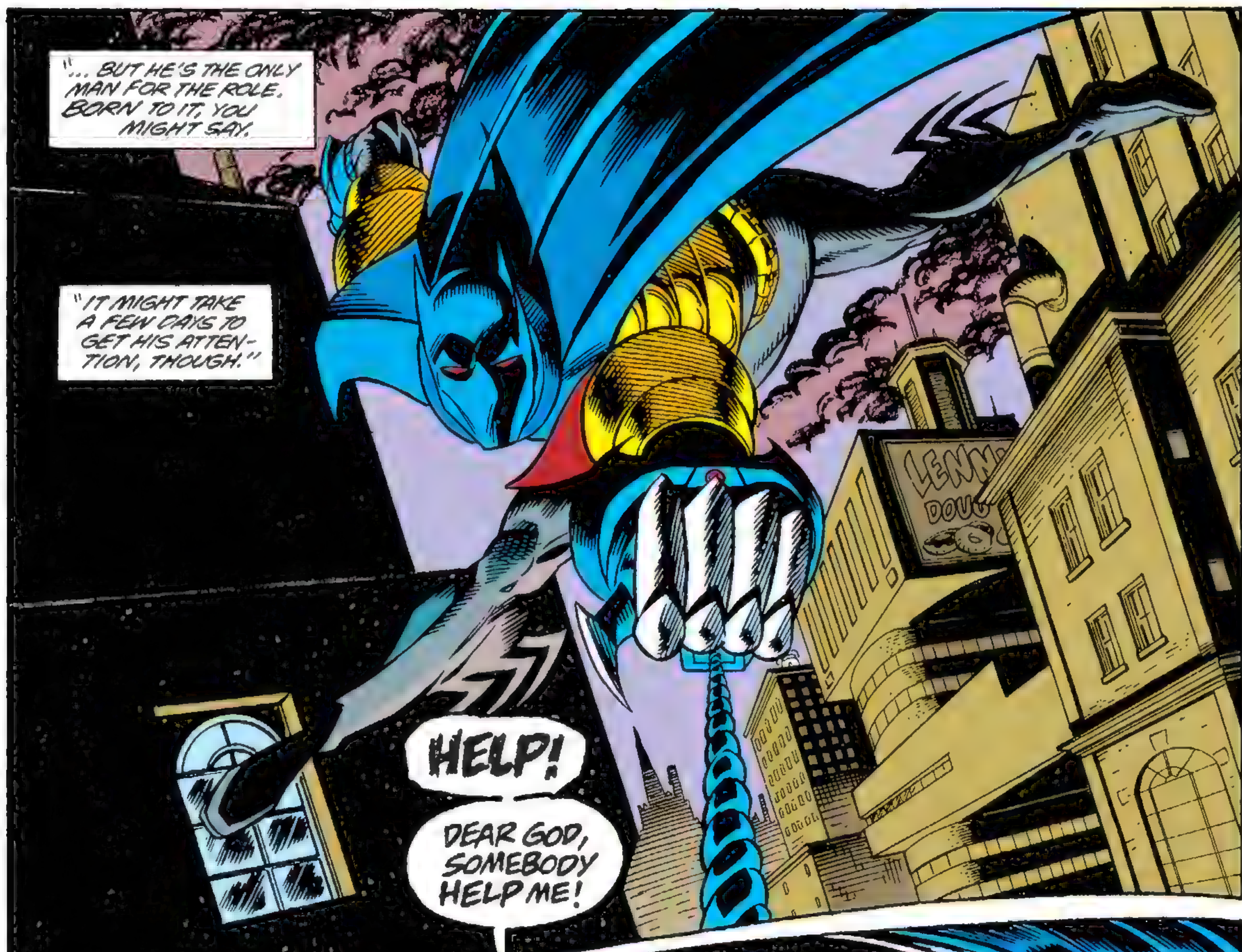
HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD.

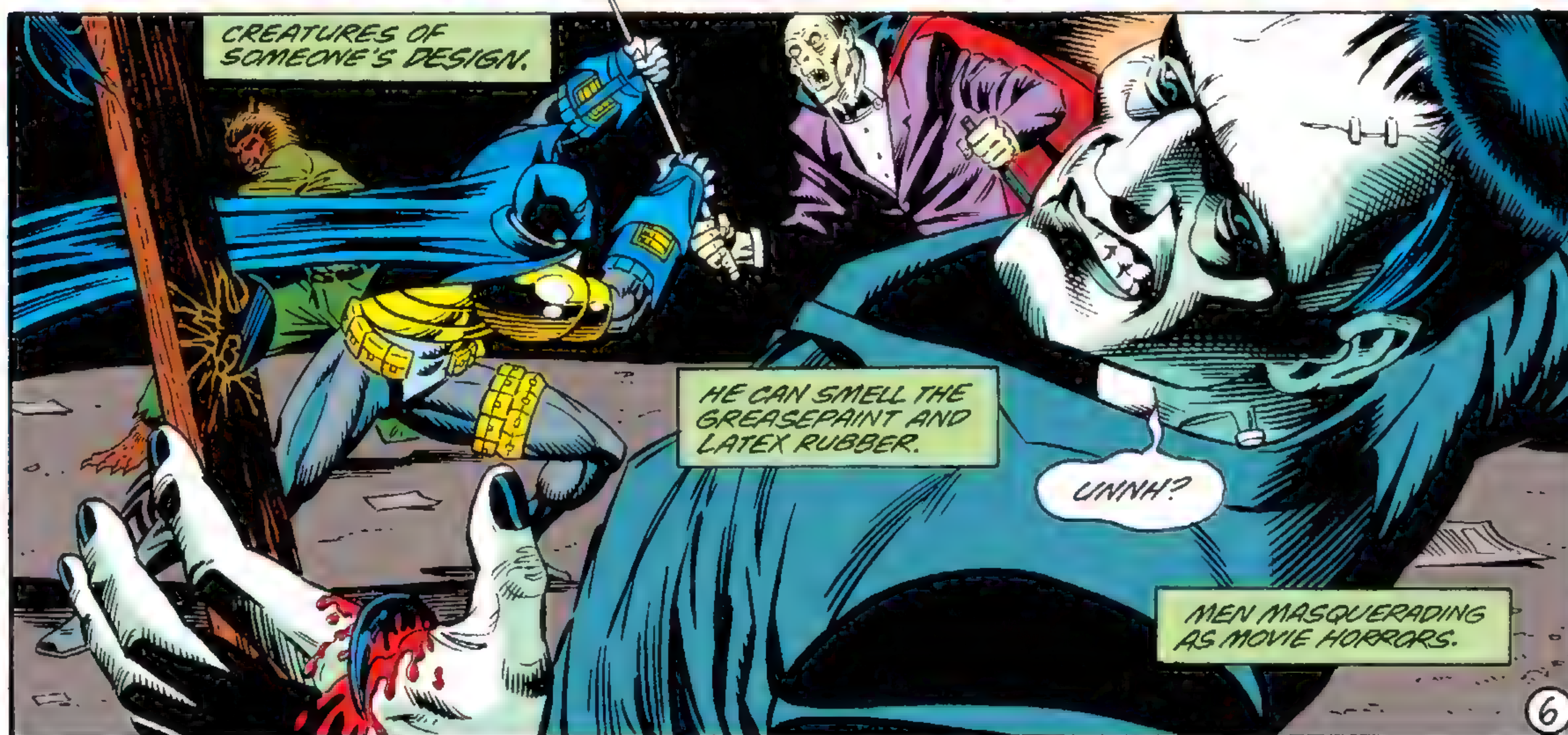
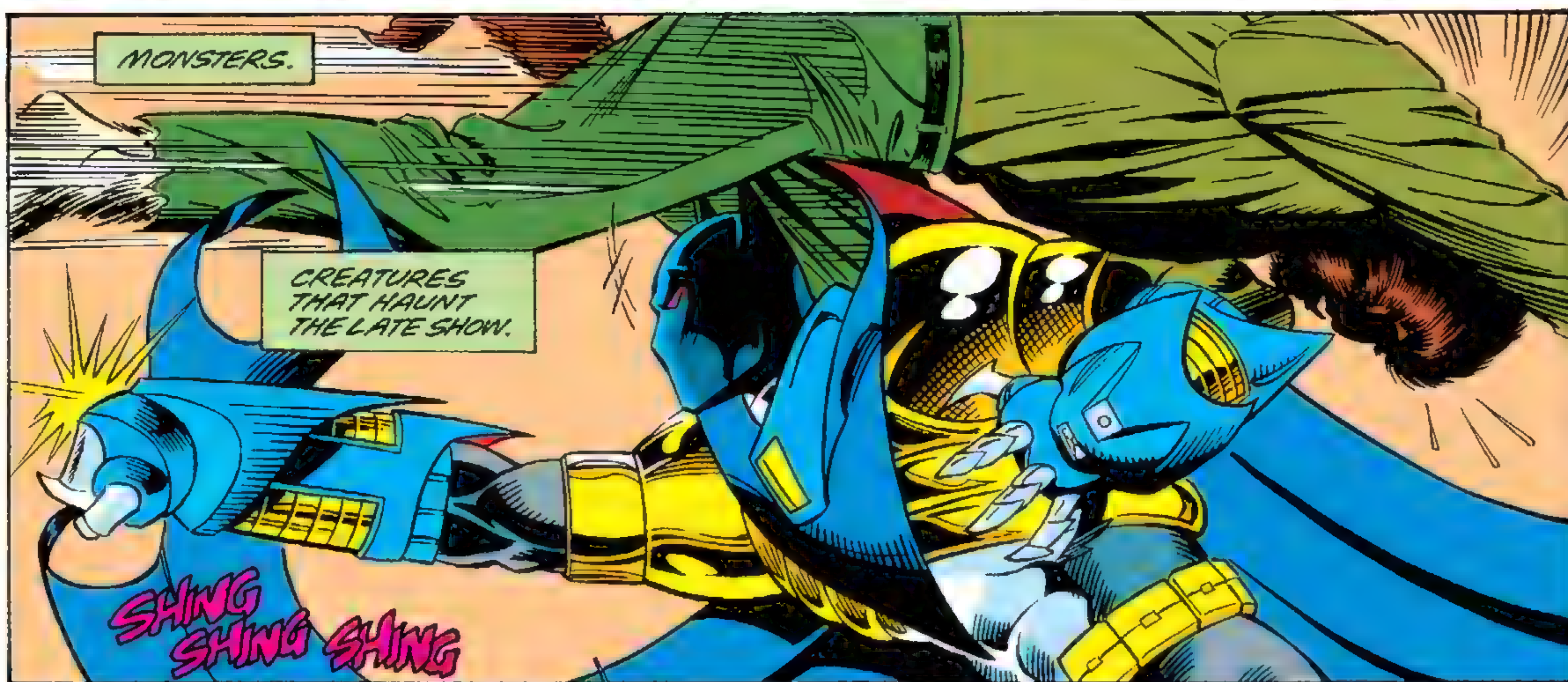


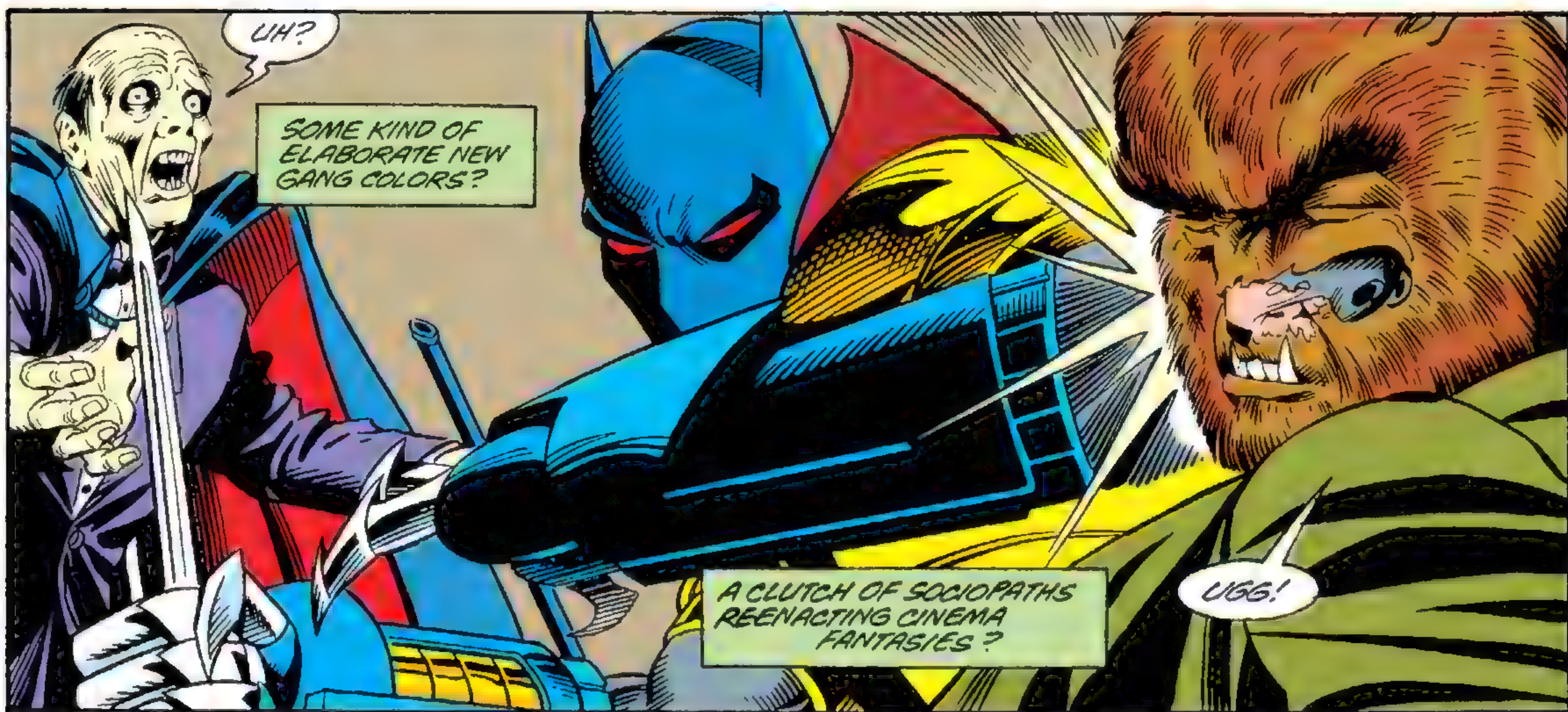
AND WHEN WILL CASTING BE COMPLETE, JOKER?

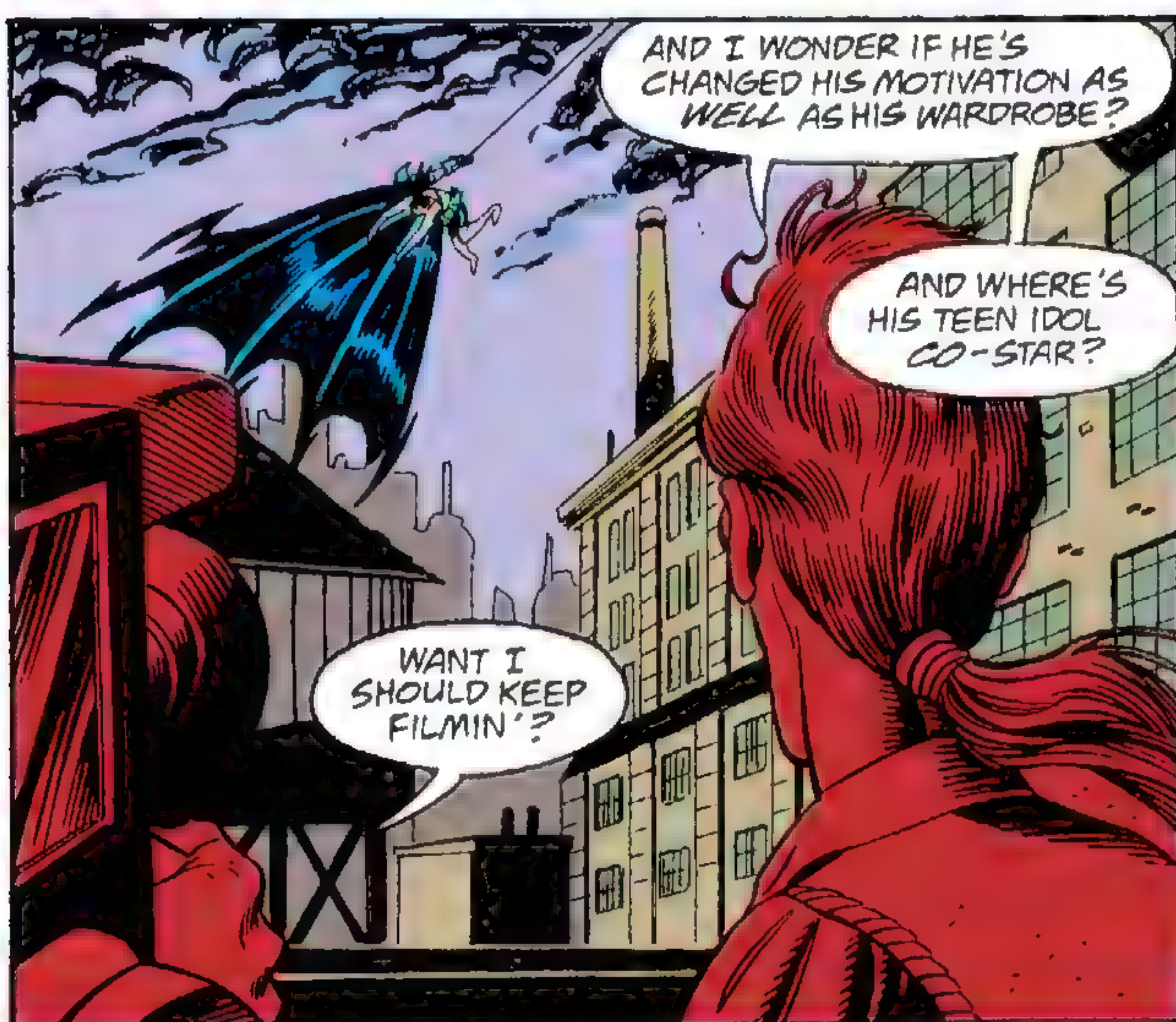
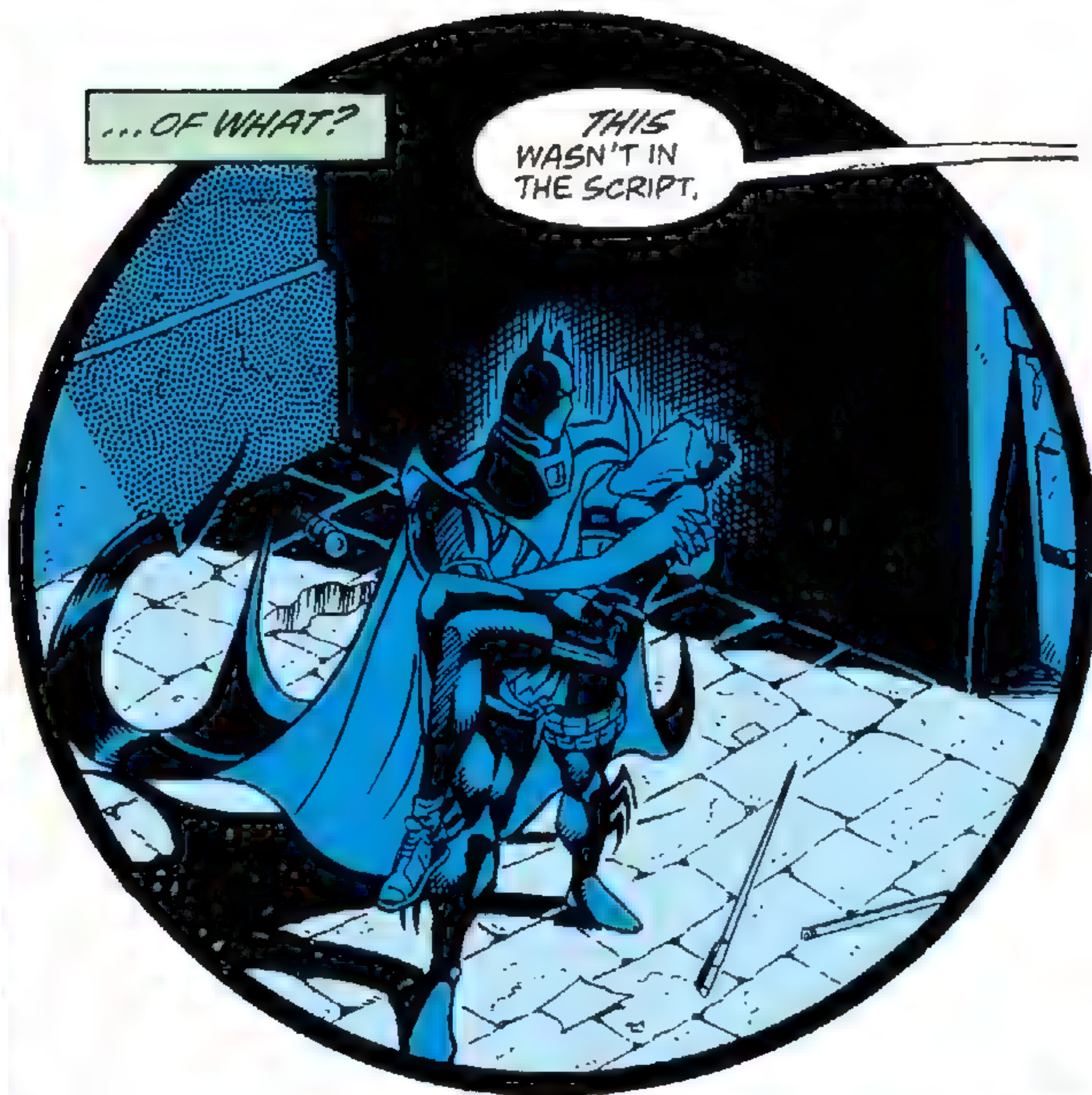
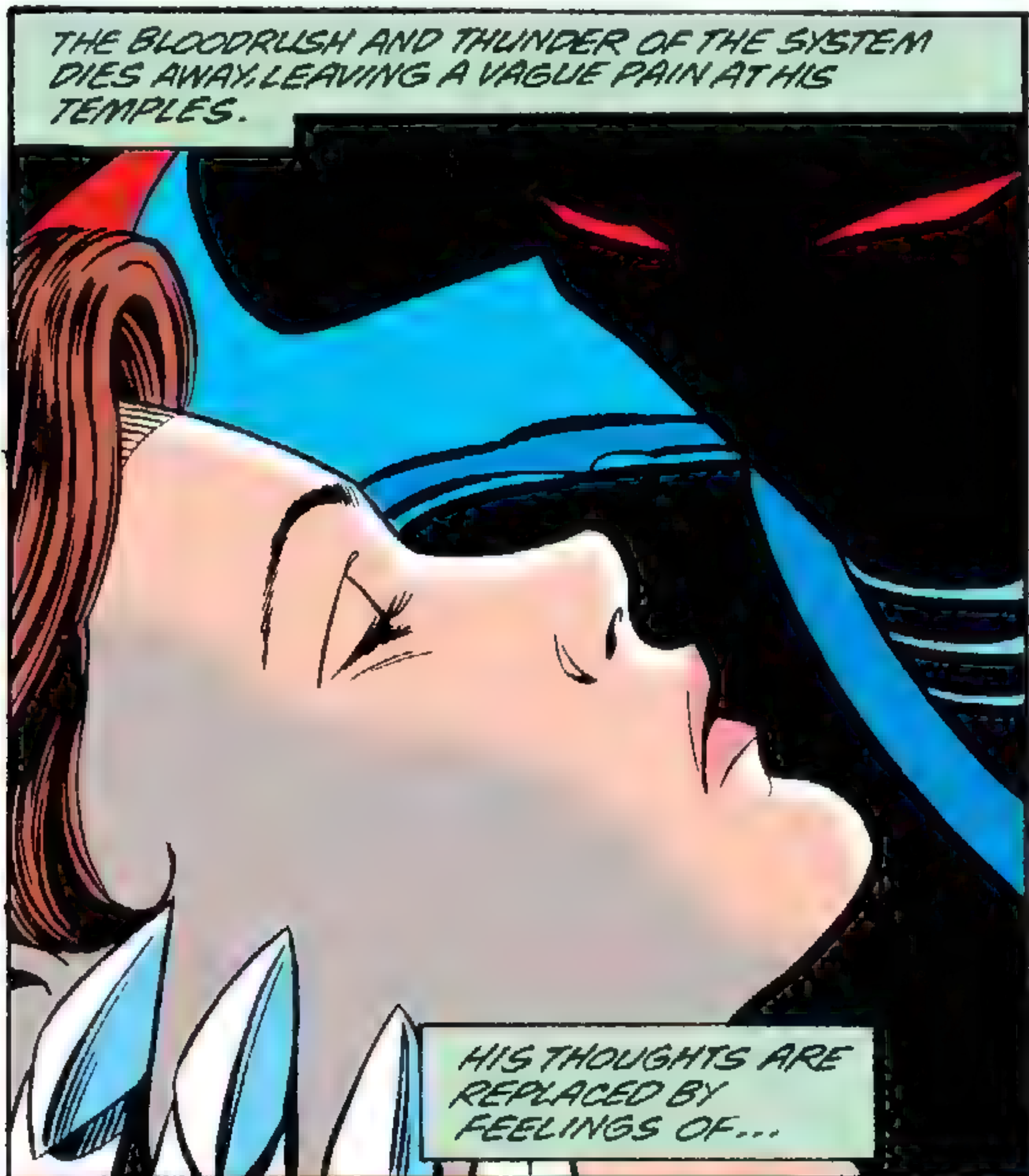
SHORTLY, BAR! OUR LEAD IS A BIT TEMPERAMENTAL AND NOT SO EASY TO NAIL DOWN...

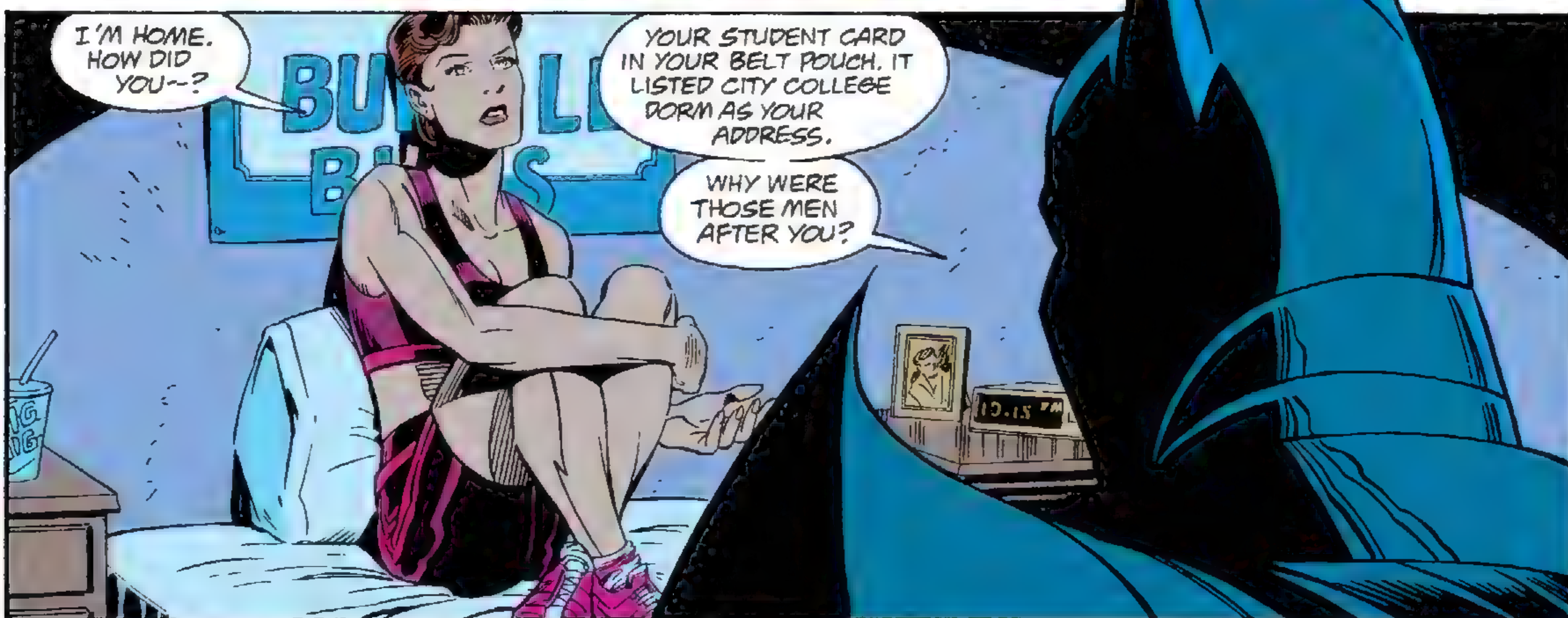
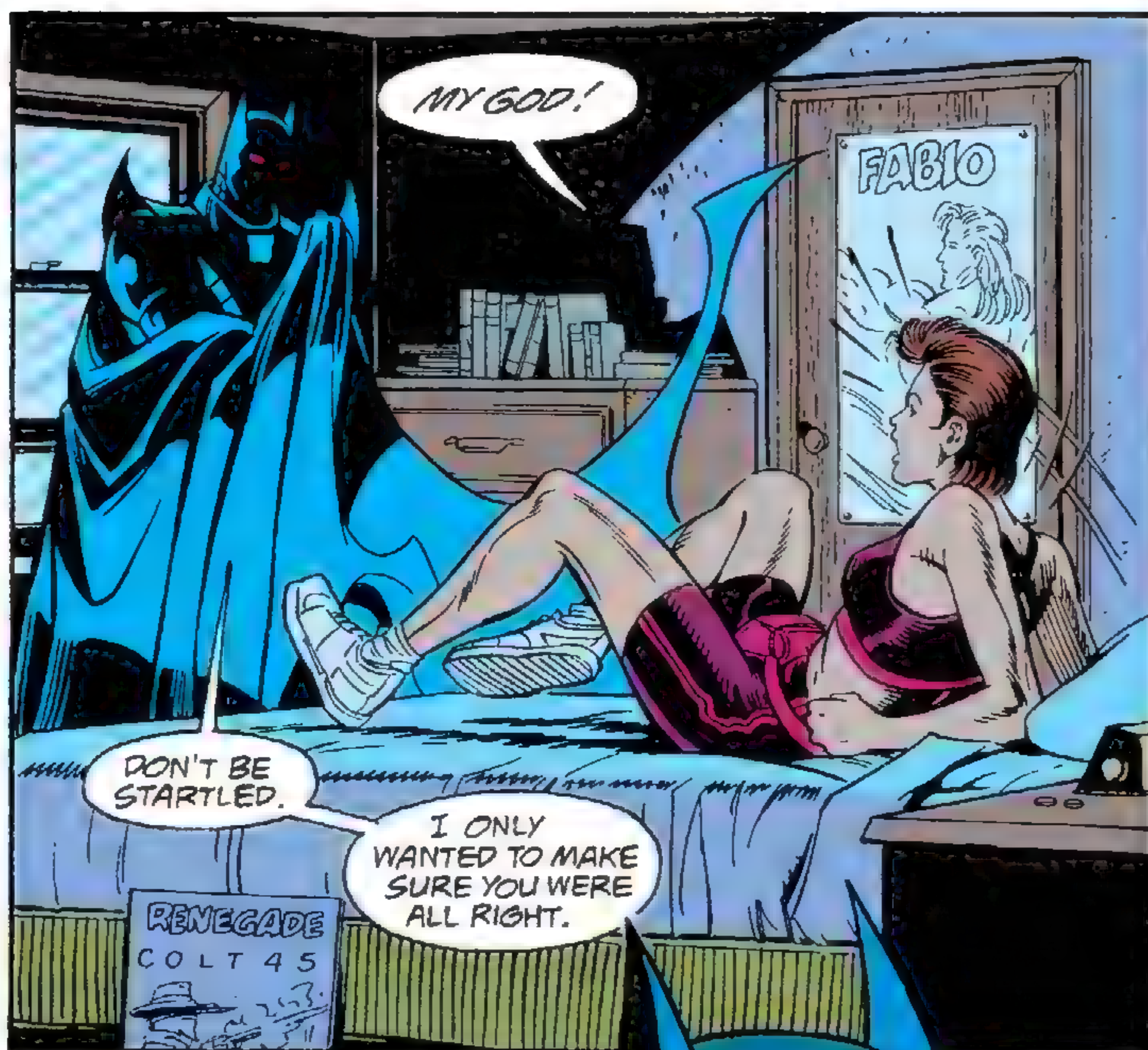
4

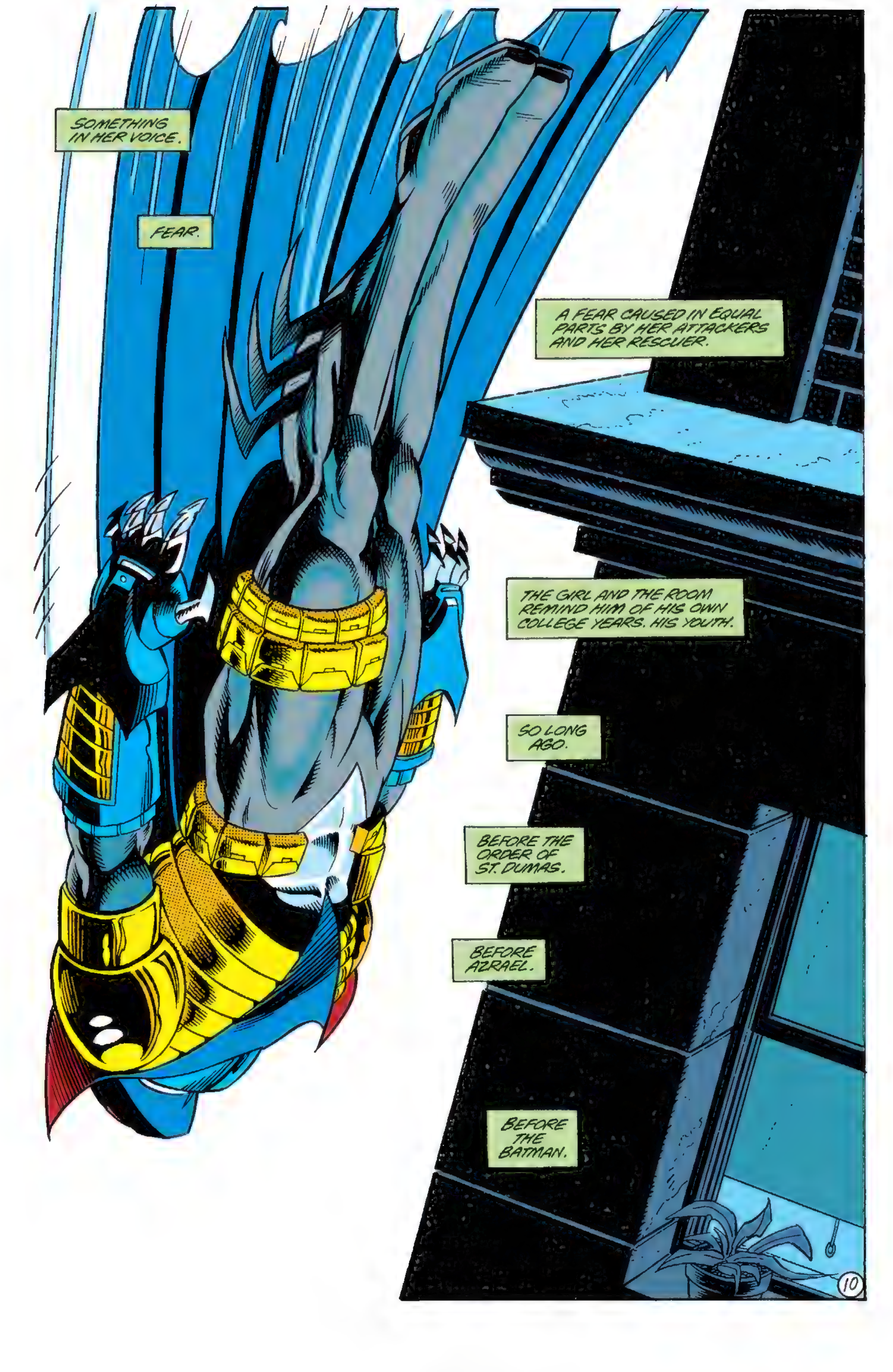










A full-page comic book illustration. Batman is shown from the waist up, facing away from the viewer and slightly to the left. He is wearing his iconic blue and grey suit with yellow utility belts. His blue cape is draped over his shoulders. He is looking out of a large, multi-paned window that occupies the right side of the frame. The window is dark, suggesting it is nighttime. The room's interior is dark, with a small potted plant visible in the bottom right corner. The overall mood is contemplative and somber.

SOMETHING
IN HER VOICE.

FEAR.

A FEAR CAUSED IN EQUAL
PARTS BY HER ATTACKERS
AND HER RESCUER.

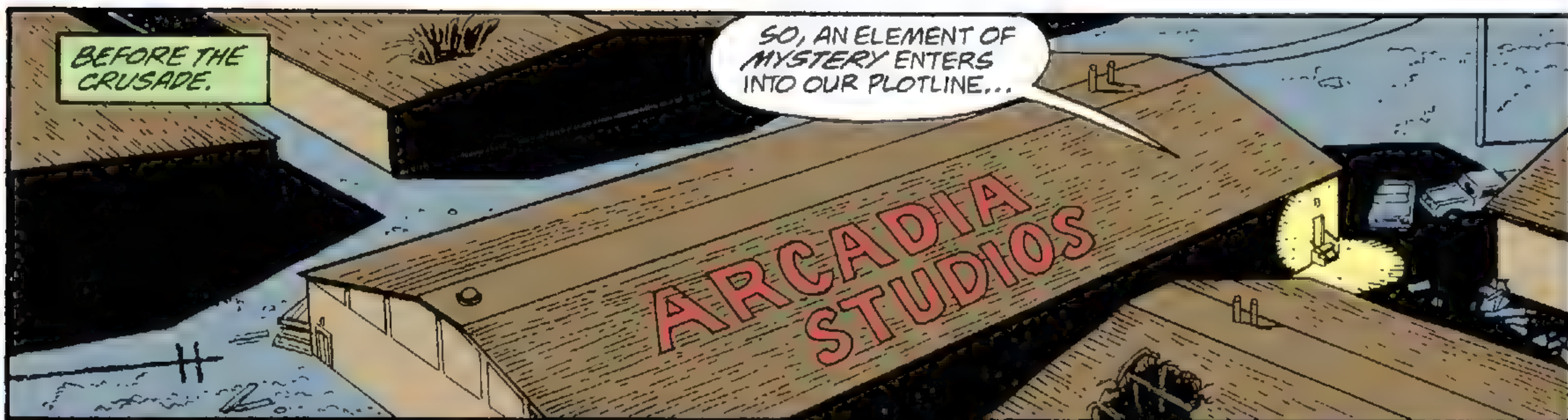
THE GIRL AND THE ROOM
REMINDED HIM OF HIS OWN
COLLEGE YEARS, HIS YOUTH.

SO LONG
AGO.

BEFORE THE
ORDER OF
ST. DUMAS.

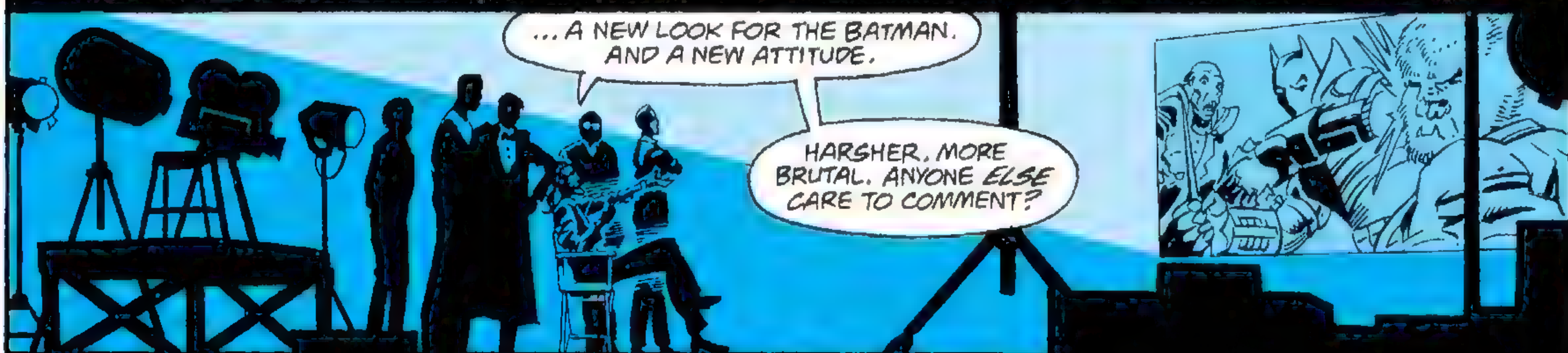
BEFORE
AZRAEL.

BEFORE
THE
BATMAN.



BEFORE THE CRUSADE.

SO, AN ELEMENT OF MYSTERY ENTERS INTO OUR PLOTLINE...



... A NEW LOOK FOR THE BATMAN. AND A NEW ATTITUDE.

HARsher, MORE BRUTAL. ANYONE ELSE CARE TO COMMENT?



HE'S UPDATED HIS IMAGE FOR THE NINETIES, JOKER. A SLEEKER LOOK. A BATMAN FOR THOSE WITH A SHORTER ATTENTION SPAN.

I CAN'T SAY I LIKE THIS NEW BATMAN.

I WON'T AGREE WITH THAT. BATMAN'S GONE FOR A RETRO-MEDIEVAL APPEARANCE.

WITH THE ARMOR AND NEW WEAPONRY HE PRESENTS A CLASSIC IMAGE OF THE DARK KNIGHT.

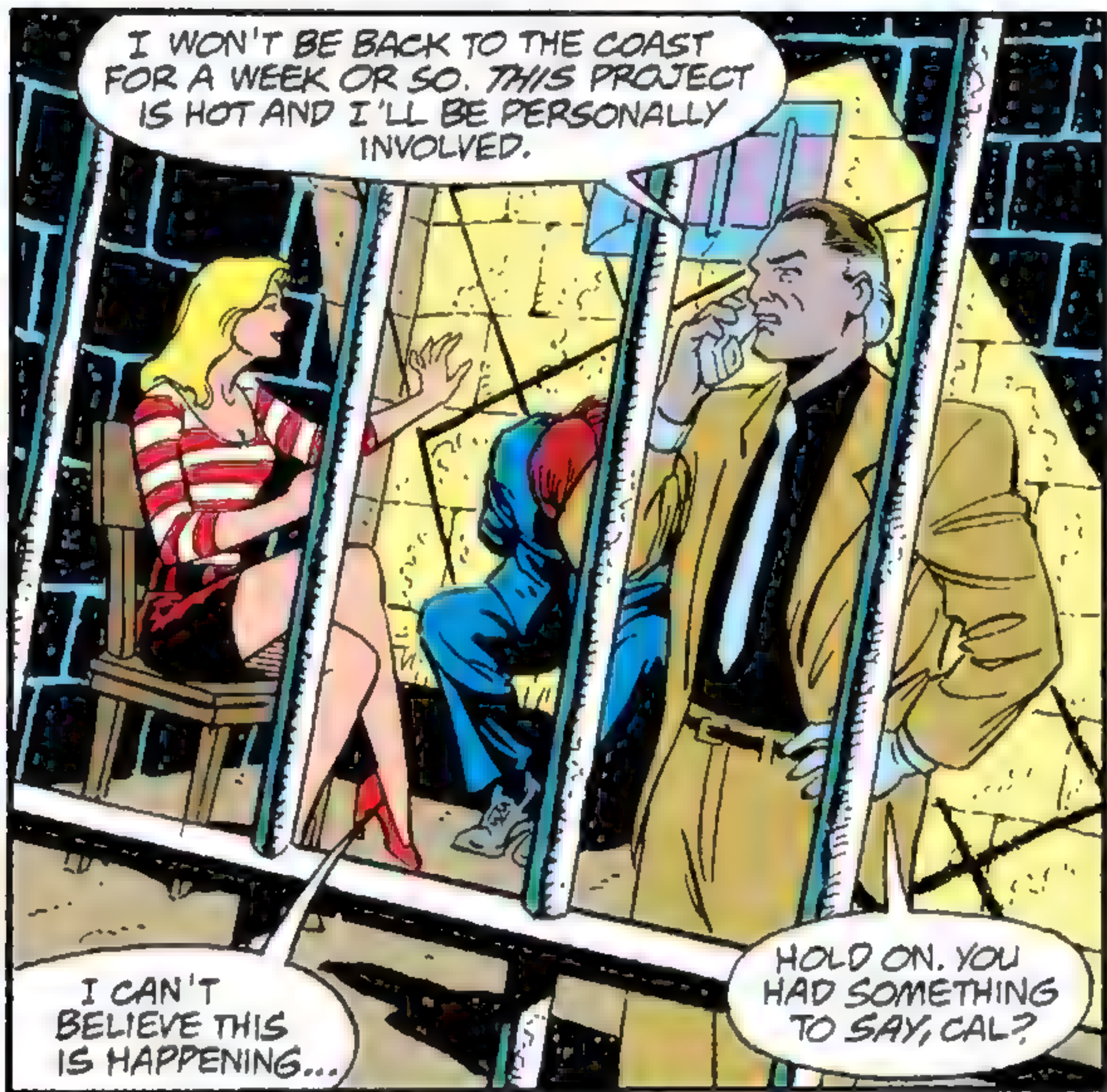


WOULD IT KILL YOU TWO TO AGREE ON SOMETHING FOR ONCE?

AS MUCH AS I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO TANGLE WITH CLASSIC BATMAN AS OPPOSED TO NEW BATMAN...

... WE CAN'T DELAY SHOOTING ANY LONGER.

WE GO INTO PRODUCTION IN THE MORNING!



I WON'T BE BACK TO THE COAST FOR A WEEK OR SO. THIS PROJECT IS HOT AND I'LL BE PERSONALLY INVOLVED.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING...

HOLD ON. YOU HAD SOMETHING TO SAY, CAL?



FOR GOD'S SAKE USE THAT PHONE AND CALL THE POLICE!

THIS LUNATIC HAS US LOCKED IN A DUNGEON, BARRY!

SO YOU'RE NOT AS PUMPED AND STOKED FOR THIS DEAL AS I AM, CALVIN.



WE TOOK A BEATING THIS PAST SUMMER ON "LAST GOON WITH A GUN" AND "ARMAGEDDON MAN 3". AND THOSE WERE YOUR IDEAS.

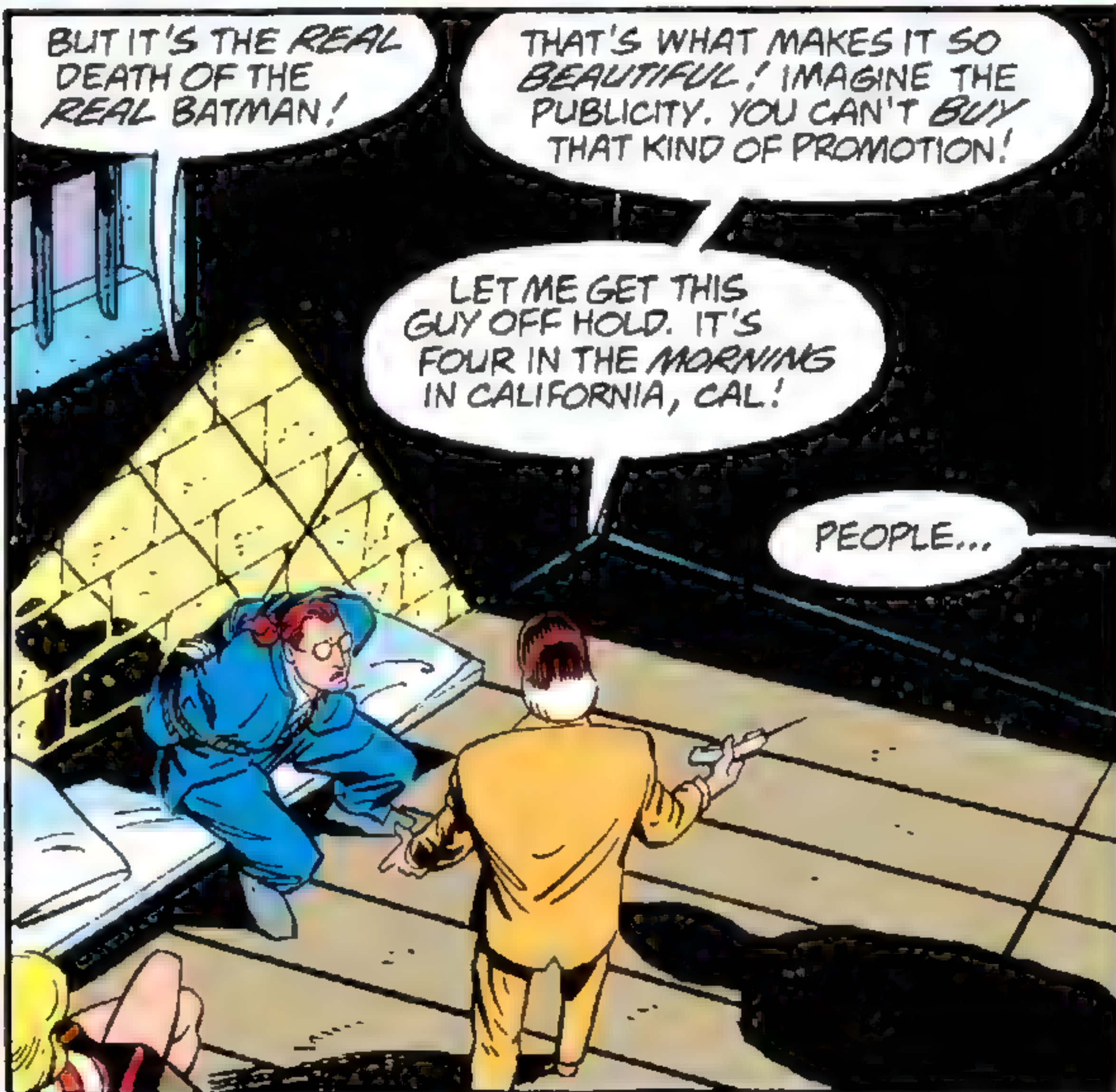
PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK "CROCY THE CROCODILE: THE MOVIE" IS GONNA PULL OUR BUTTS OUT OF THE WRINGER THIS SPRING.

SO "THE DEATH OF BATMAN" IS THE ONLY GOING DO-ABLE PROPERTY WE HAVE THAT HAS A PRAYER OF REPEAT TICKET SALES.



OKAY, THIS JOKER GUY'S A LITTLE "ECCENTRIC." I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

BUT I WORKED WITH BRANDO. AFTER HIM THE JOKER IS CAKE.



BUT IT'S THE REAL DEATH OF THE REAL BATMAN!

THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO BEAUTIFUL! IMAGINE THE PUBLICITY. YOU CAN'T BUY THAT KIND OF PROMOTION!

LET ME GET THIS GUY OFF HOLD. IT'S FOUR IN THE MORNING IN CALIFORNIA, CAL!

PEOPLE...



...WE HAVE AN EARLY START TOMORROW. LET'S GET OUR BEAUTY SLEEP.

CIAO, BAY-BAY.



YOU SURE
NOBODY LIVES
HERE?

NAW. THEY BEEN
AWAY FOR MONTHS.
SEE IF YOU CAN HIT THAT
BIG WINDOW WAY UP
NEAR THE ROOF.



GOT
IT!

NOT MUCH
GLASS LEFT TO
BREAK, HUH?



WUUH-
WUUH-WHAT'S
GOIN' ON?

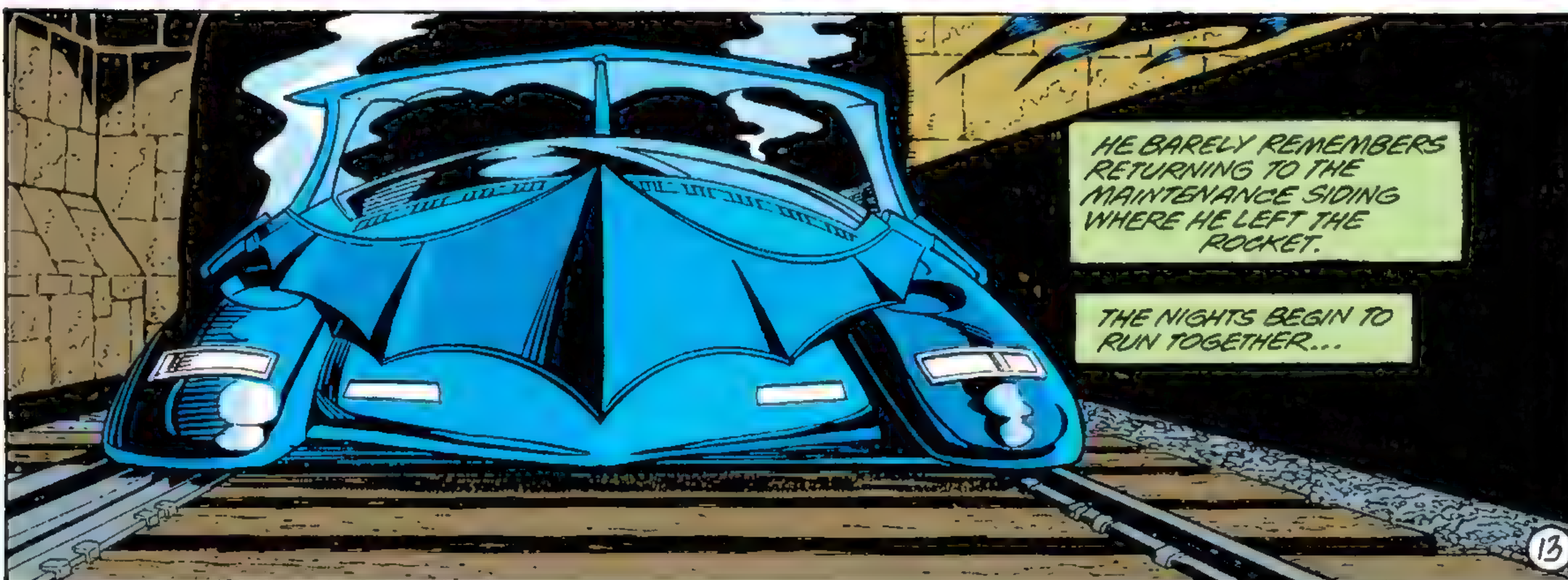
FUH-FUH-FEELS
LIKE AN
EARTHQUAKE!

RUMRUMRUMRUM



I'M
OUTTA
HERE!

WAIT
FOR ME!



HE BARELY REMEMBERS
RETURNING TO THE
MAINTENANCE SIDING
WHERE HE LEFT THE
ROCKET.

THE NIGHTS BEGIN TO
RUN TOGETHER...



THE GIRL. HE REMEMBERS
HOW WARM SHE WAS IN
HIS ARMS.

AND HE FOUND
HER FEAR ODDLY...
THRILLING.

AZRAEL...

HOW THE SYSTEM
LOST ITS HOLD
WHEN SHE SPOKE.



ST. DUMAS...

YOU WEARY
OF THE
CRUSADE.

I SEE NO
END TO IT.

AS I FELT ONCE,
MARCHING THE DUSTY
ROAD TO TYRE AND
ANTIOCH... LONGING
TO SEE THE GATES
OF FAIR
JERUSALEM.

THE DARK CITY NEEDS YOU,
LAD. YOU ARE ITS MEREST
HOPE.

AS THE HOLYLANDS
NEEDED THE KNIGHTS
OF THE CROSS, SO THIS
BENIGHTED PLACE NEEDS
AN AVENGING DEMON.



A CRUSADE,
TO SAVE GOTHAM
FROM ITSELF.

BUT WHO
WILL SAVE
ME?



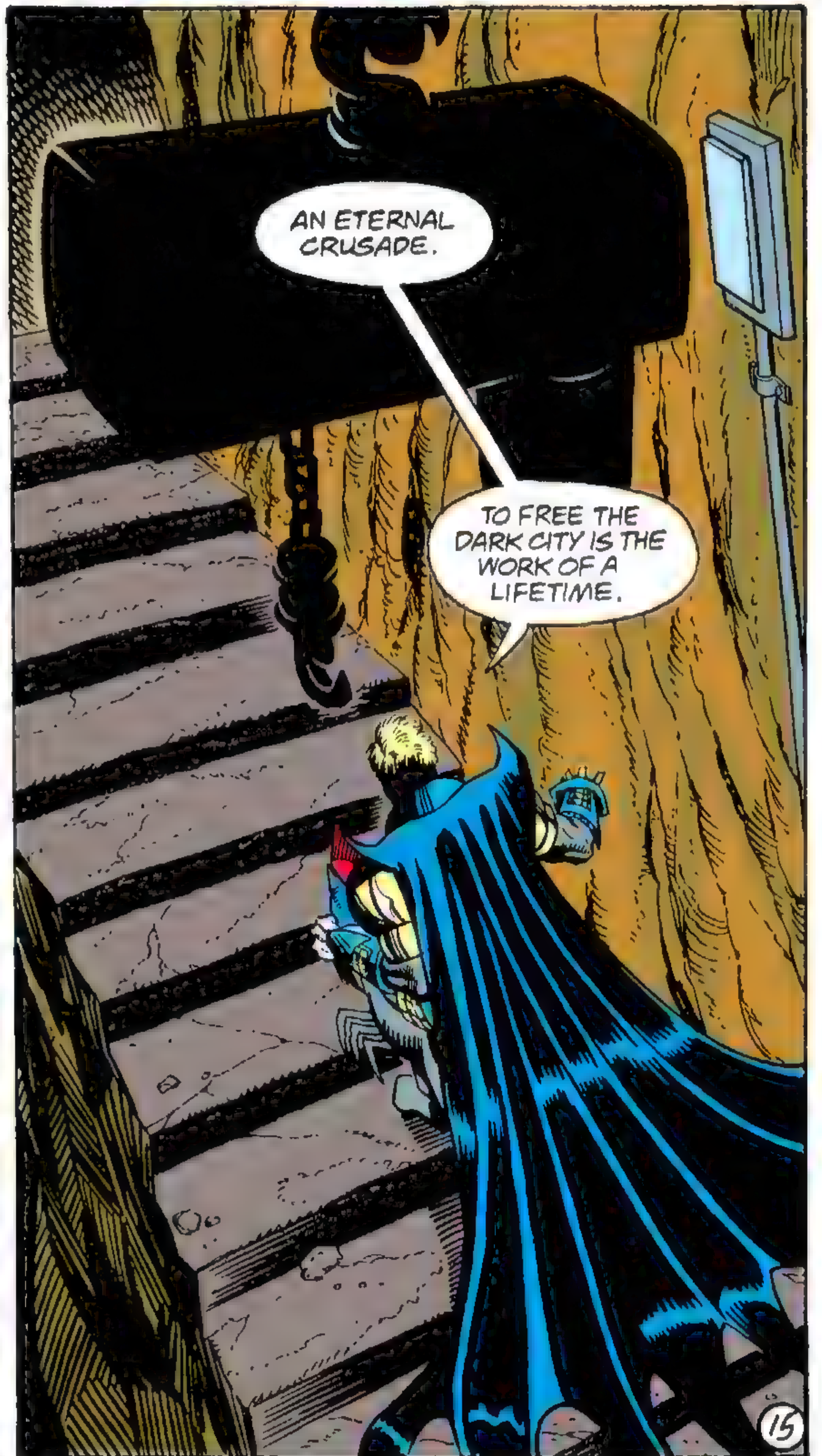
EVERY WAKING HOUR IS SPENT AS THE BATMAN.
THE LITTLE SLEEP I GET IS HAUNTED BY DREAMS.

ARE THEY MY DREAMS OR
A PART OF THE SYSTEM? AND
WHAT ABOUT YOU, ST. DUMAS?
ARE YOU A PART OF MY
PROGRAMMING OR AM I
GOING INSANE?



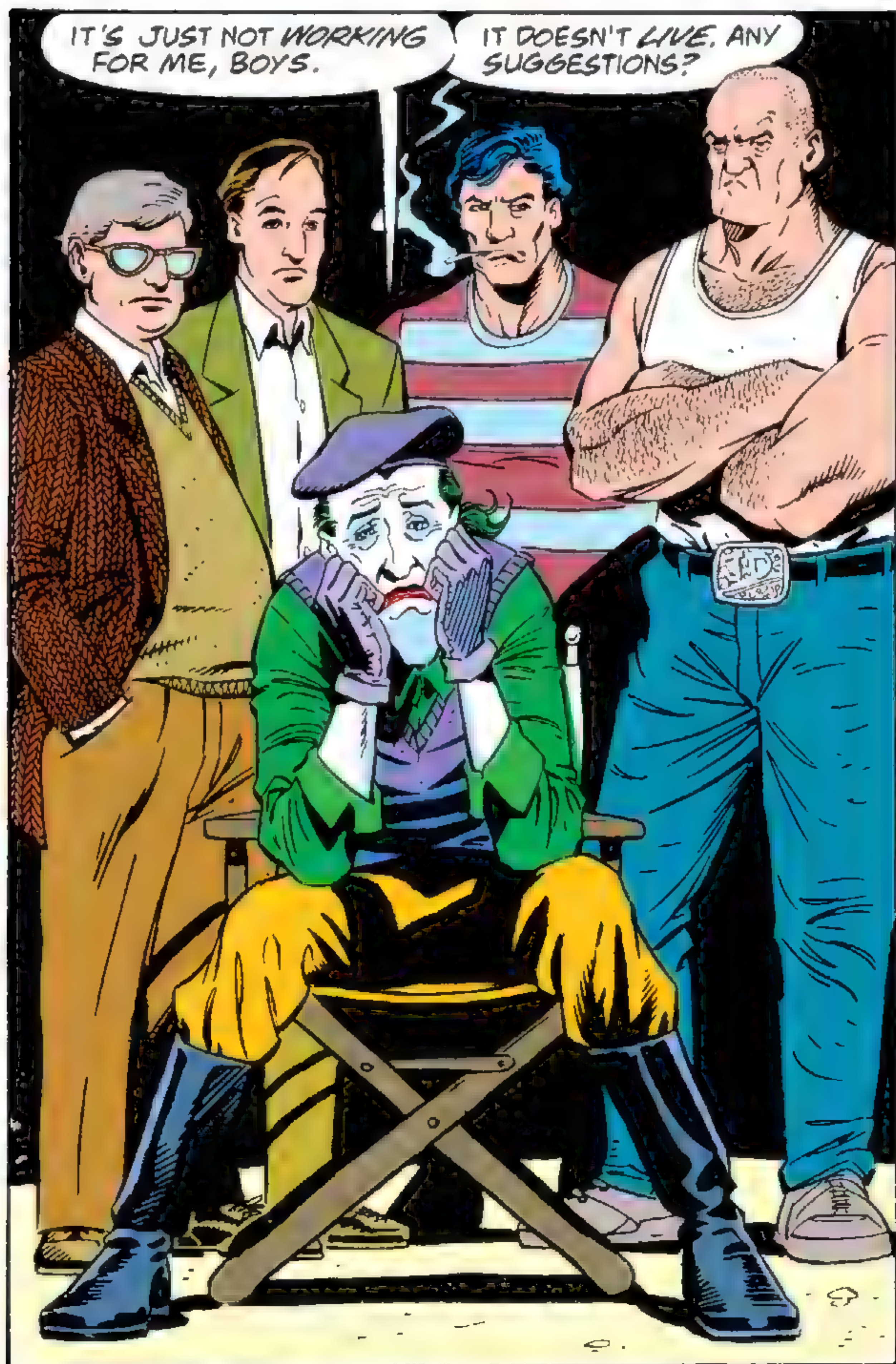
AT LEAST YOUR
MISSION HAD A POINT.
A MAD, HOPELESS
GOAL.

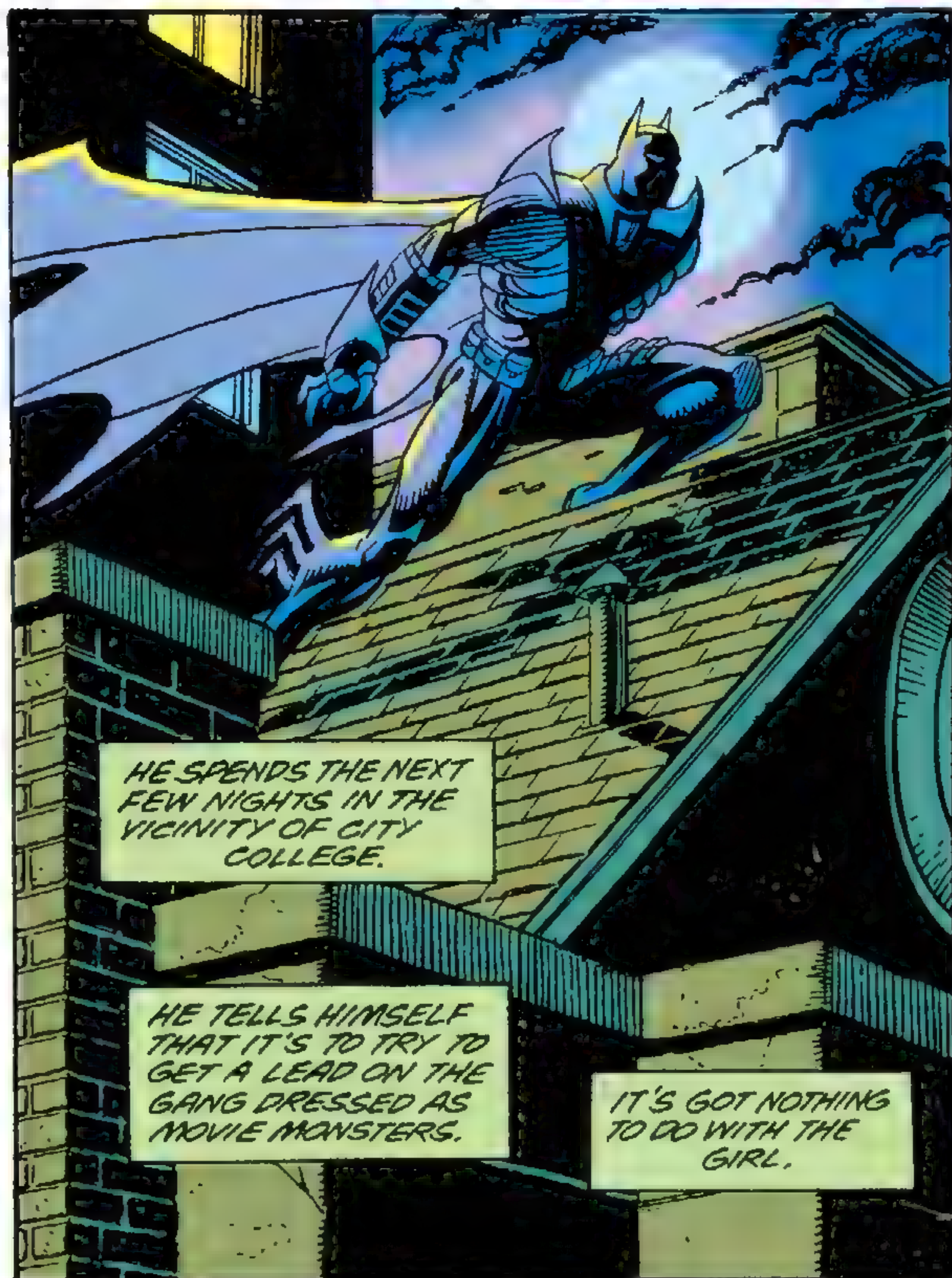
MINE IS A CITY
STEEPED IN A DARKNESS
OF ITS OWN CREATION.



AN ETERNAL
CRUSADE.

TO FREE THE
DARK CITY IS THE
WORK OF A
LIFETIME.

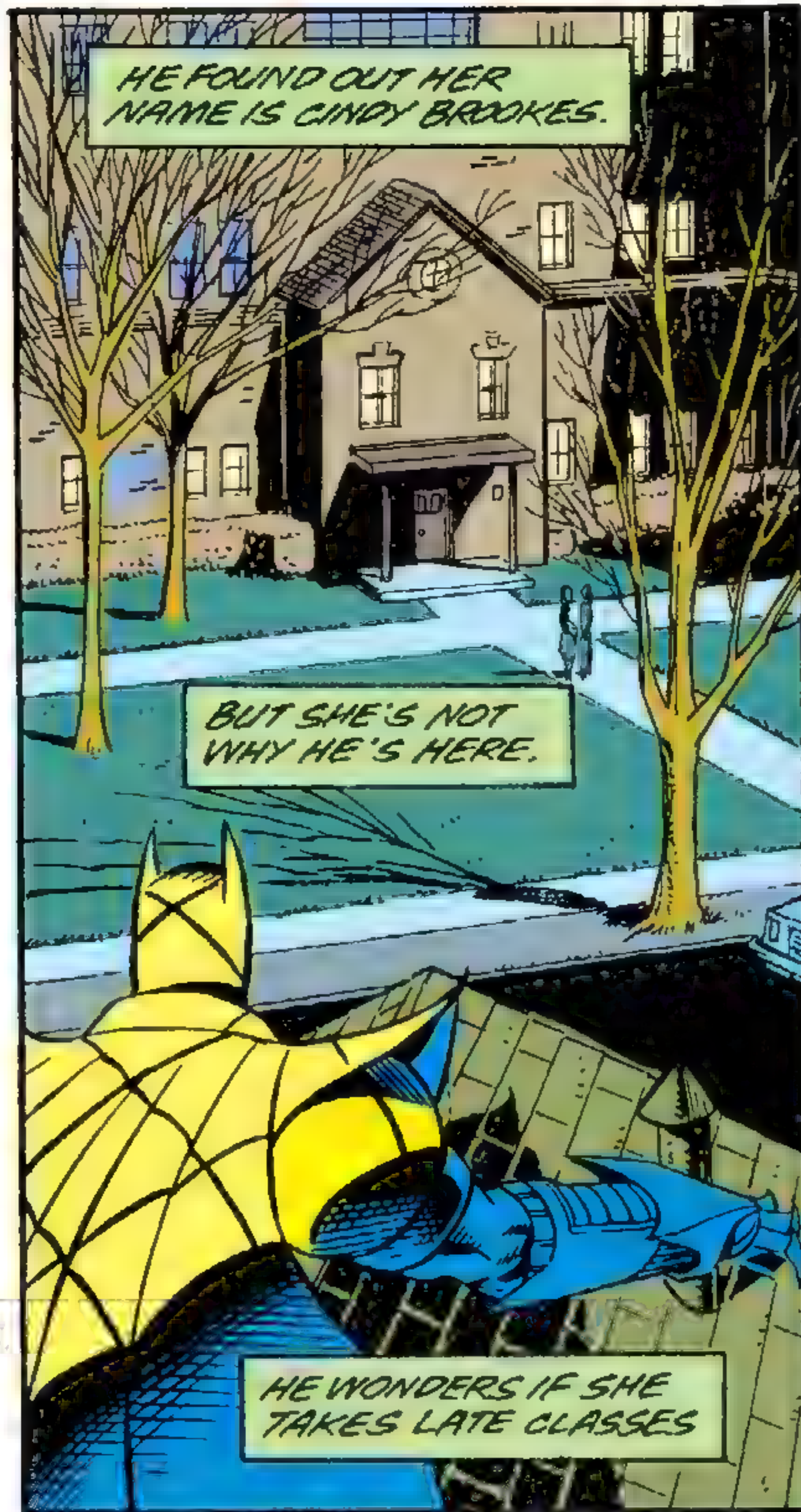




HE SPENDS THE NEXT FEW NIGHTS IN THE VICINITY OF CITY COLLEGE.

HE TELLS HIMSELF THAT IT'S TO TRY TO GET A LEAD ON THE GANG DRESSED AS MOVIE MONSTERS.

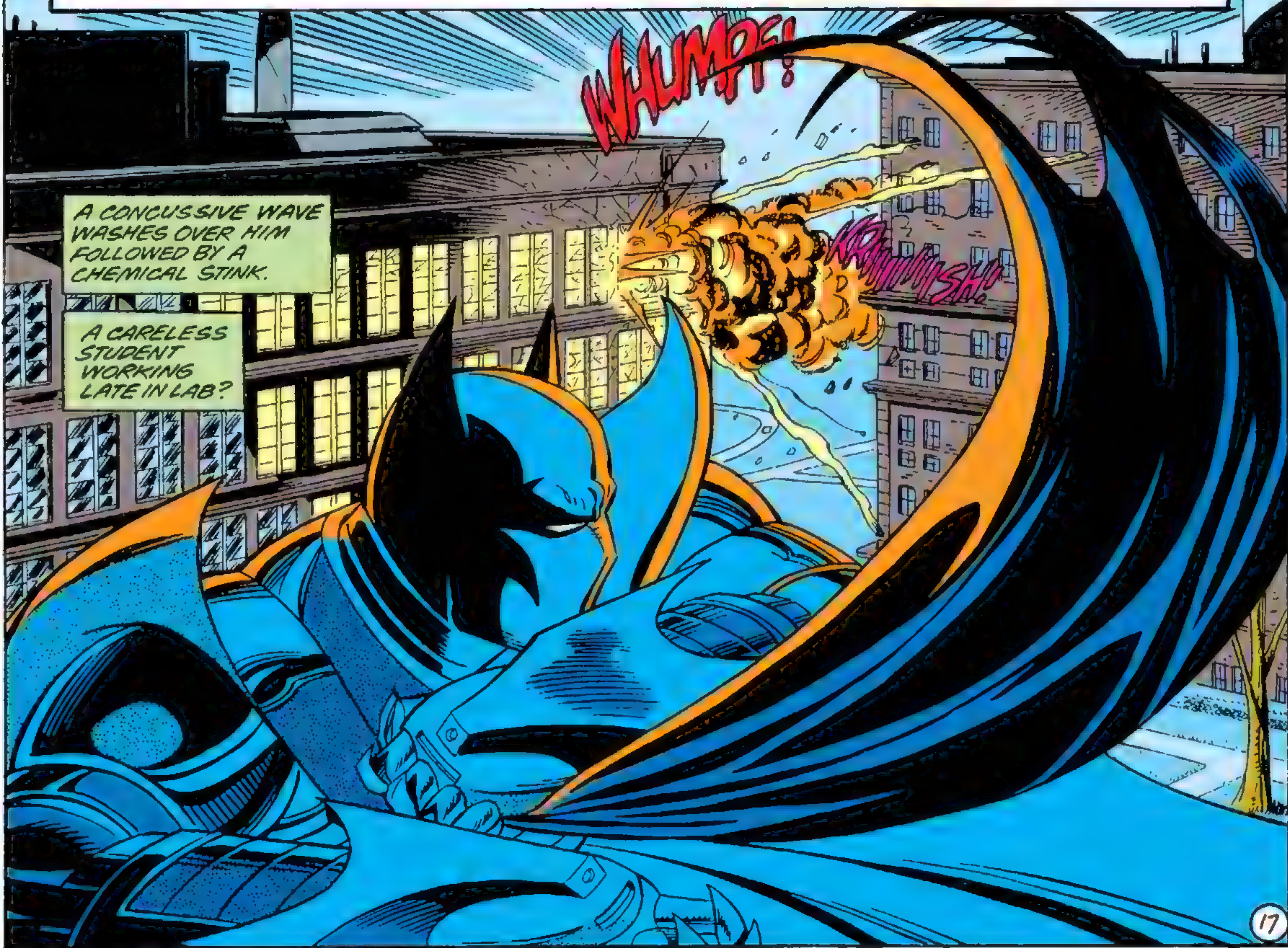
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THE GIRL.



HE FOUND OUT HER NAME IS CINDY BROOKES.

BUT SHE'S NOT WHY HE'S HERE.

HE WONDERS IF SHE TAKES LATE CLASSES



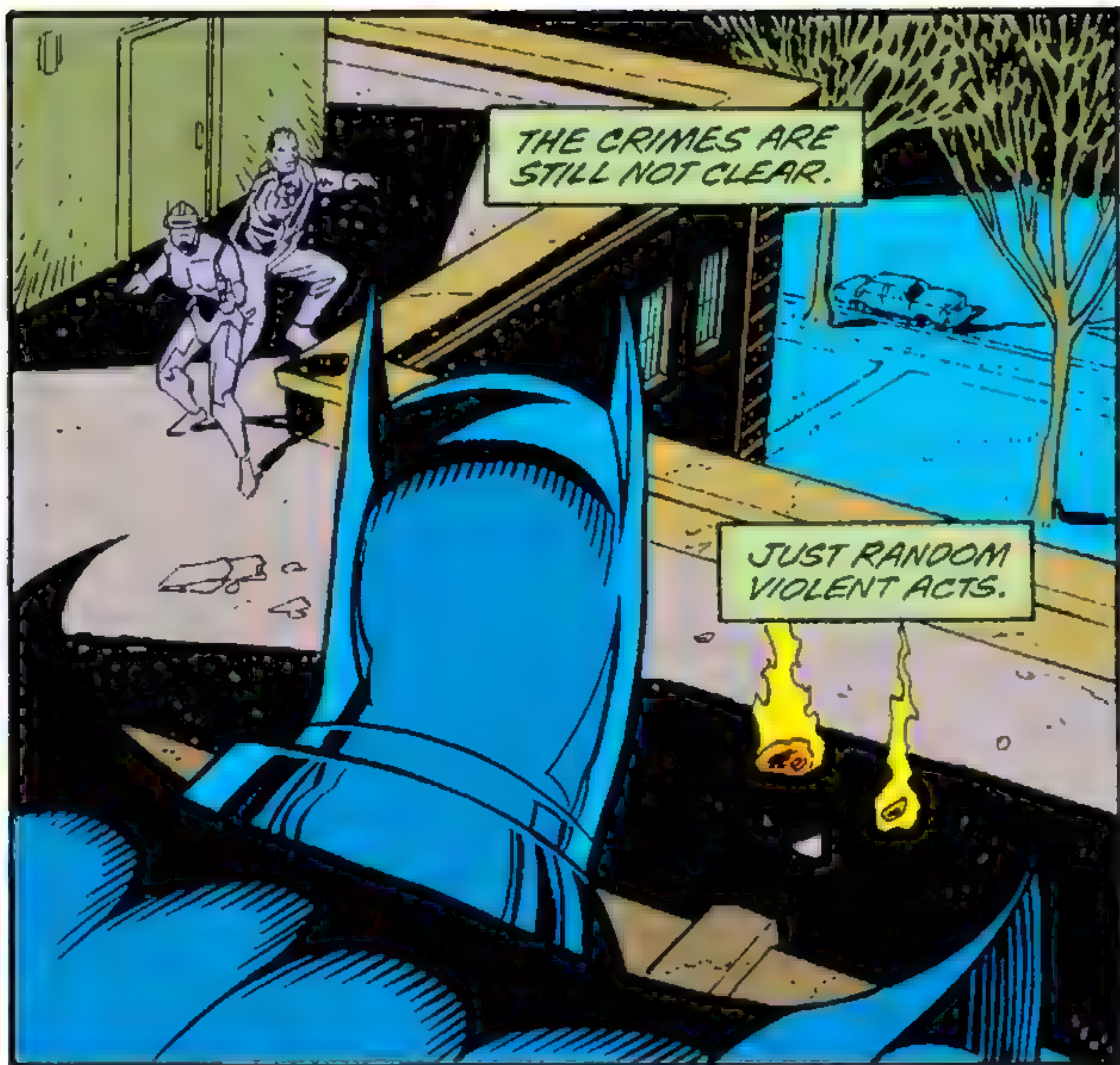
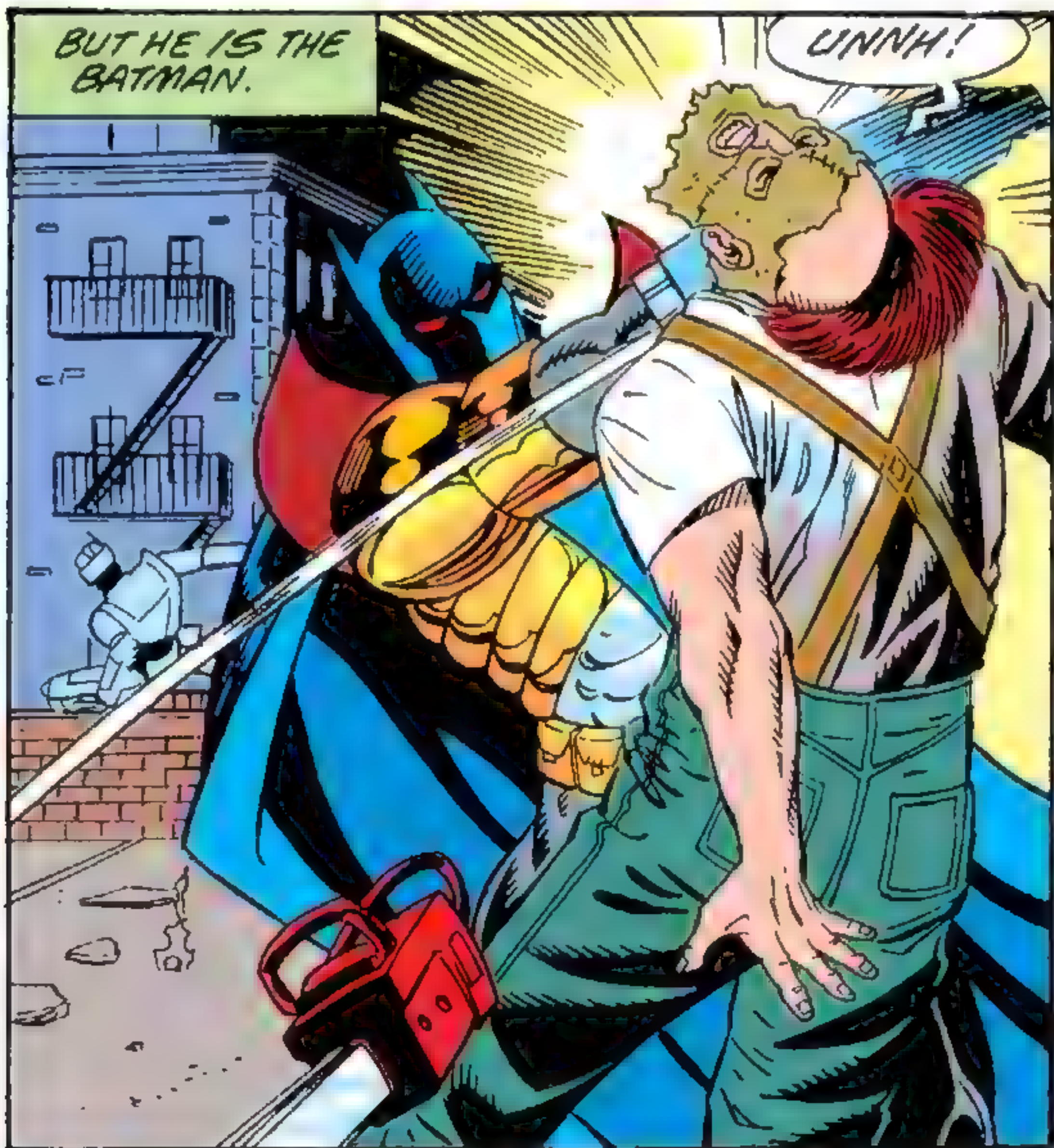
A CONCUSSIVE WAVE WASHES OVER HIM FOLLOWED BY A CHEMICAL STINK.

A CARELESS STUDENT WORKING LATE IN LAB?

WHUMPH!

POW!







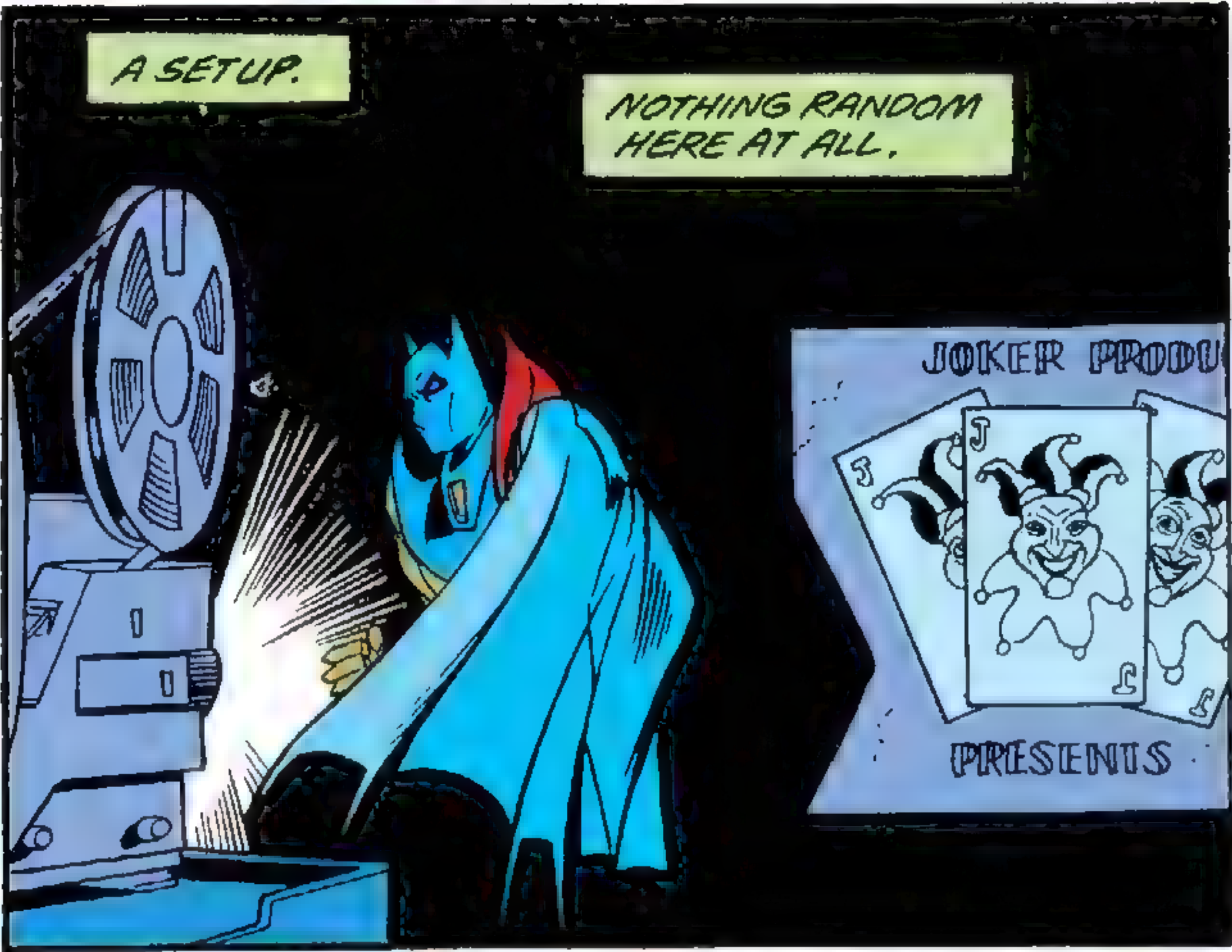
CAN'T HEAR THEM.
TOO FAR AHEAD
OF HIM.

THIS ESCAPE
ROUTE WAS
PLANNED.



A FLASH
OF LIGHT.

A FAMILIAR
CLICKING
SOUND.

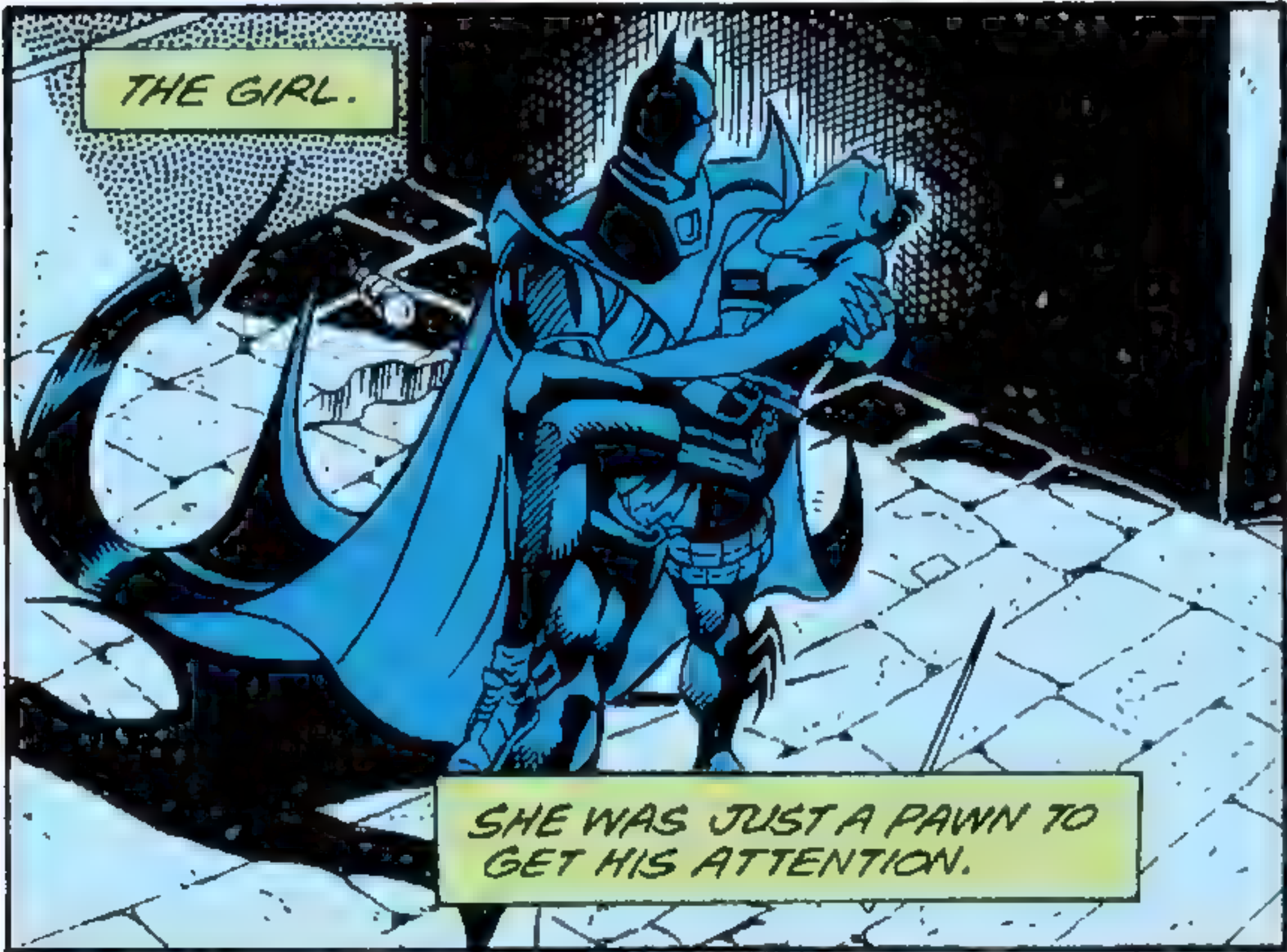


A SETUP.

NOTHING RANDOM
HERE AT ALL.

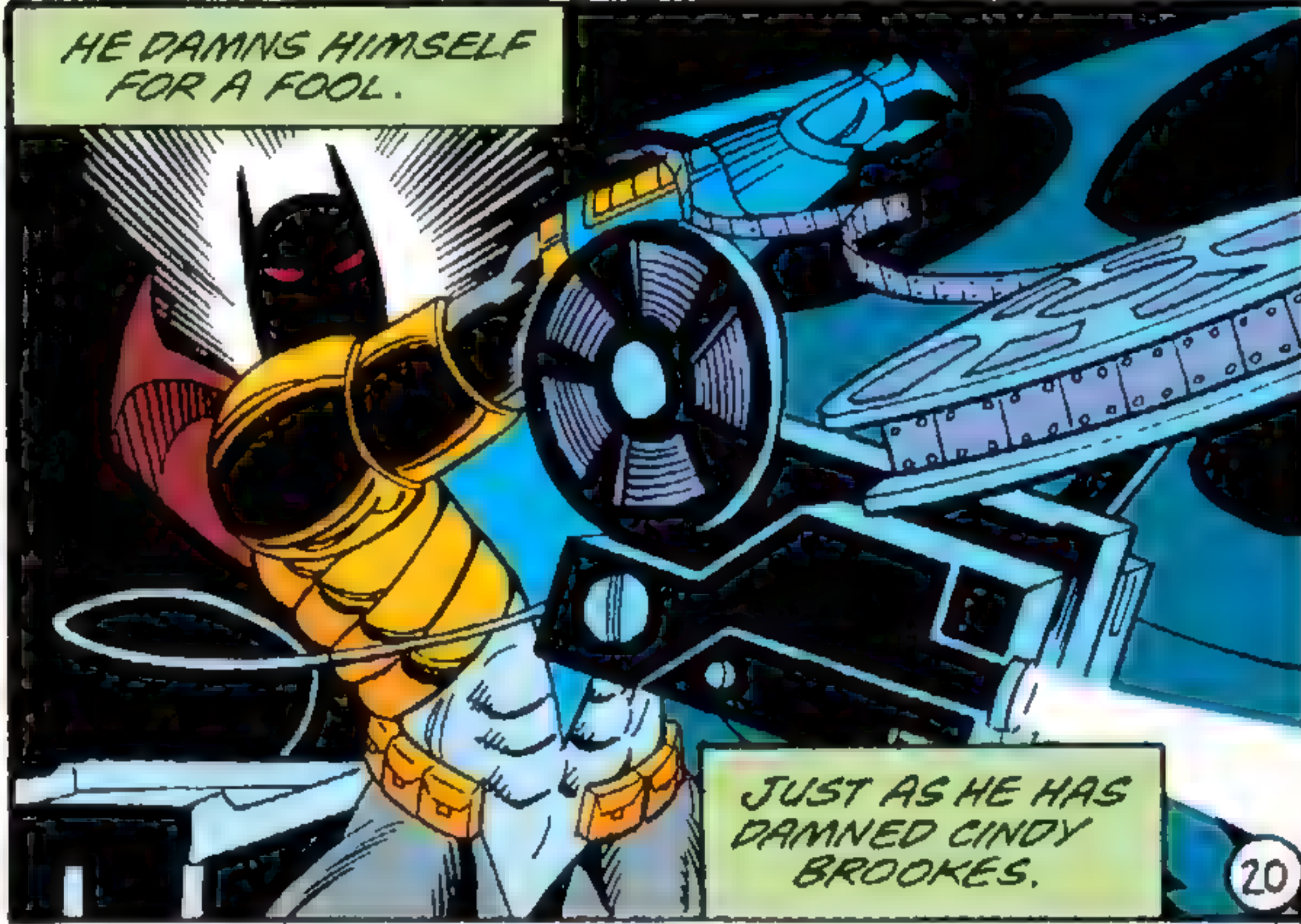


LAST NIGHT. THE
FIGHT IN THE
ALLEY.



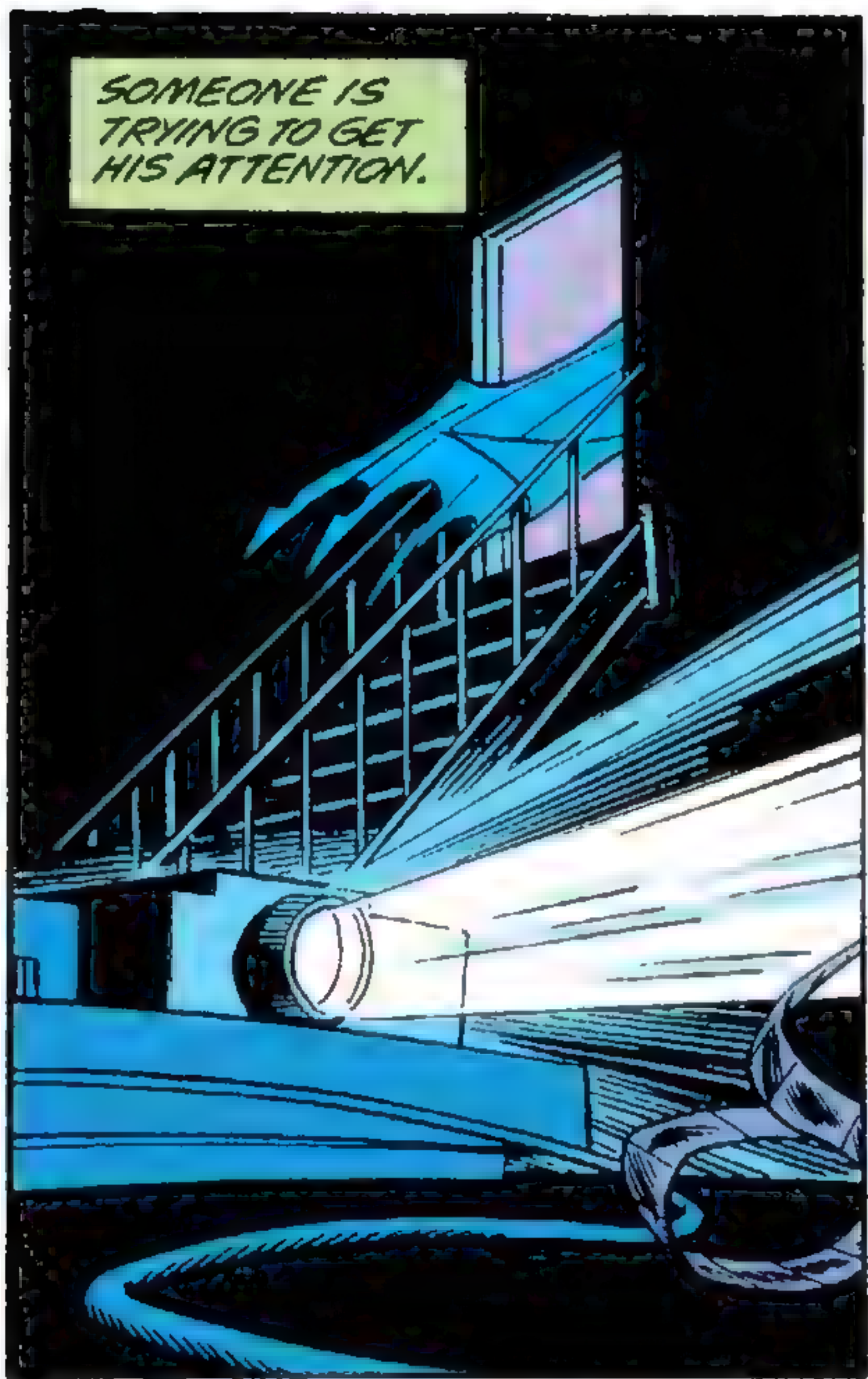
THE GIRL.

SHE WAS JUST A PAWN TO
GET HIS ATTENTION.



HE DAMNS HIMSELF
FOR A FOOL.

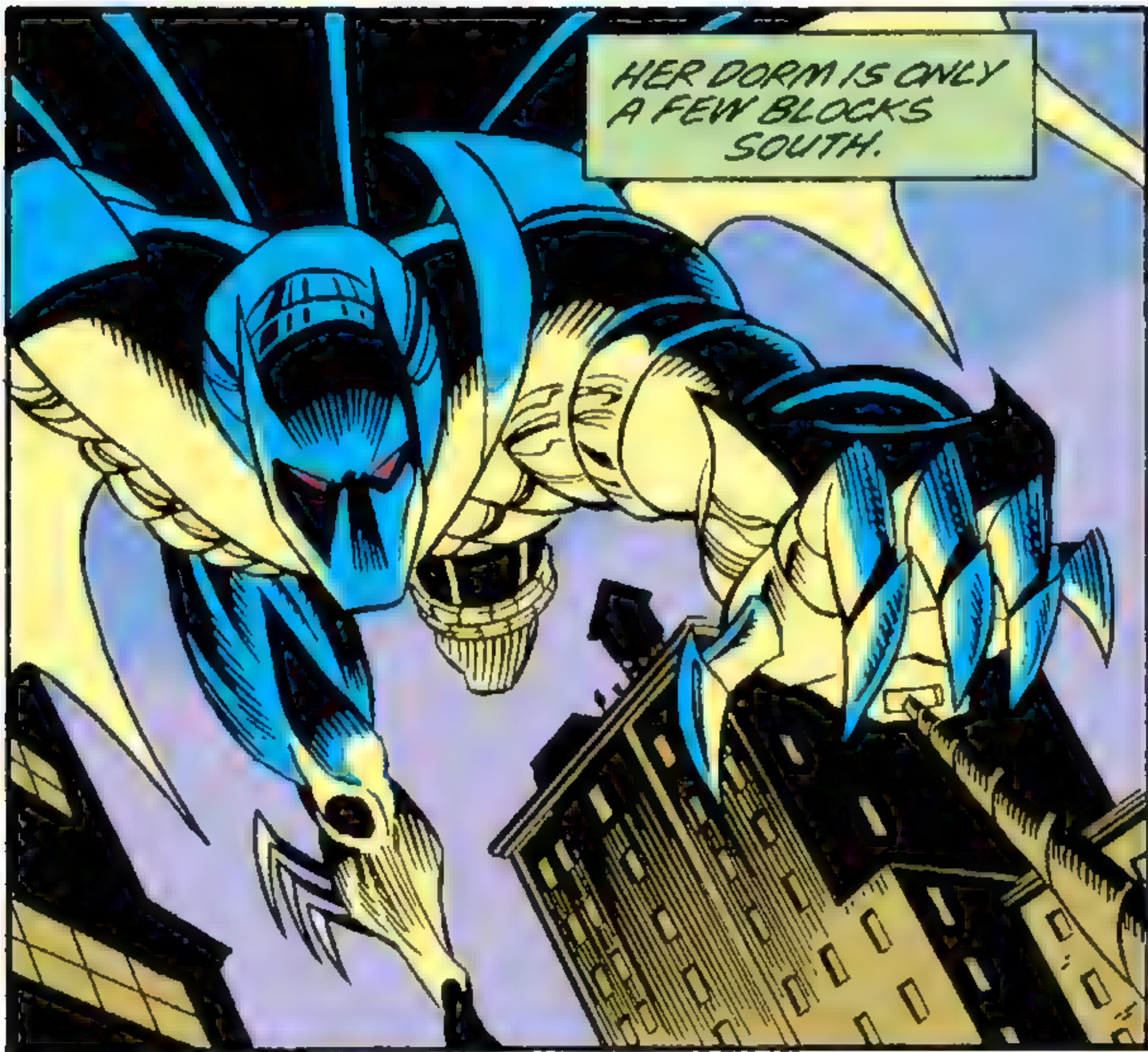
JUST AS HE HAS
DAMNED CINDY
BROOKES.



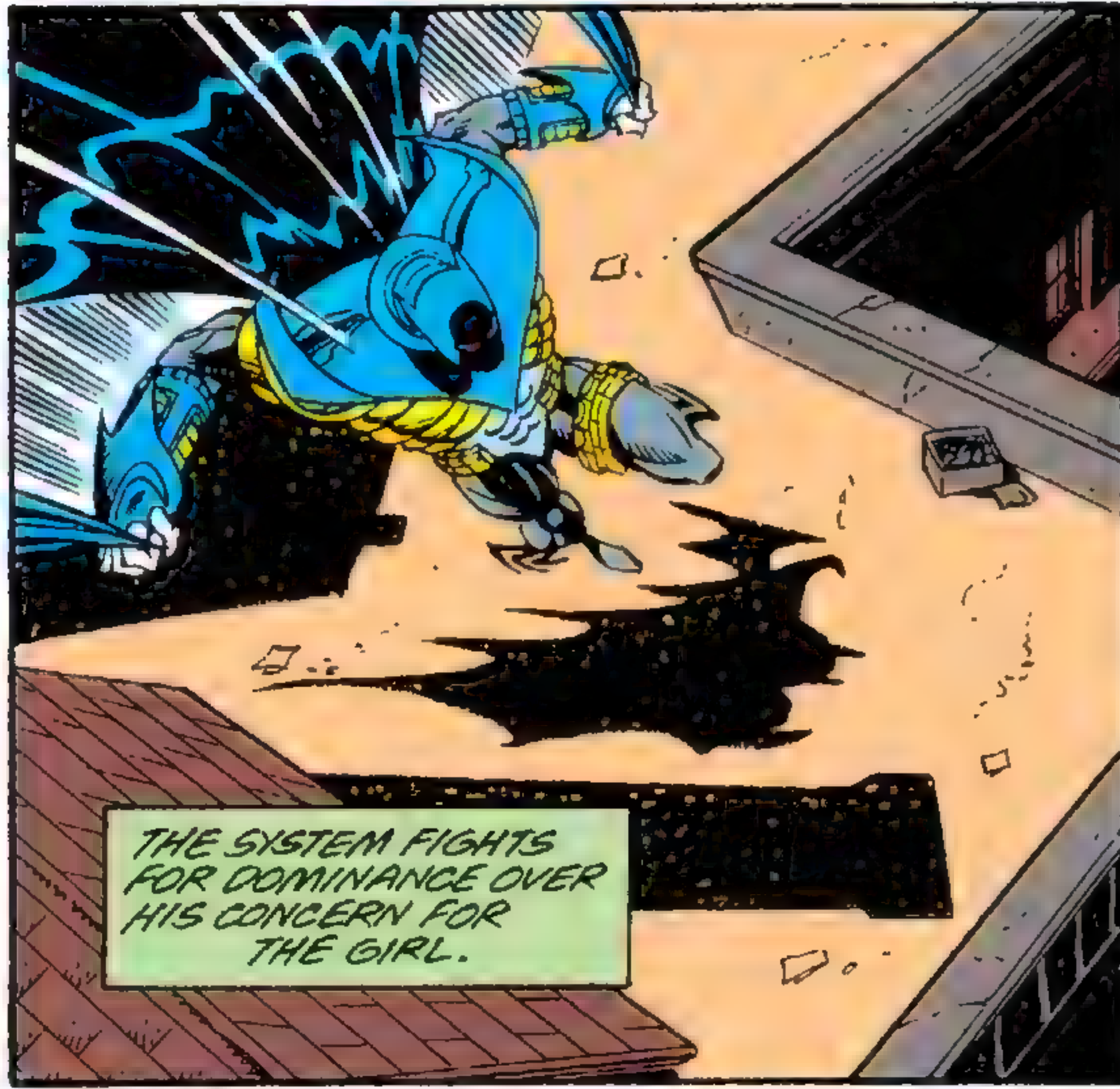
SOMEONE IS TRYING TO GET HIS ATTENTION.



EVEN IF SOMEONE HAS TO DIE TO ACHIEVE THAT.



HER DORM IS ONLY A FEW BLOCKS SOUTH.



THE SYSTEM FIGHTS FOR DOMINANCE OVER HIS CONCERN FOR THE GIRL.



GLASS BREAKING, A DARKLY MUSICAL SOUND.

THAT'S HER ROOM.



NEXT ISSUE: **SMASH CUT!**



DETECTIVE
COMICS

872

\$1.50 US
\$2.00 CAN
70¢ UK

KNIGHTQUEST

THE CRUSADE

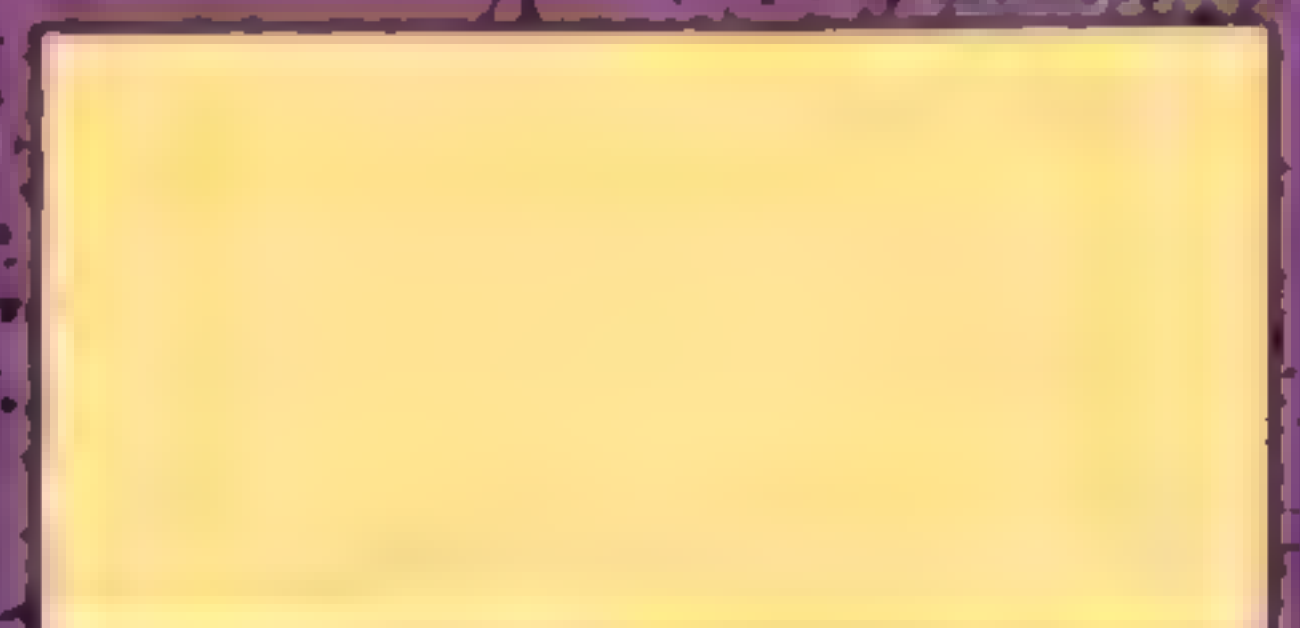
DETECTIVE COMICS

FEATURING

BATMAN



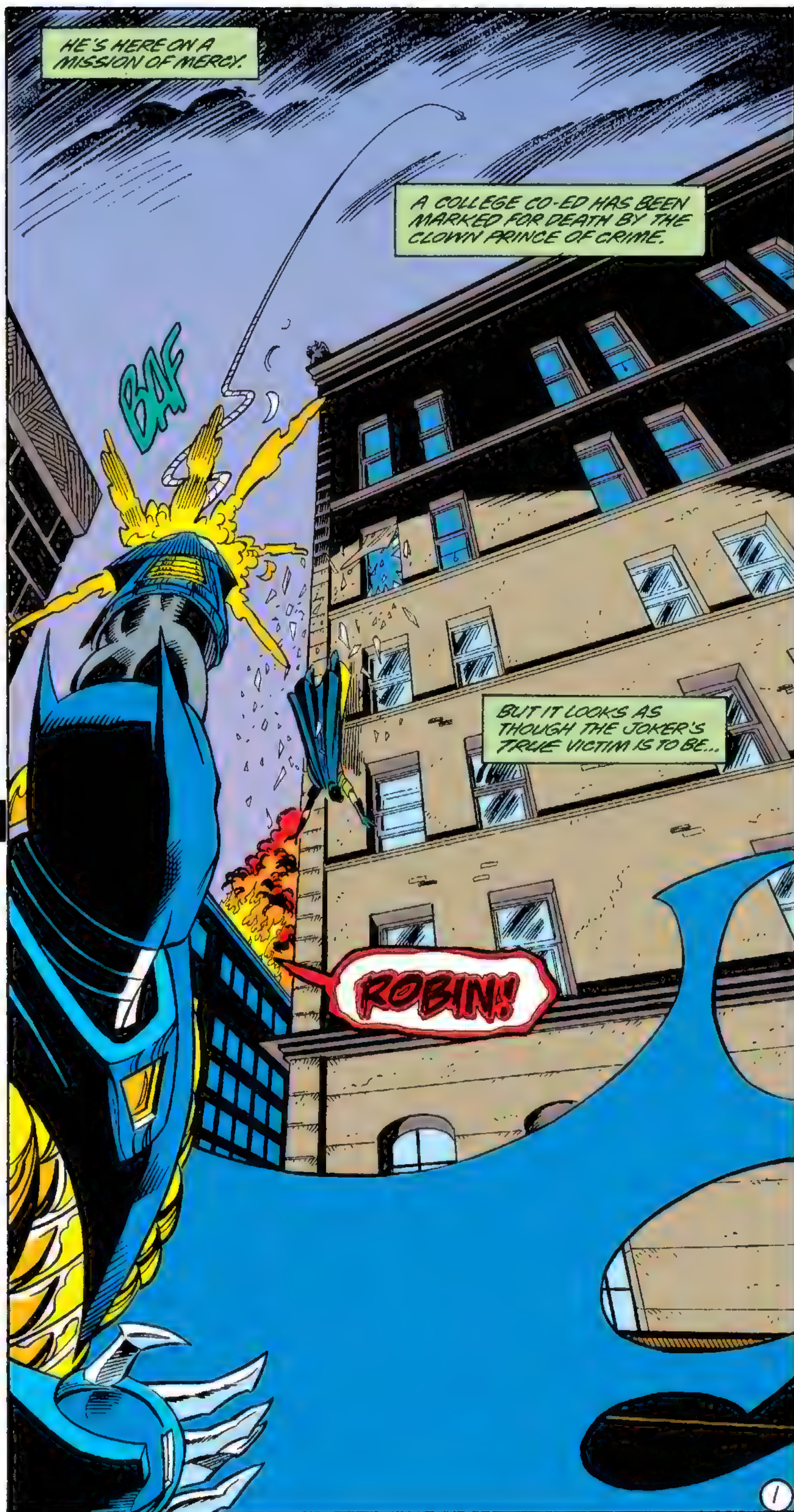
DIXON
NOLAN
HANNA

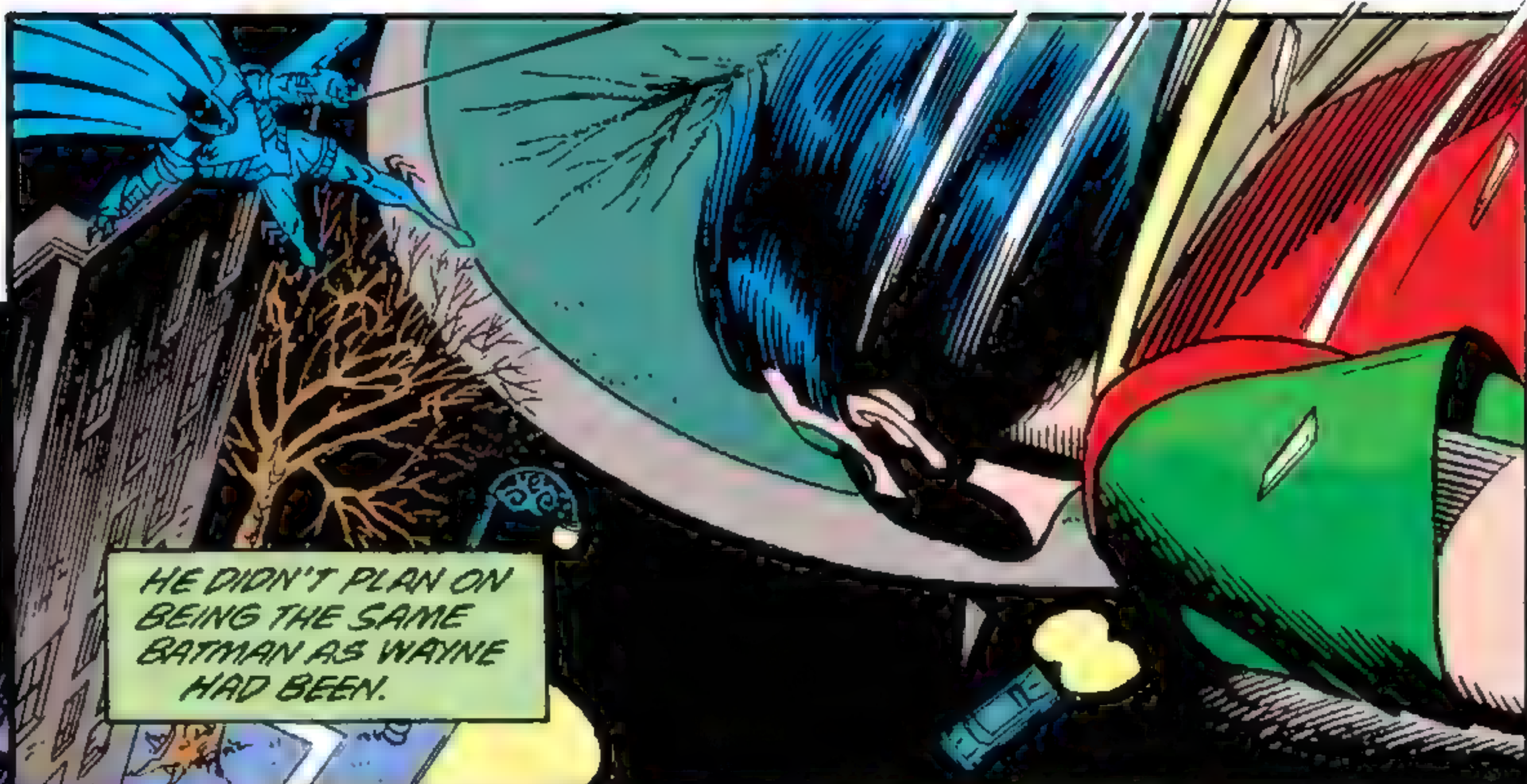


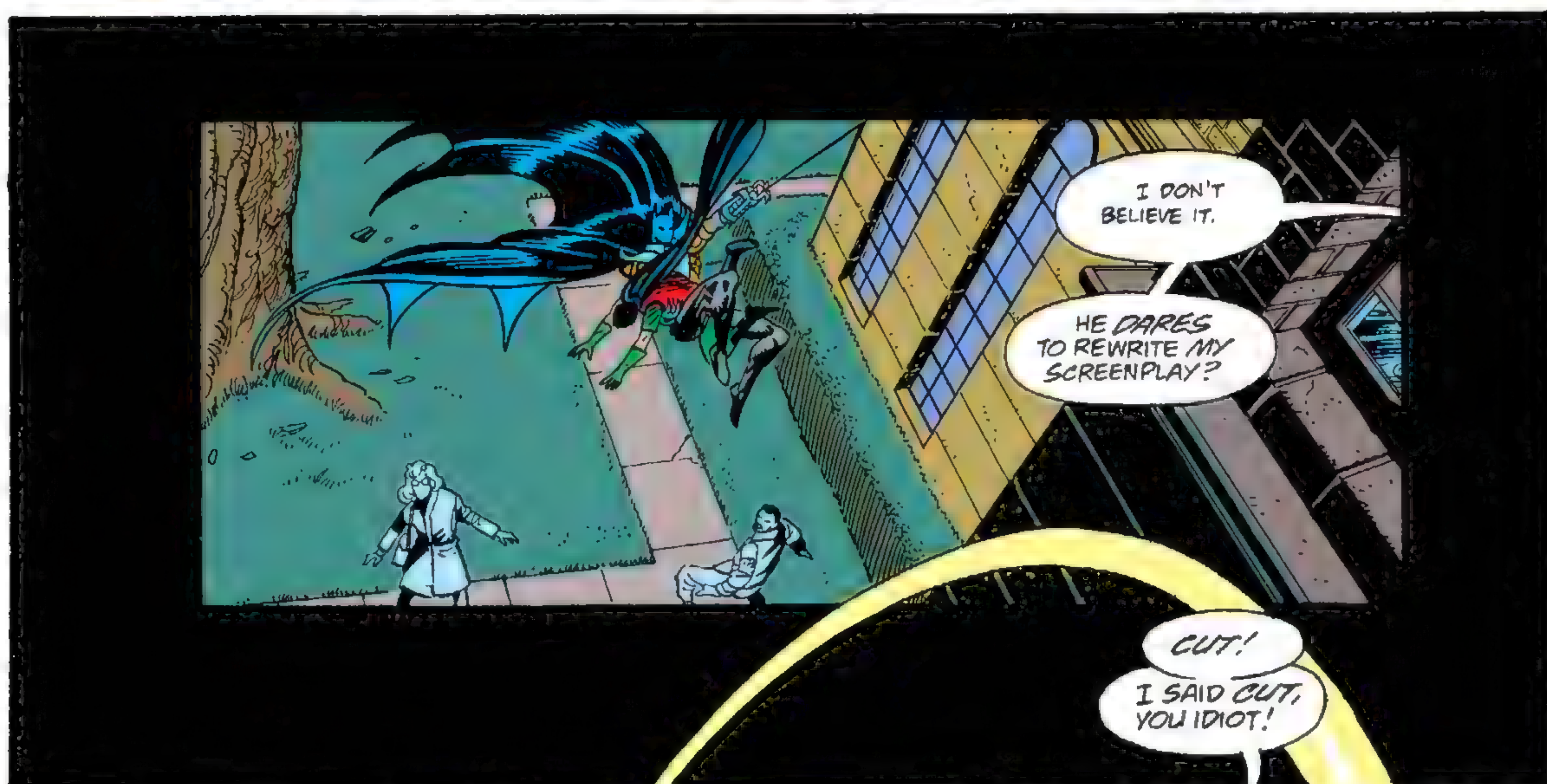
SMASH CUT

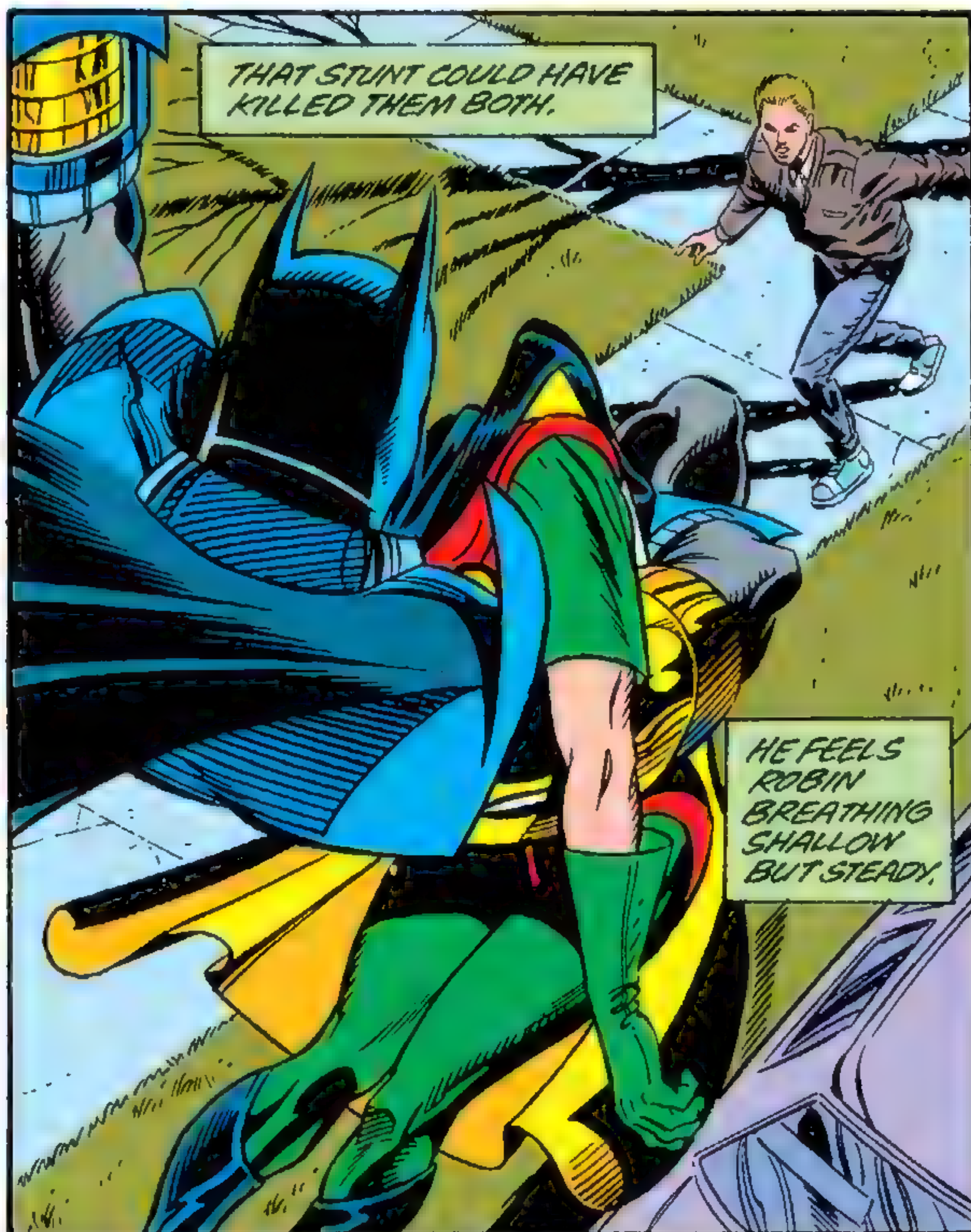
CHUCK DIXON
writer
GRAHAM NOLAN
penciller
SCOTT HANNA
inker
ADRIENNE ROY
colorist
JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
DARREN VINCENZO
assistant editor
SCOTT PETERSON
editor

BATMAN created by
BOB KANE



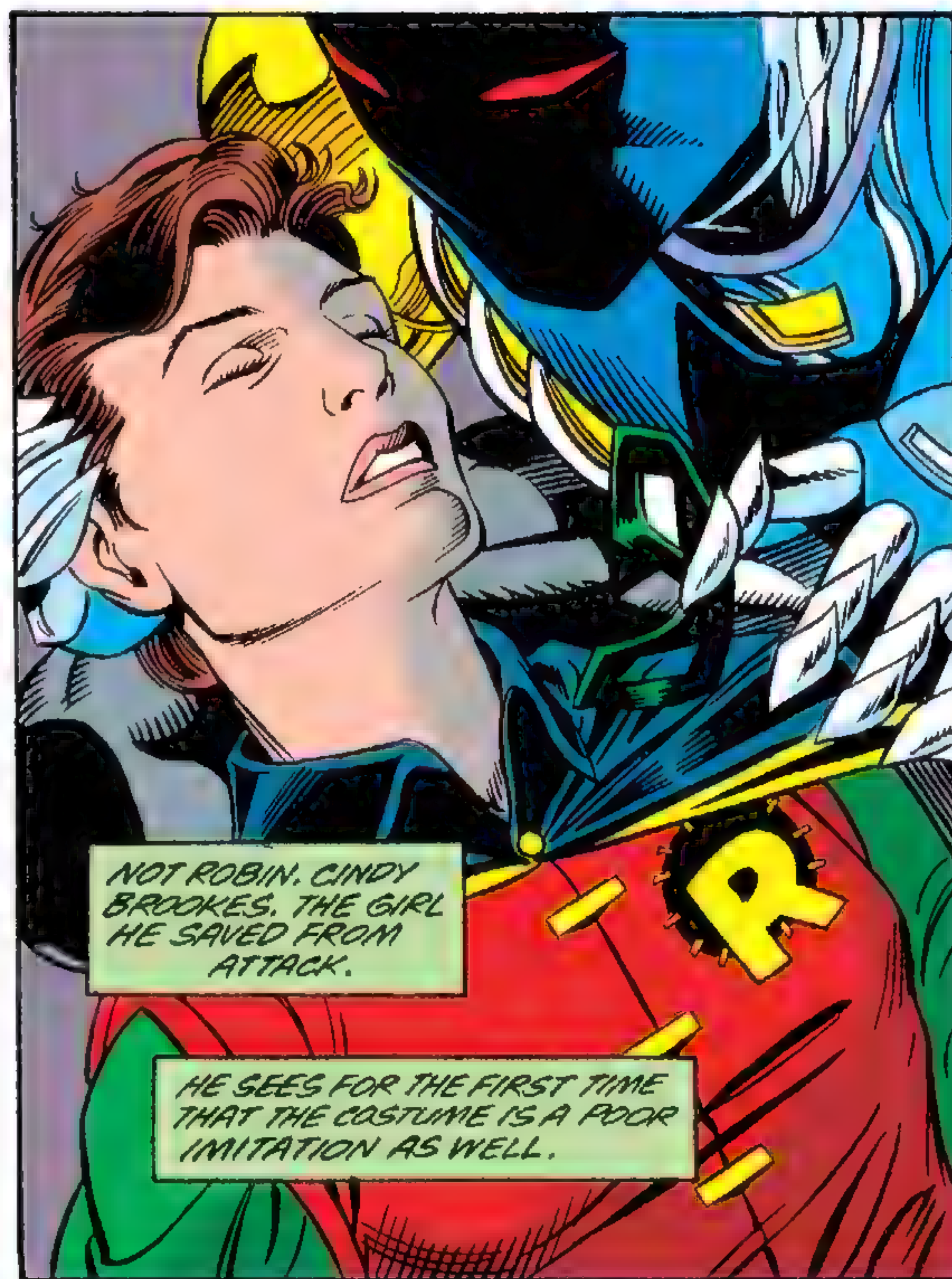






THAT STUNT COULD HAVE KILLED THEM BOTH.

HE FEELS ROBIN BREATHING SHALLOW BUT STEADY.



NOT ROBIN. CINDY BROOKES, THE GIRL HE SAVED FROM ATTACK.

HE SEES FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT THE COSTUME IS A POOR IMITATION AS WELL.



DRUGGED.

SHE WAS UNCONSCIOUS WHEN THROWN FROM THE WINDOW.



YOU! CALL NINE ONE ONE! GET THIS GIRL AN AMBULANCE AND GET HER TO A HOSPITAL!

SHUH-SHUH-SURE!

THE GIRL ISN'T THE TARGET. SHE'S ONLY A DECOY.

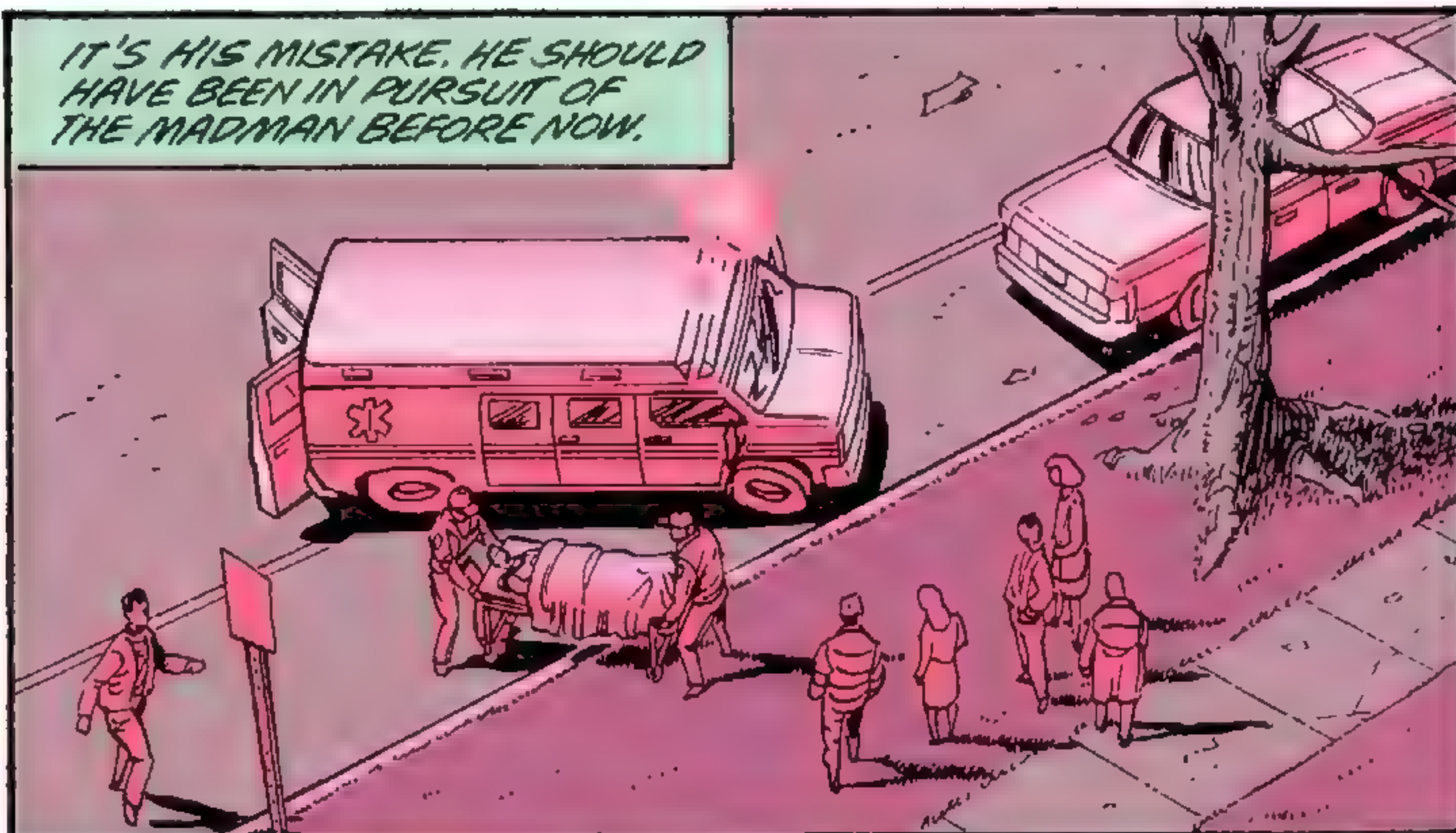


AND THE ROBIN COSTUME IS A MESSAGE. HE IS THE ONE THAT THE JOKER SEEKS.

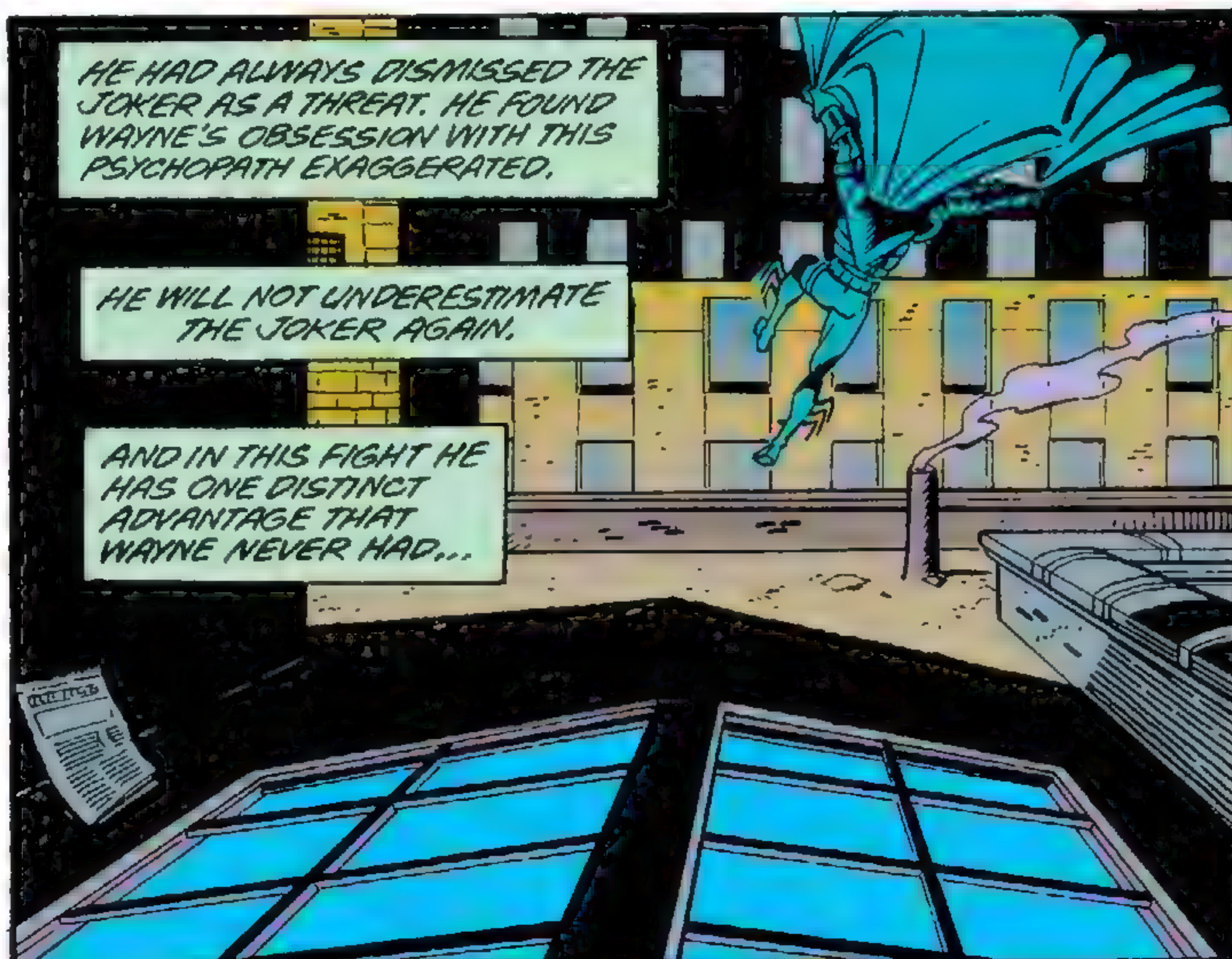


CINDY BROOKES WAS PICKED AT RANDOM TO DRAW HIM INTO THE LIGHT.

HE KNEW THE JOKER HAD NOT YET BEEN CAUGHT AND RETURNED TO ARKHAM.



IT'S HIS MISTAKE. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN PURSUIT OF THE MADMAN BEFORE NOW.



HE HAD ALWAYS DISMISSED THE JOKER AS A THREAT. HE FOUND WAYNE'S OBSESSION WITH THIS PSYCHOPATH EXAGGERATED.

HE WILL NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE JOKER AGAIN.

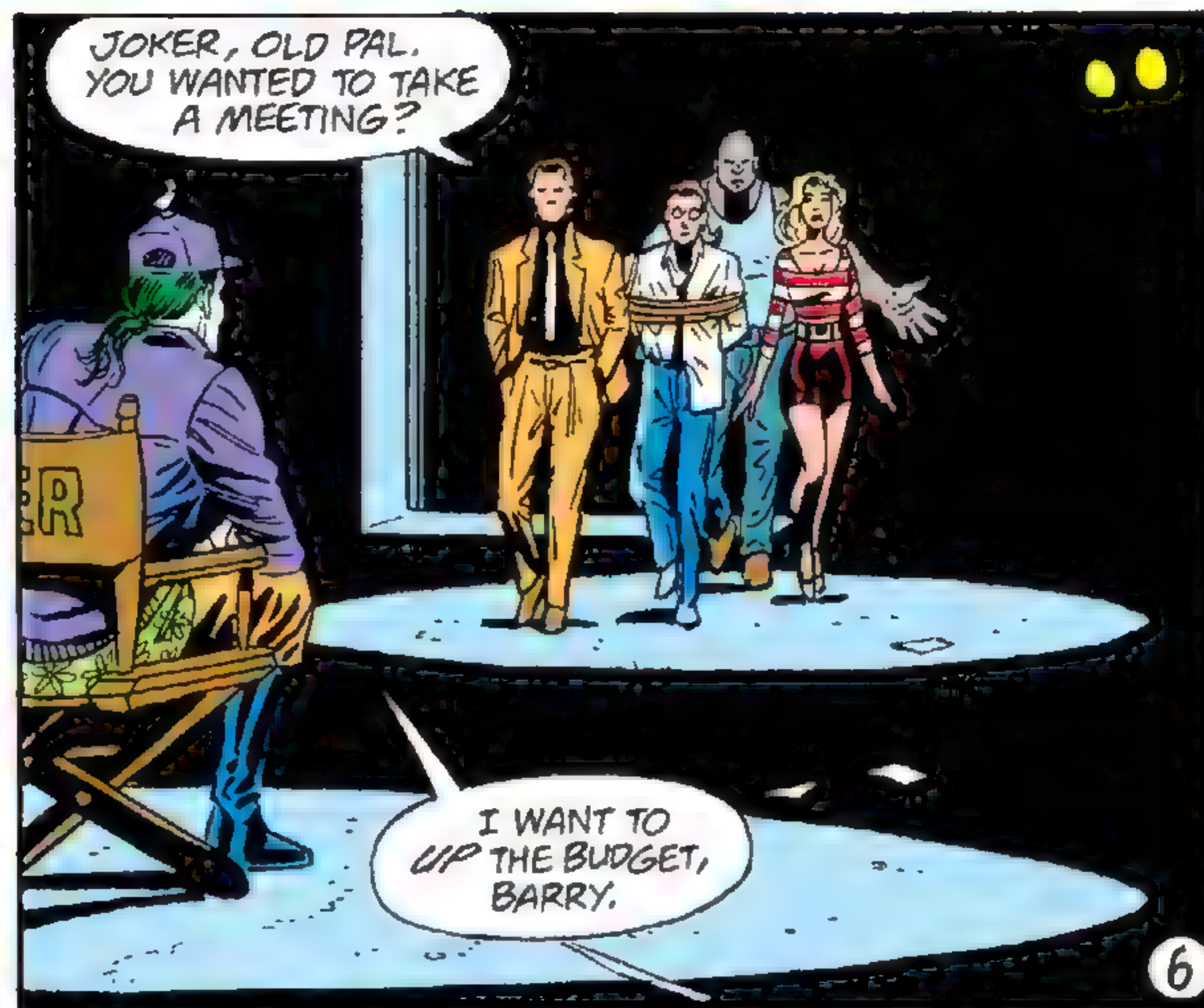
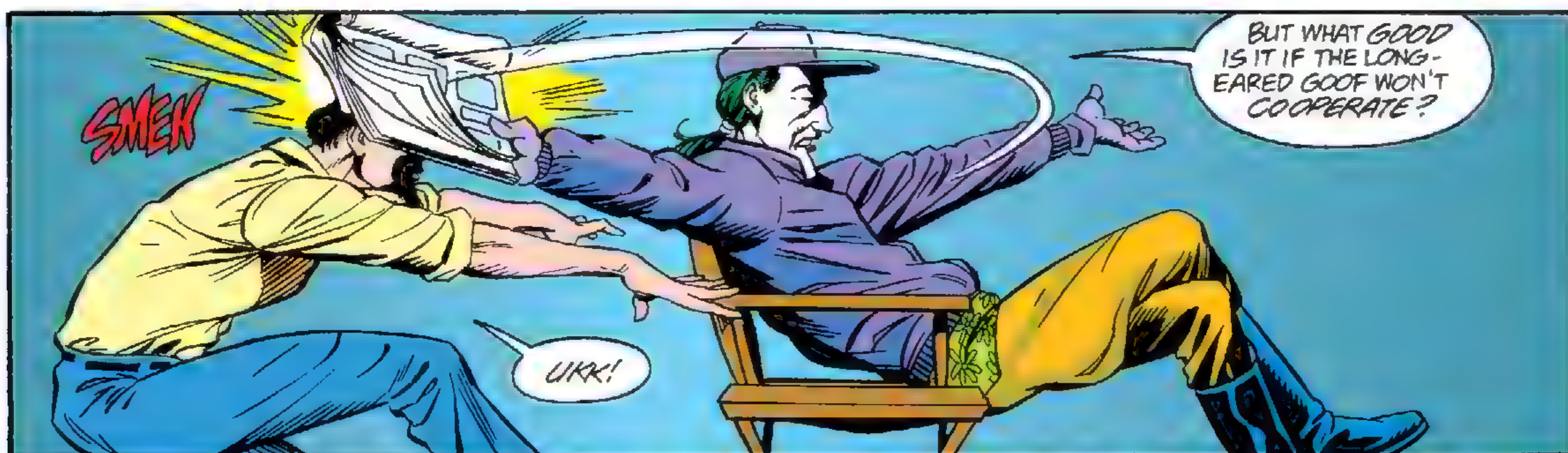
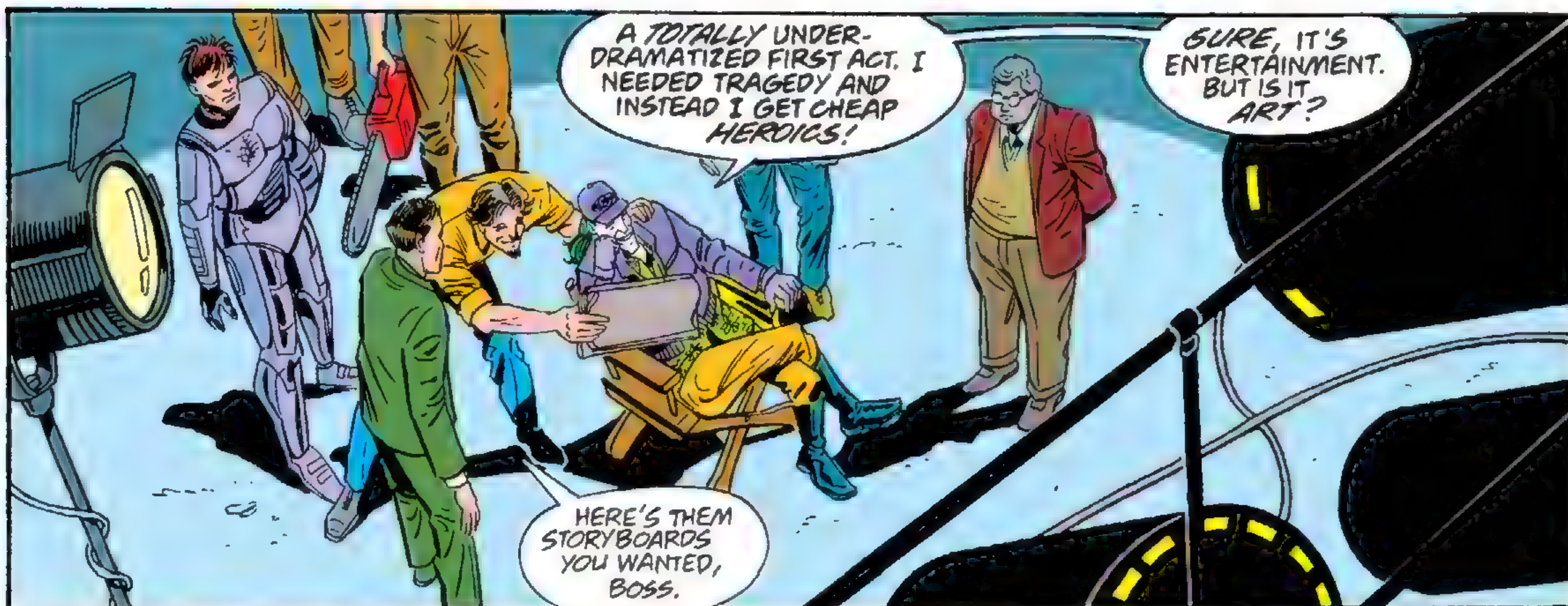
AND IN THIS FIGHT HE HAS ONE DISTINCT ADVANTAGE THAT WAYNE NEVER HAD...

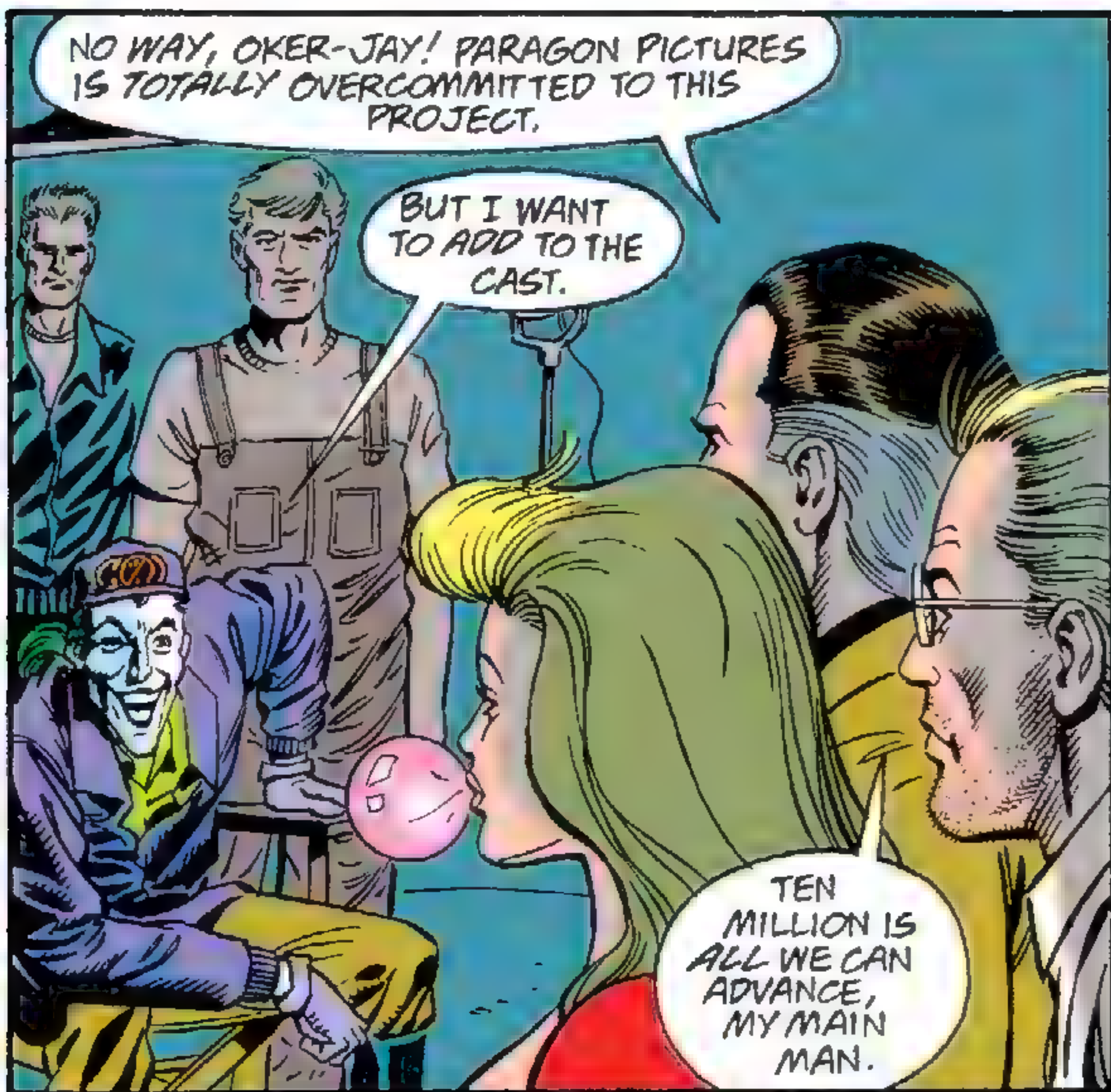


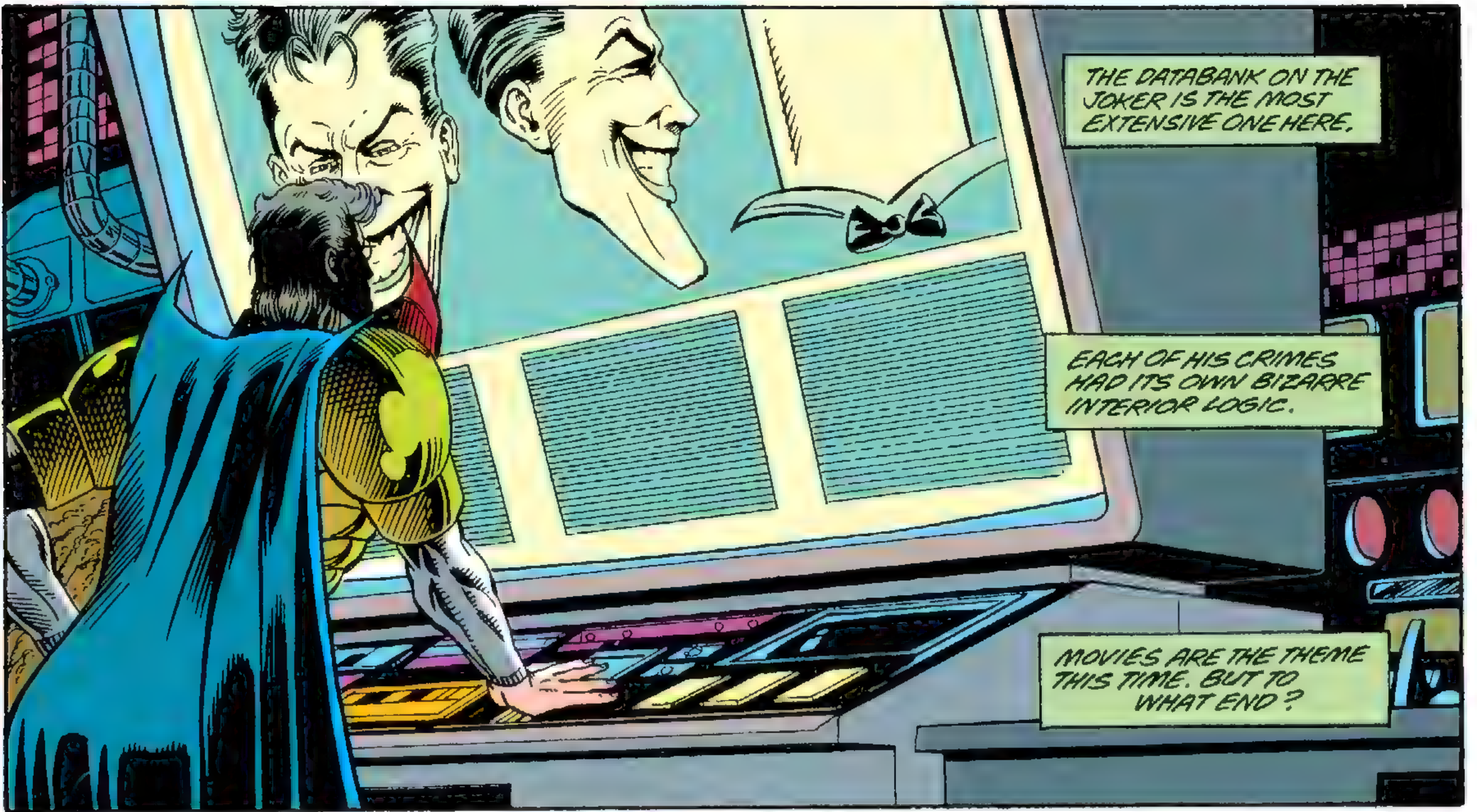
...FOR THE FIRST TIME JOKER IS NOT PITTED AGAINST A BATMAN HE KNOWS.

A PERFECT SCENE RUINED!

THAT BAT-WINGED SCENE-STEALER TOOK ALL THE PUNCH OUT OF IT!







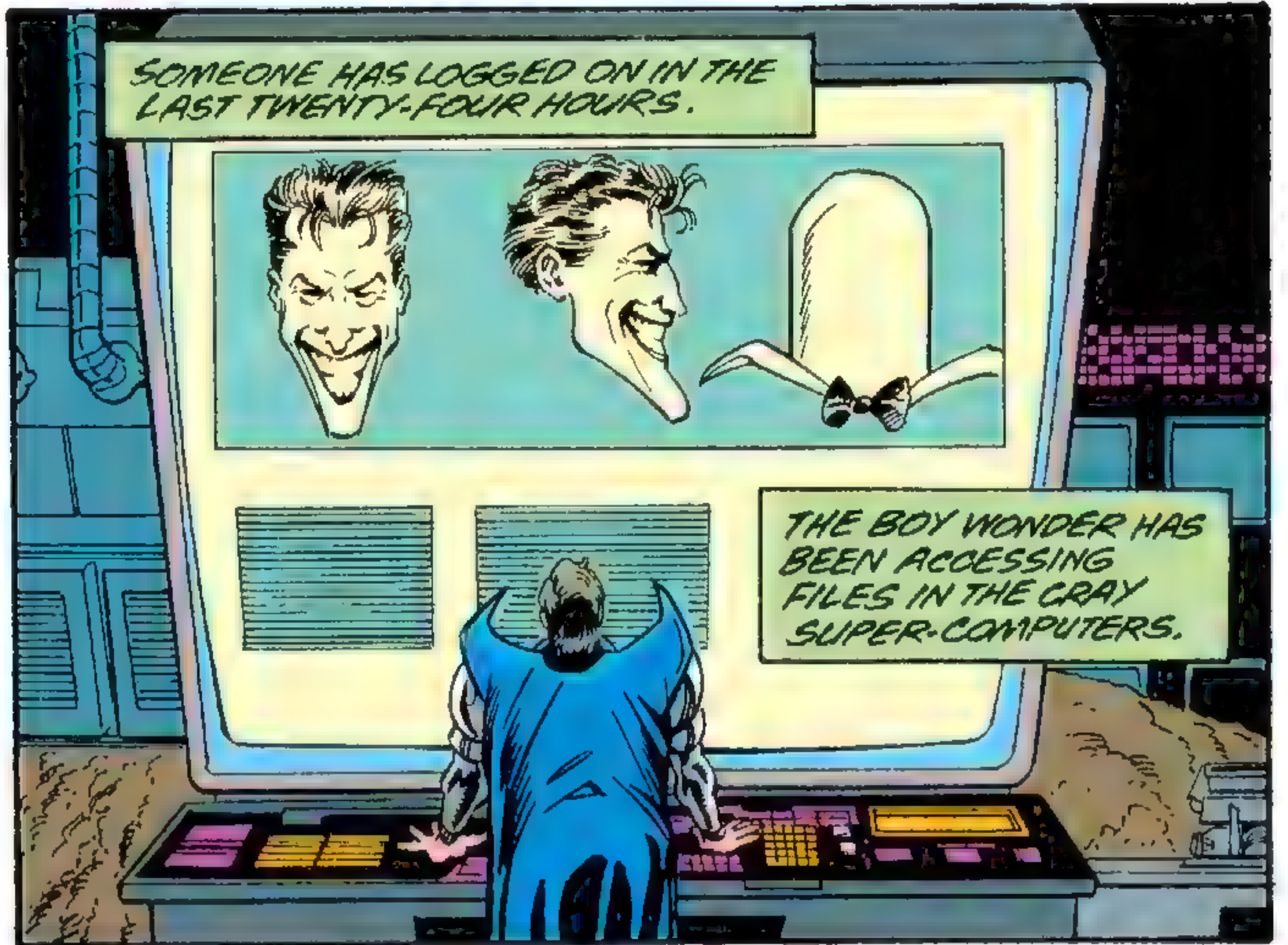
THE DATABANK ON THE JOKER IS THE MOST EXTENSIVE ONE HERE.

EACH OF HIS CRIMES HAD ITS OWN BIZARRE INTERIOR LOGIC.

MOVIES ARE THE THEME THIS TIME. BUT TO WHAT END?



A ROUTINE SEARCH OF THE USAGE LOG TURNS UP SOMETHING INTERESTING.



SOMEONE HAS LOGGED ON IN THE LAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

THE BOY WONDER HAS BEEN ACCESSING FILES IN THE CRAY SUPER-COMPUTERS.

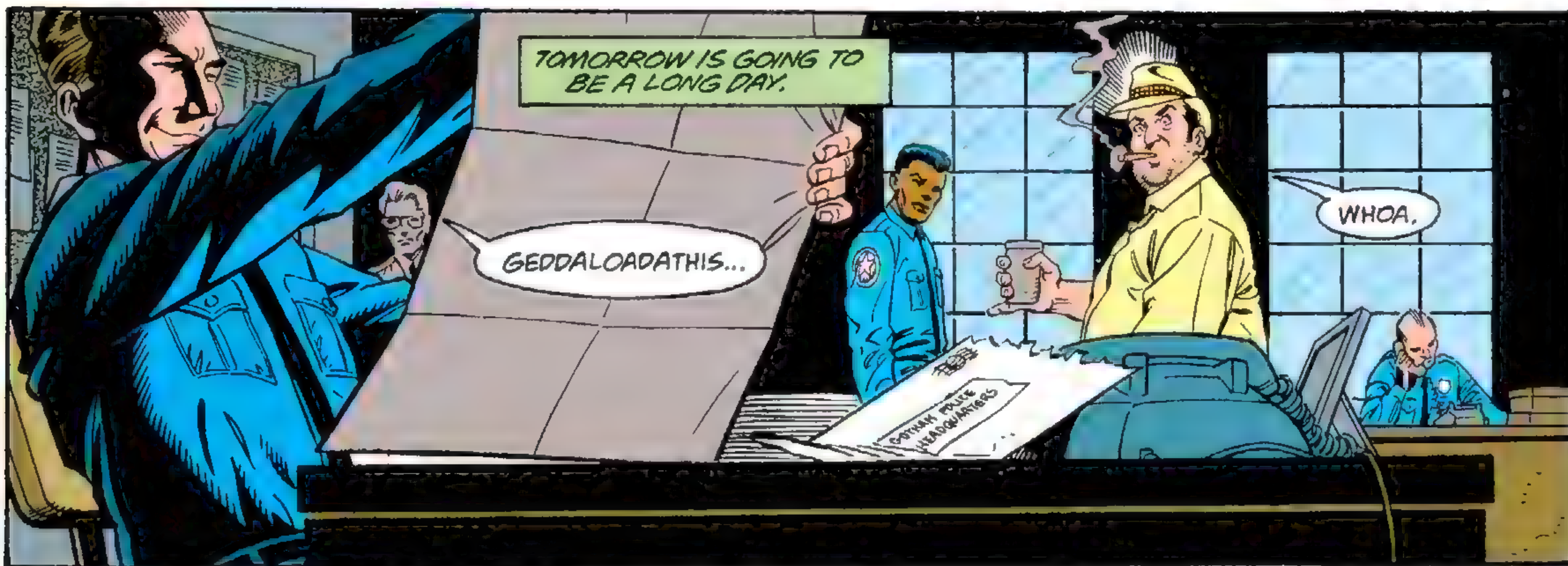
CLEVER LITTLE BIRD. HE DISGUISED HIS ON-TIME AS A ROUTINE DIAGNOSTIC.

ROBIN FORGETS THAT A HACKER EVEN MORE TALENTED THAN HE INHABITS THE CAVE NOW.



HE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT AT ANOTHER TIME.

RIGHT NOW HE JUST WANTS FOUR HOURS OF DREAMLESS SLEEP.



THIS IS A
CASTING CALL,
BOYS.

YOU'RE GOIN' IN THERE
A MURDERER. BUT YOU'RE
COMIN' BACK A STAR!

J O K E R

THE DEATH OF BATMAN

YOU'LL BELIEVE A BATMAN CAN DIE!

"★★★★
I'LL GIVE IT
FOUR STARS!
Don't hit me again!"
—WHAM-TV

"A TOWERING
CINEMA
ACHIEVEMENT!

"I'd say that even
if I didn't have a
blowtorch held to
my feet!"
—D MORNING
GOTHAM



"I have to
say it's the
**FINEST FILM
OF THE YEAR
TO DATE**
or the Joker will
kill my family!"
—GOTHAM
GAZETTE

"YOU'VE GOT
TO SEE THIS
MOVIE!"
My life depends
on it!"
—NEWSTIME

COMING SOON TO: THE MANCHESTER MAJESTIC THEATER

THE JOKER PRESENTS A PARAGON PICTURES PRODUCTION of "THE DEATH OF BATMAN"
STARRING THE JOKER • BATMAN AND A CAST OF A THOUSAND KILLERS

SCREENPLAY BY THE JOKER MUSIC BY THE JOKER BASED ON THE JOKER

ADAPTED FOR SCREEN BY THE JOKER

DIRECTED BY THE JOKER

A JOKER PRODUCTION





WE HAVE A BUDGET OF FIFTEEN MILLION WITH TWO MILL GOING TO THE LUCKY GUY WHO ACTUALLY OFFS THE BATMAN.

THIS IS BARRY ZEDMORE, OUR STUDIO CONTACT. HE BELIEVES IN THIS PROJECT!



WE'RE GONNA FINISH THE JOB THAT BANE ONLY STARTED.

THIS TIME BATS GOES DOWN FOR THE LAST TIME. I'M EVEN SUPPLYING THE HARDWARE.



"WE'VE SCOUTED THE PERFECT LOCATION."

"AND YOU GENTLEMEN ARE A DREAM CAST OF GOTHAM'S BEST HITMEN."

"LET'S MAKE MAGIC."



COMMISSIONER, IT'S FREEZING OUT HERE.

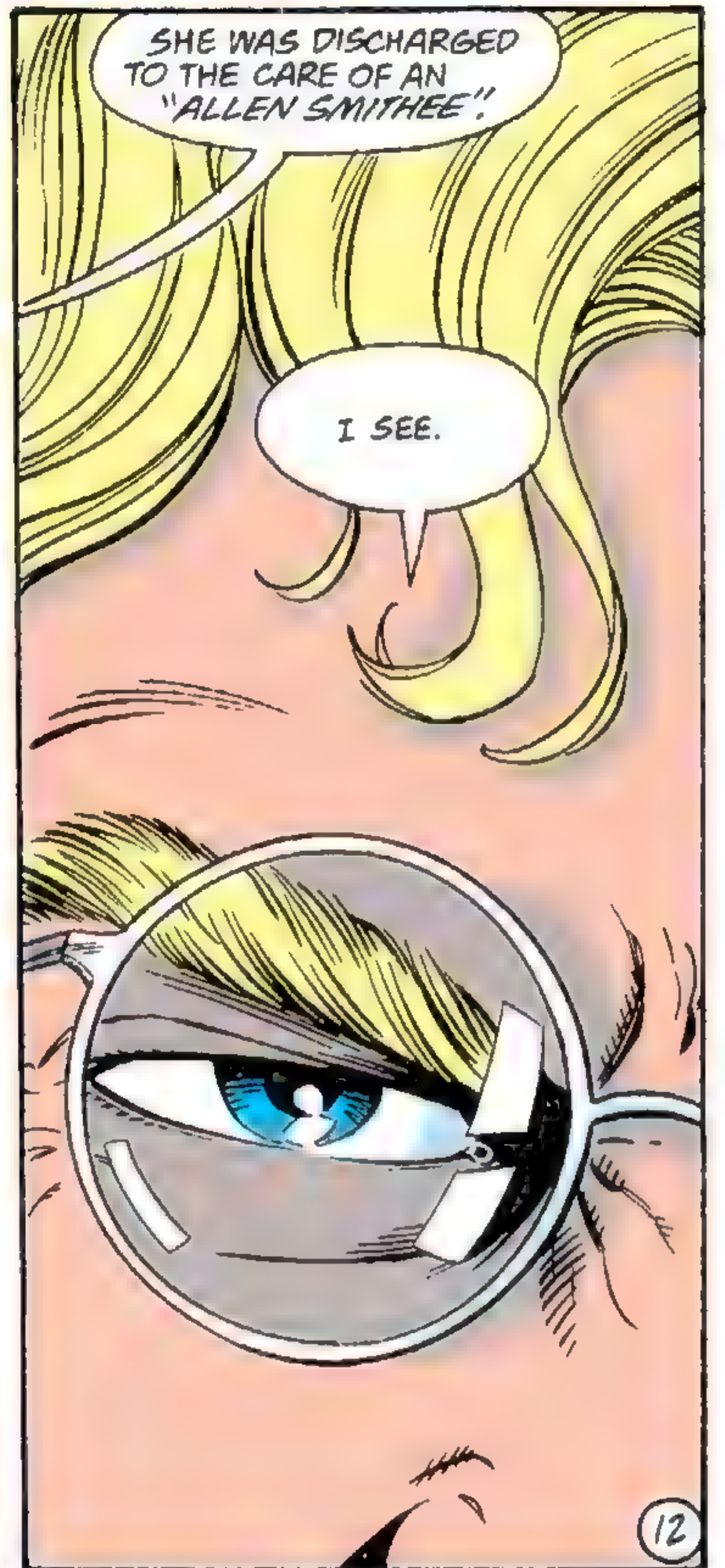
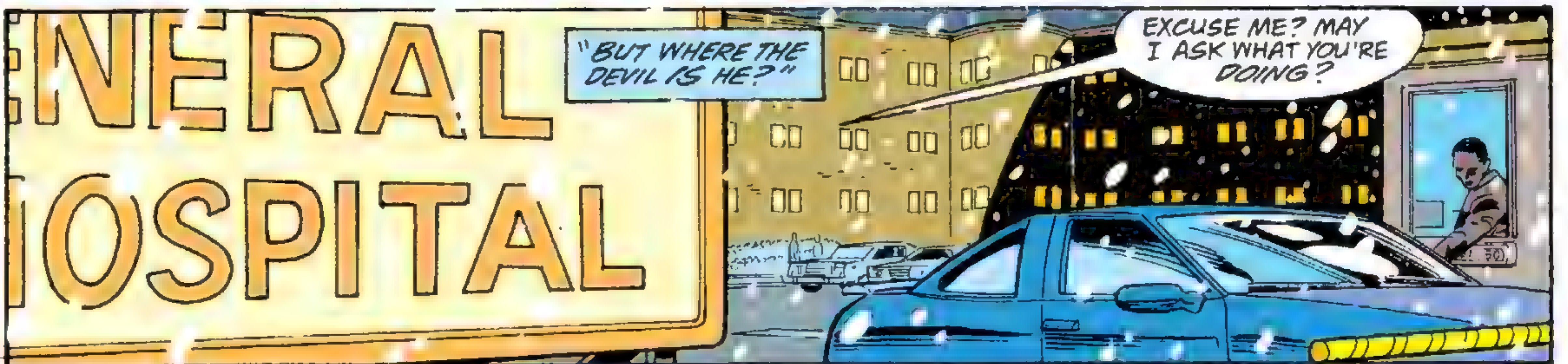
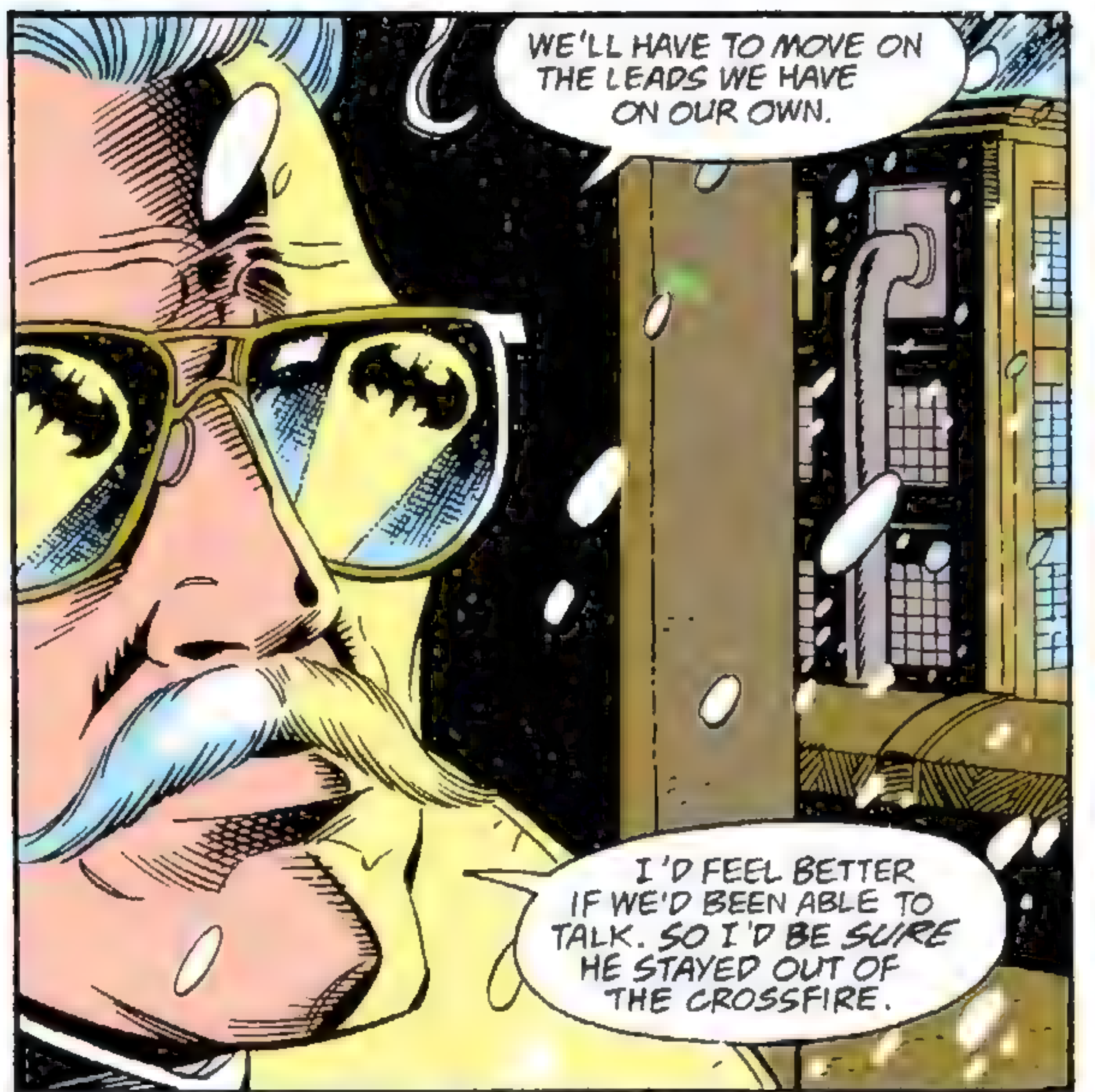
I WAS JUST COMING INSIDE, MONTAYA.

I THOUGHT HE WOULD SHOW BY NOW.



THIS NEW SET OF THREATS FROM THE JOKER... I DIDN'T WANT TO DEAL WITH THEM UNTIL WE'D SPOKEN.

USUALLY I WOULD HAVE HEARD SOMETHING FROM HIM BY NOW. I THINK HE DELIGHTS IN LETTING ME KNOW HE CAN ALWAYS REACH ME.





A BIT OF USEFUL TRIVIA HE LEARNED WHILE SPENDING THE DAY WORKING POSSIBLE ANGLES ON THE JOKER'S PLANS.

ALLEN SMITHEE IS A PSEUDONYM COMMONLY USED BY FILM DIRECTORS WHEN THEY ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR FINISHED PRODUCT.

THE GIRL IS IN DANGEROUS HANDS.

THE CLUE DROPPED IN THE MOCK MOVIE POSTER THE GAZETTE RAN IS TOO OBVIOUSLY A TRAP.



HIS WORK THIS AFTERNOON POINTS TO A MORE LIKELY LOCATION FOR THE JOKER'S LAIR.



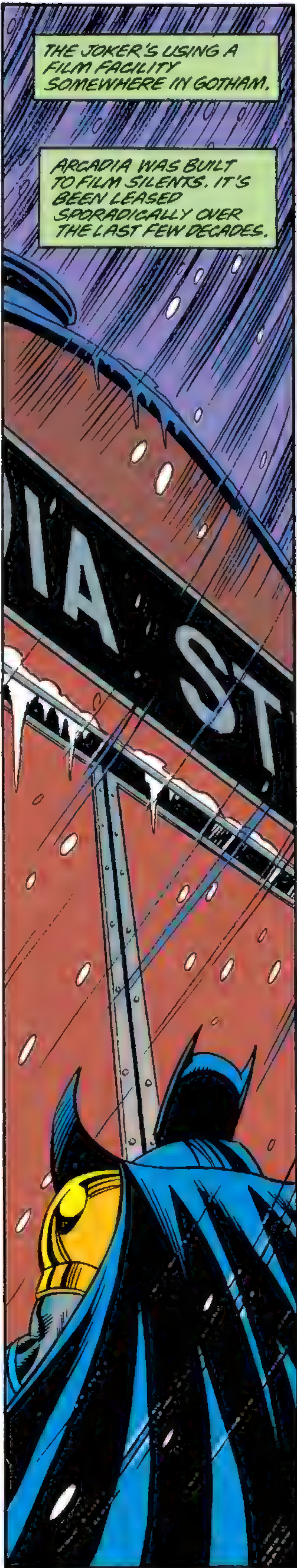
THE POLICE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HANDLE THE MANCHESTER MAJESTIC LEAD.

EVERYBODY WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACK. THE JOKER'S NOT SHY ABOUT KILLING COPS.

WE'VE DONE THIS BEFORE, KITCH.

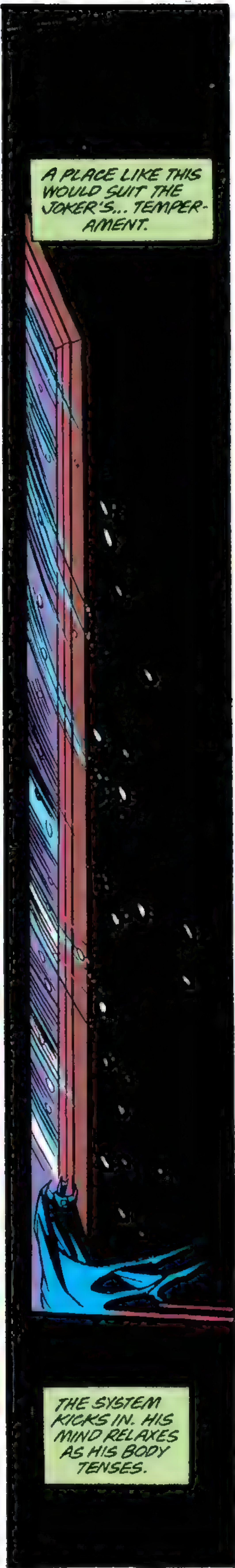
AND EVERY TIME A COUPLE OF COPS DIED.





THE JOKER'S USING A FILM FACILITY SOMEWHERE IN GOTHAM.

ARCADIA WAS BUILT TO FILM SILENTS. IT'S BEEN LEASED SPORADICALLY OVER THE LAST FEW DECADES.



A PLACE LIKE THIS WOULD SUIT THE JOKER'S... TEMPERAMENT.

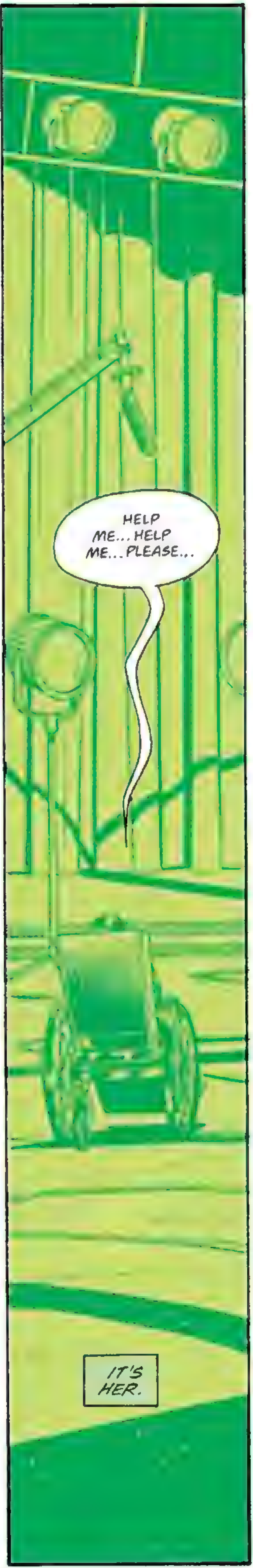
THE SYSTEM KICKS IN. HIS MIND RELAXES AS HIS BODY TENSES.



BATMAN...
BATMAN...?

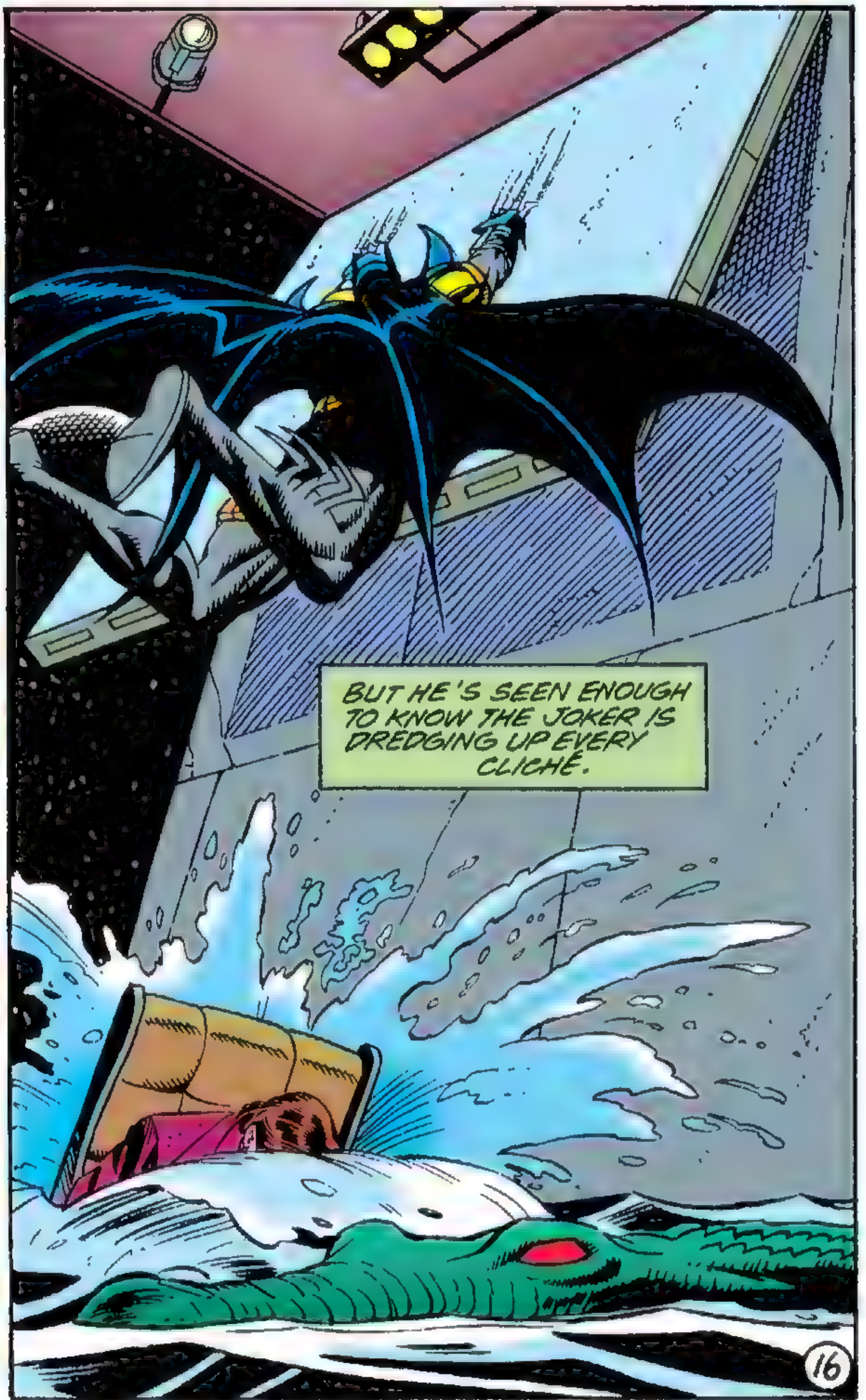
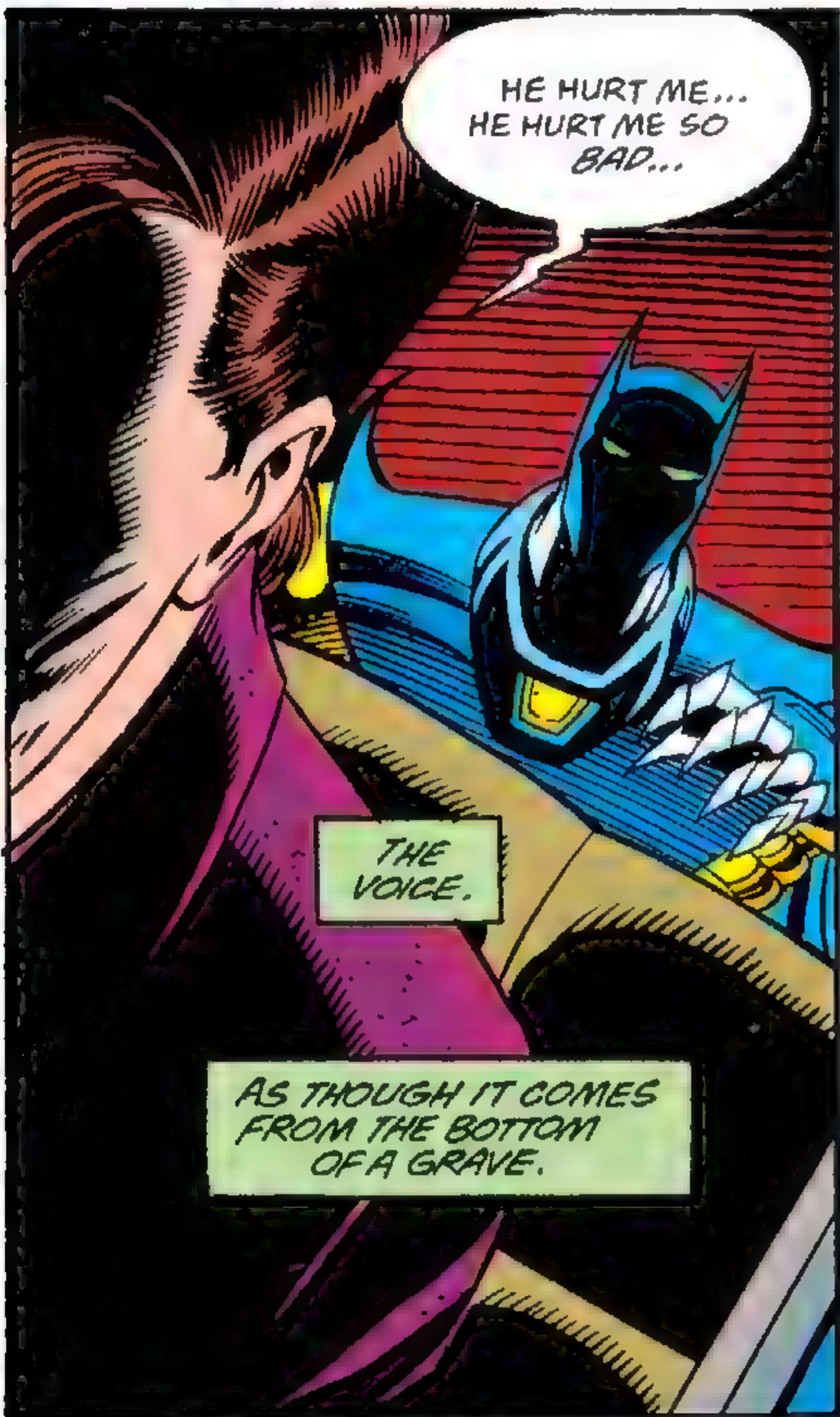
THE GIRL'S VOICE. WEAK. FRIGHTENED.

SWITCHING TO NIGHT VISION.



HELP
ME... HELP
ME... PLEASE...

IT'S
HER.



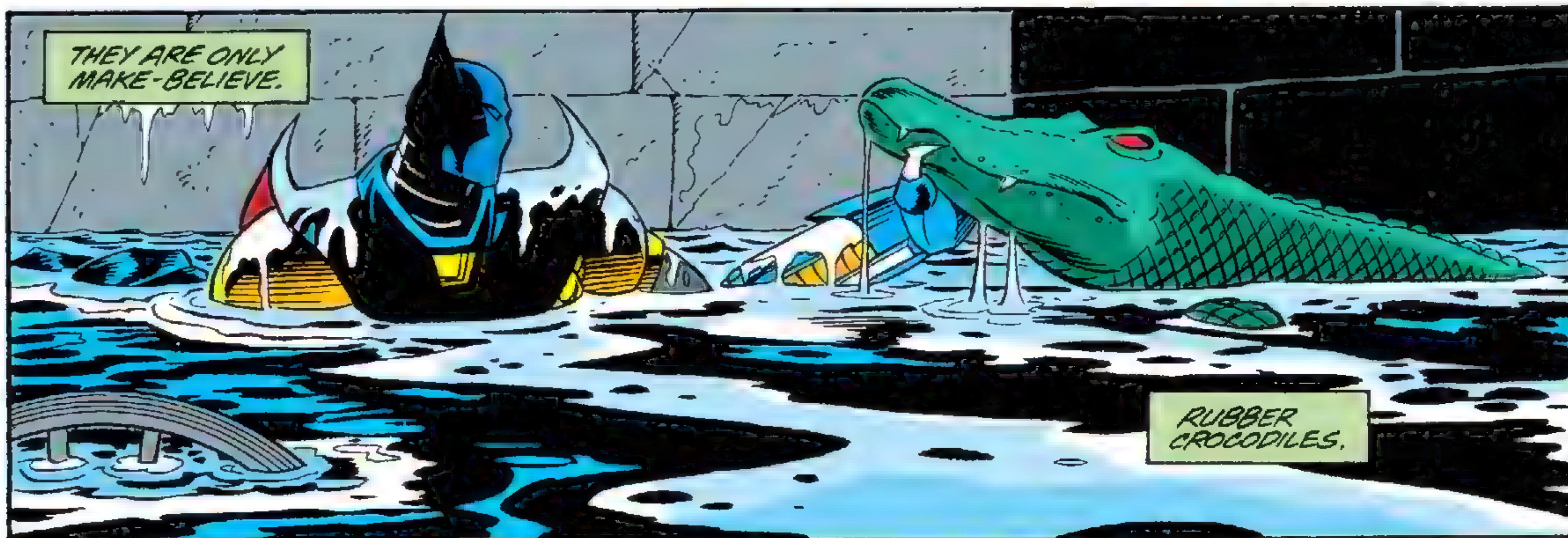


FIRING THE GRAPPLE LINE. BUT HE KNOWS IT'S...



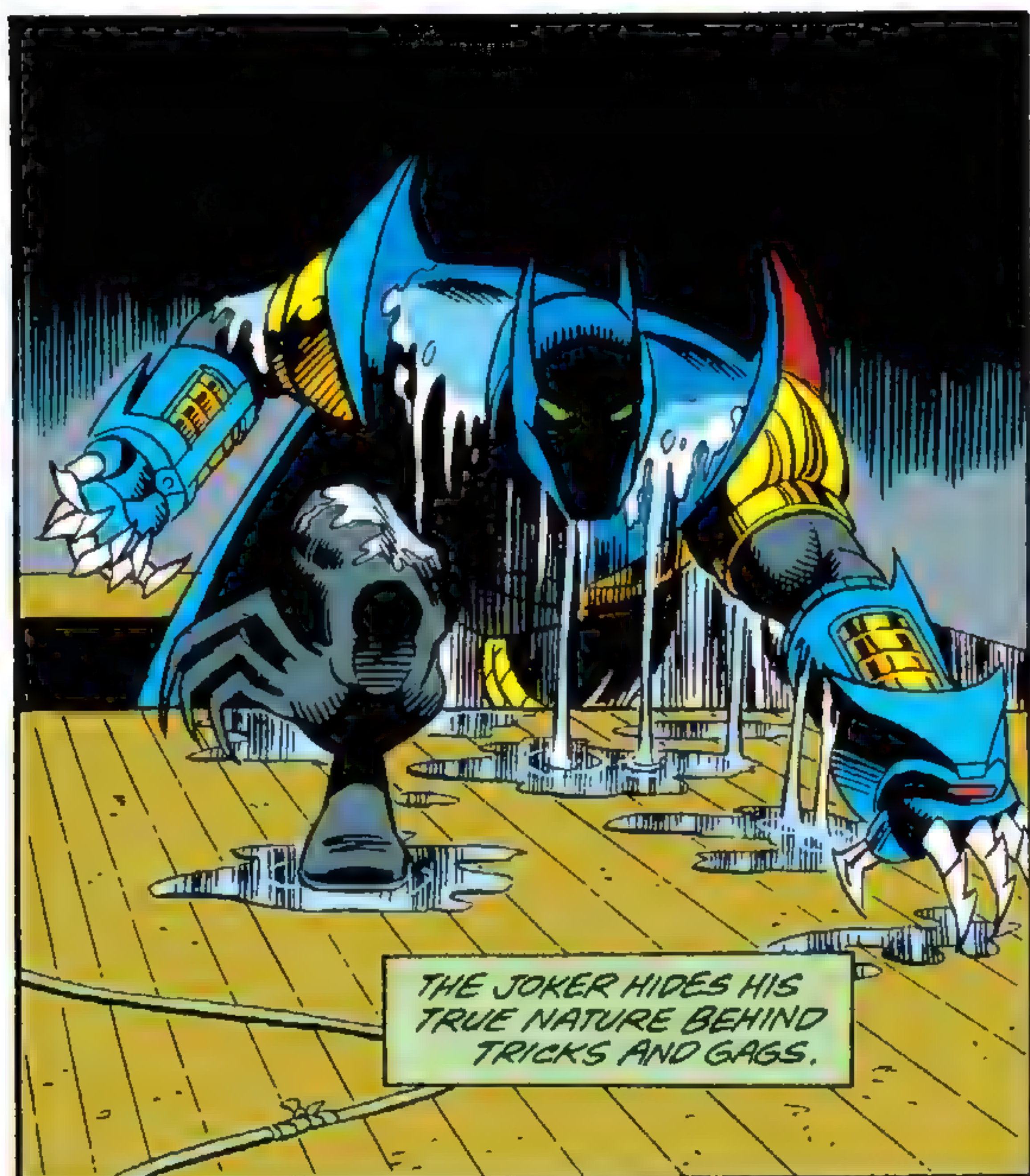
TOO LATE.

HE REALIZES THAT THE JOKER'S TRAPS ARE LIKE THE MOVIES IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.



THEY ARE ONLY MAKE-BELIEVE.

RUBBER CROCODILES.



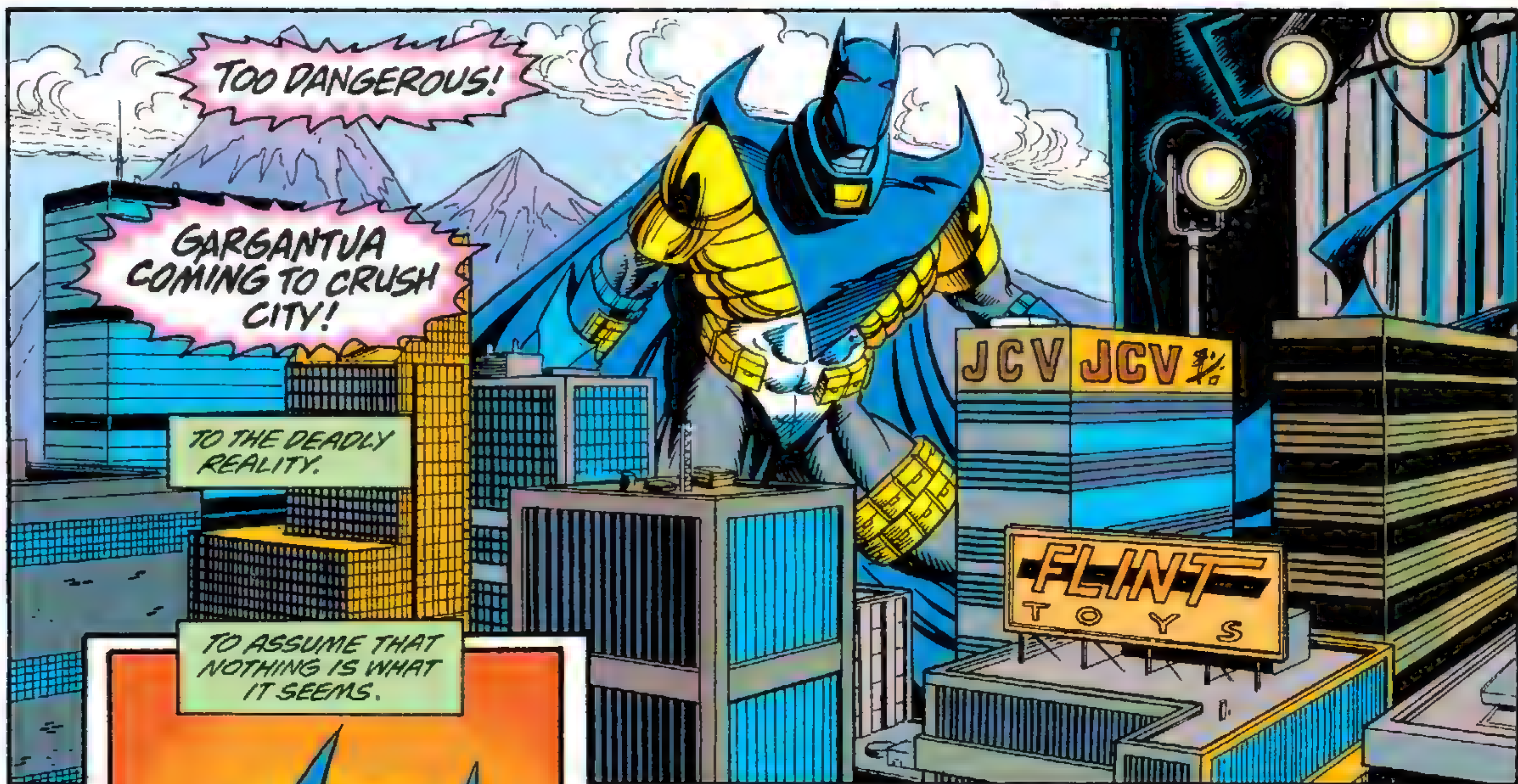
THE JOKER HIDES HIS TRUE NATURE BEHIND TRICKS AND GAGS.



THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IS TO SEE THROUGH THE ILLUSION.

GARGANTUA IS COMING! GARGANTUA IS COMING!

17

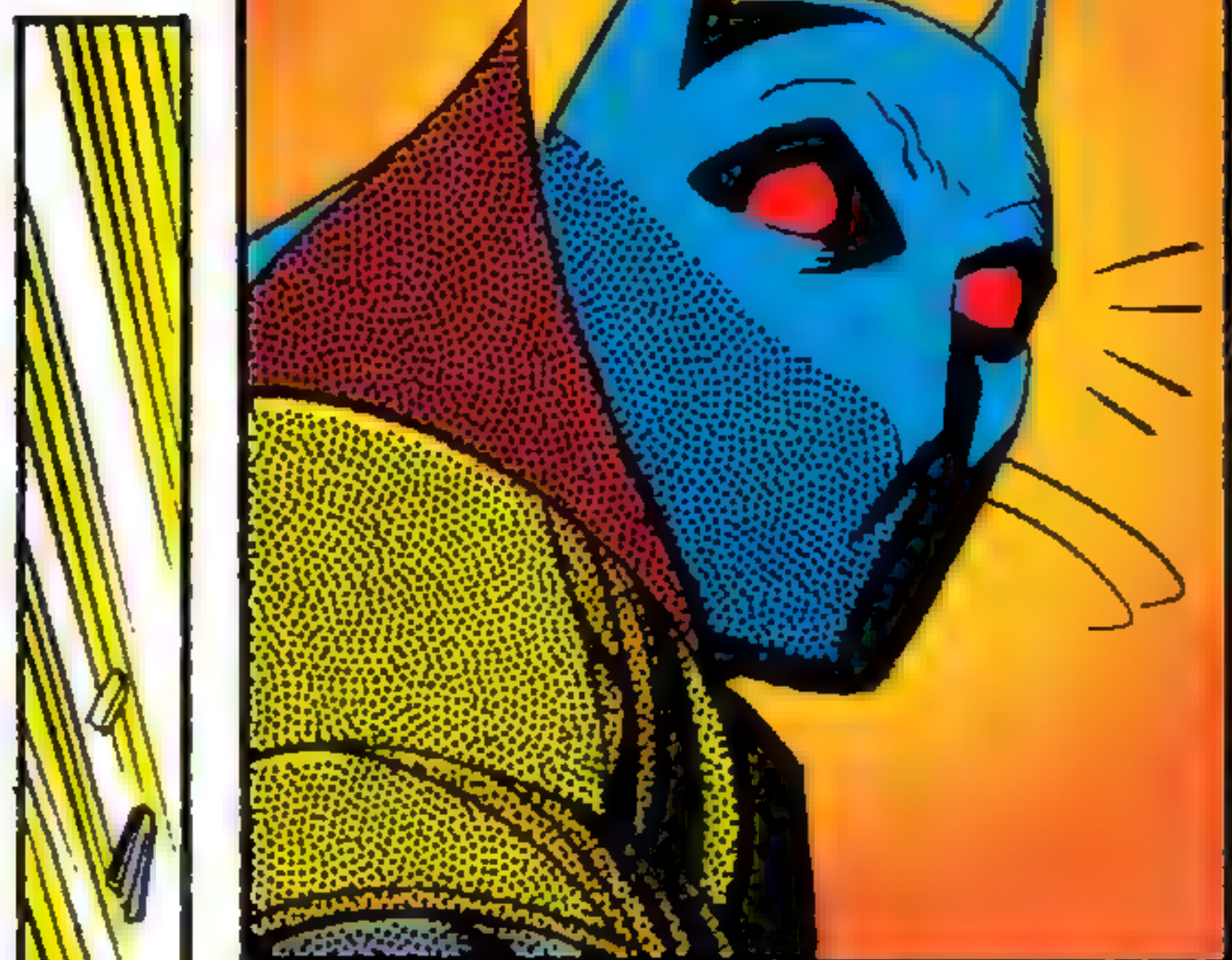


TOO DANGEROUS!

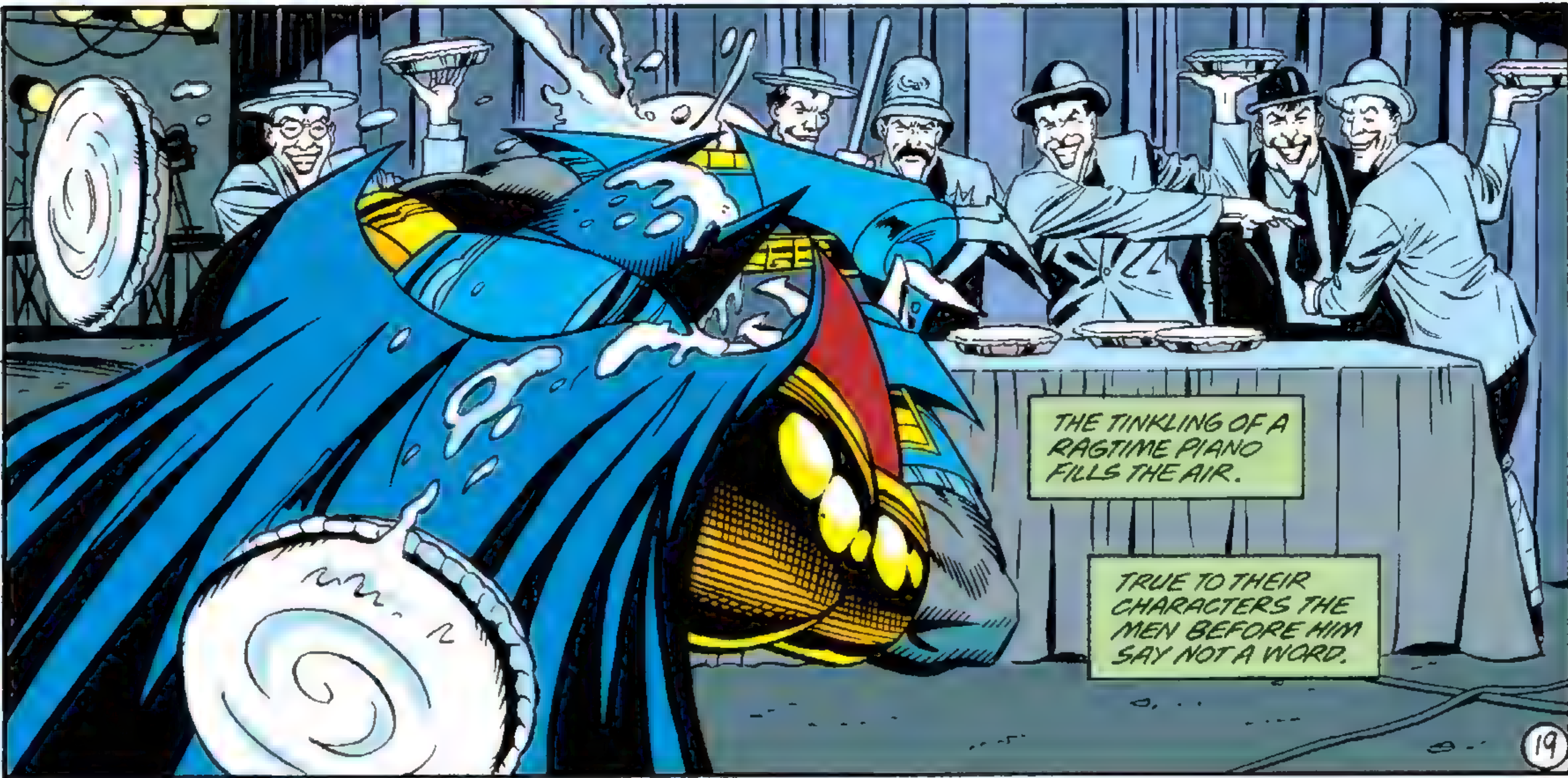
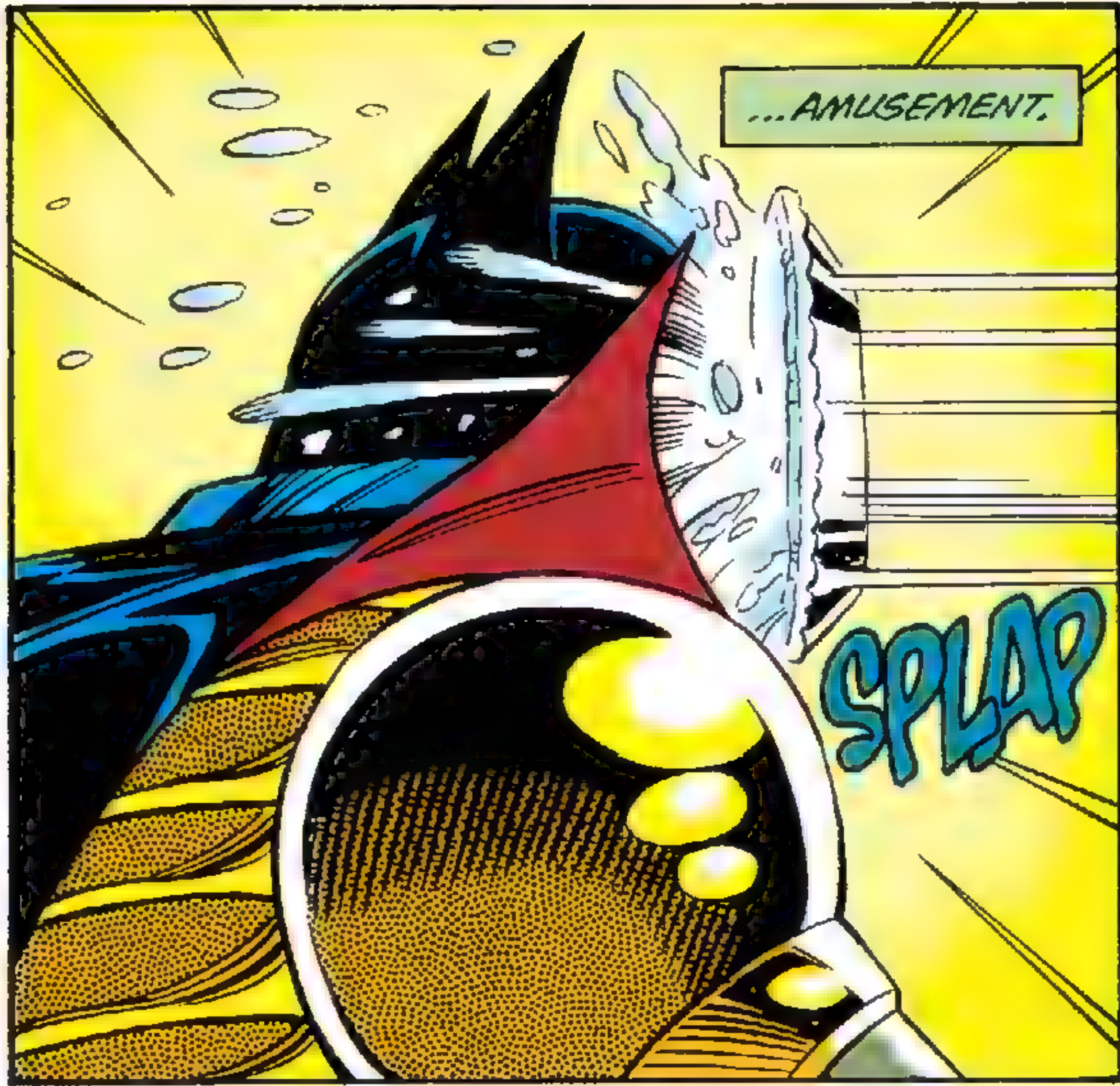
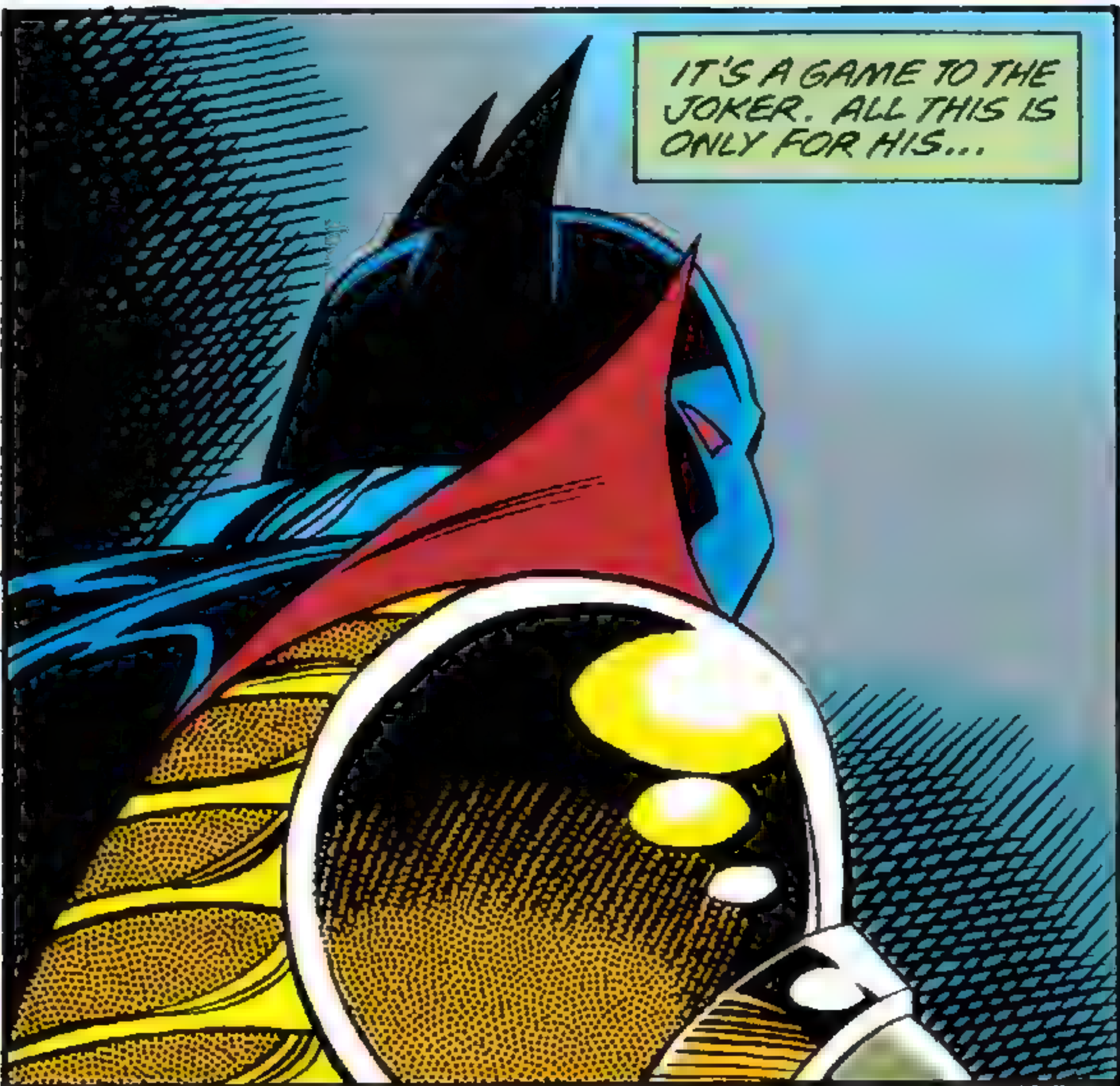
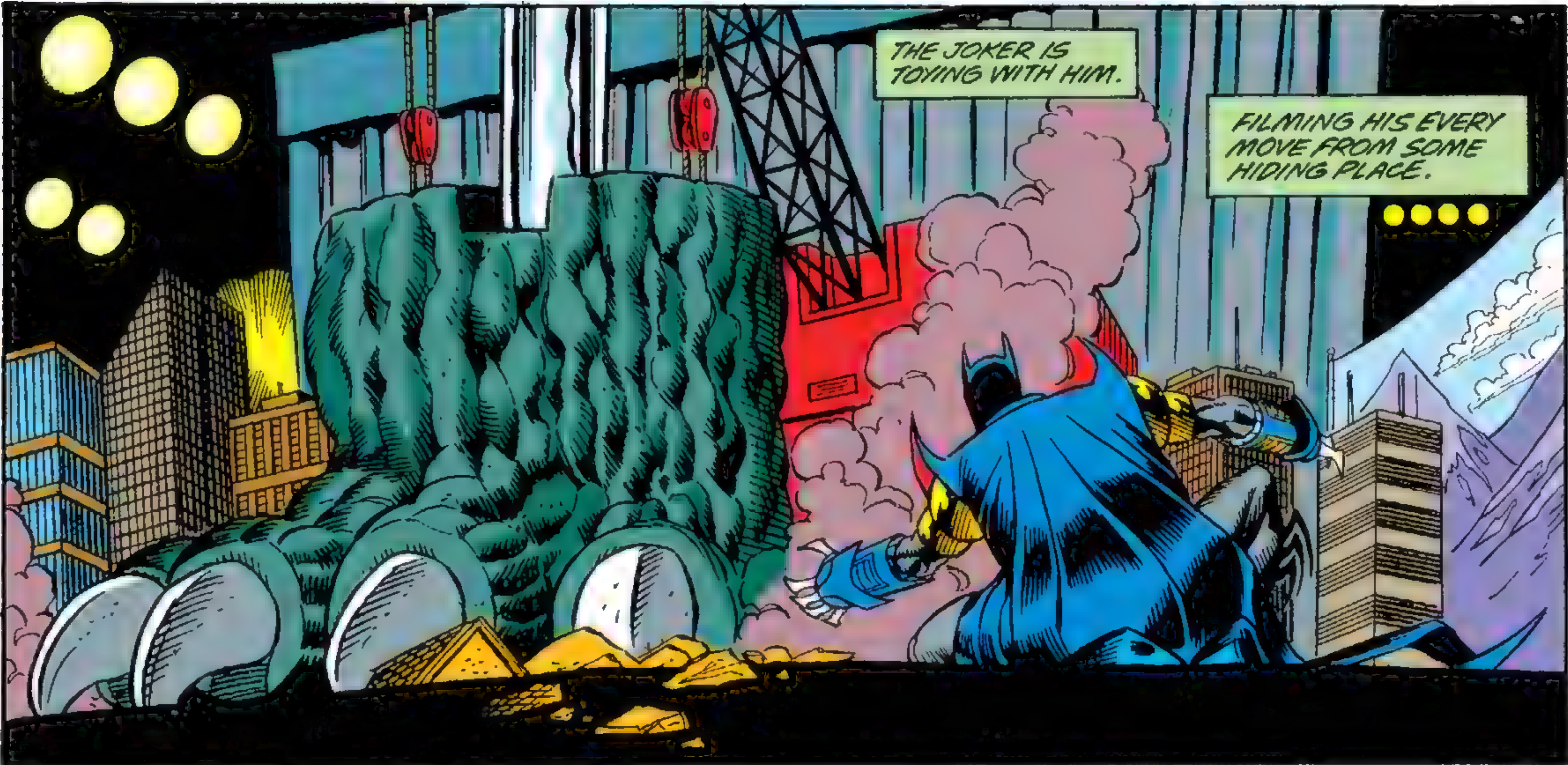
GARGANTUA
COMING TO CRUSH
CITY!

TO THE DEADLY
REALITY.

TO ASSUME THAT
NOTHING IS WHAT
IT SEEMS.



AND THAT DANGER
IS EVERYWHERE.





ANY ONE OF THEM COULD
BE THE REAL JOKER.

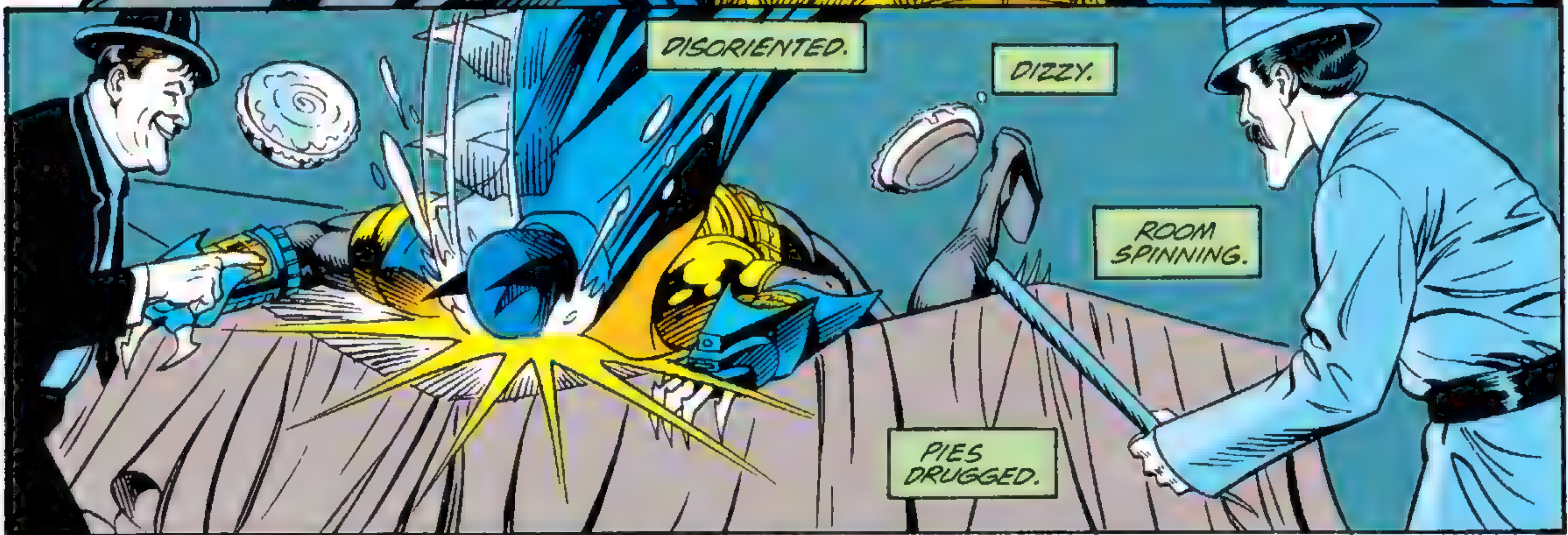
WAYNE WOULD HAVE
TAKEN THEM ON
HAND-TO-HAND.



UK!

HE USES
HIS
ARSENAL.

SUDDENLY HIS FEET
FEEL UNCERTAIN
UNDER HIM.

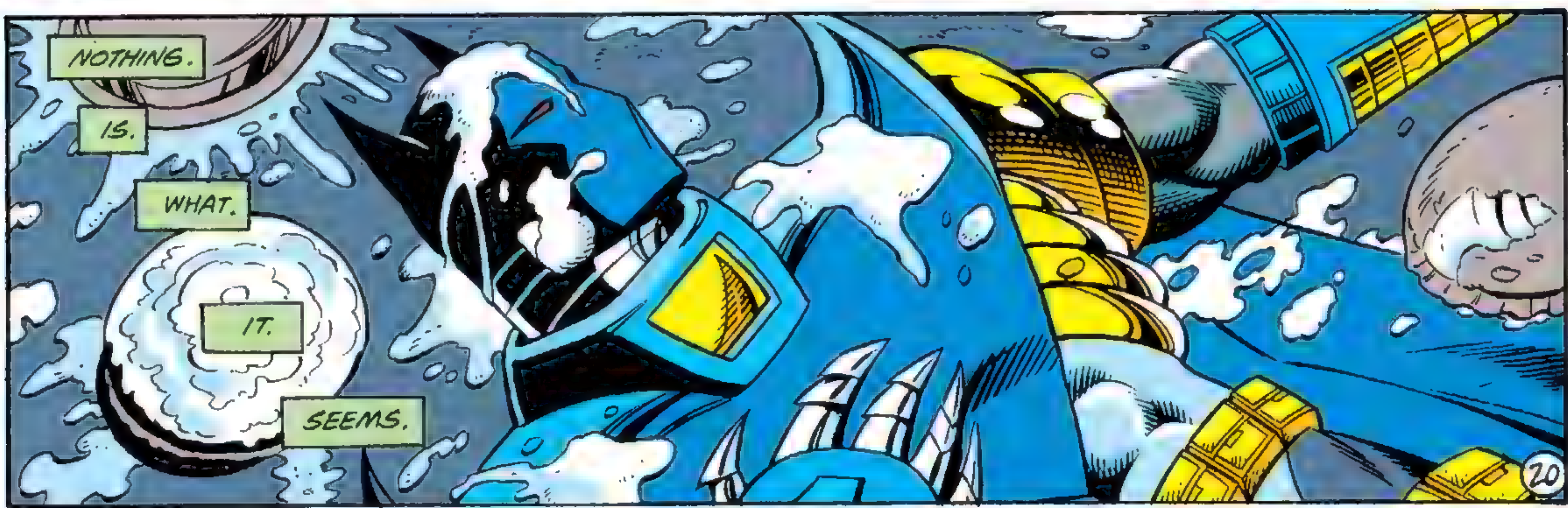


DISORIENTED.

DIZZY.

ROOM
SPINNING.

PIES
DRUGGED.



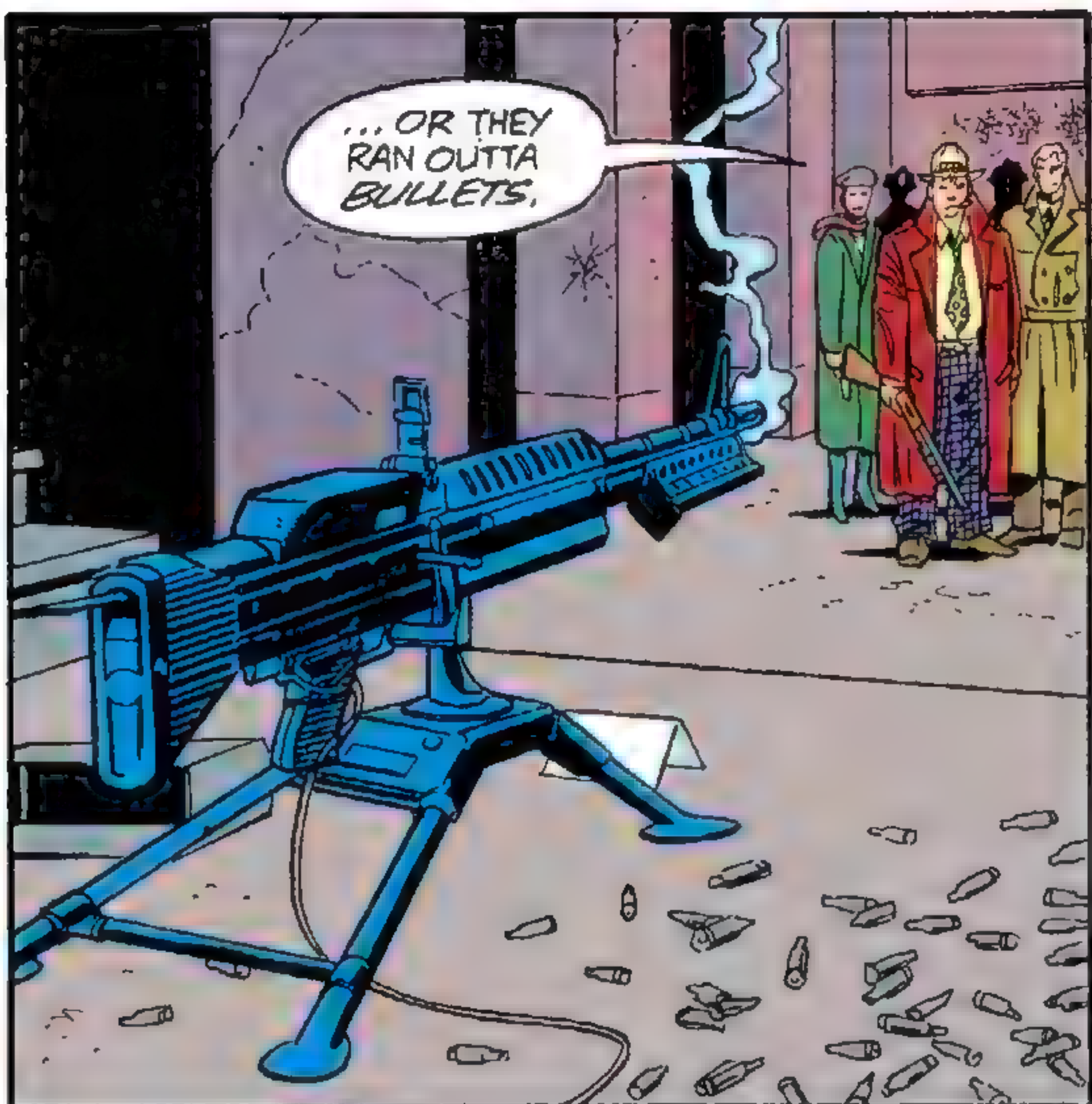
NOTHING.

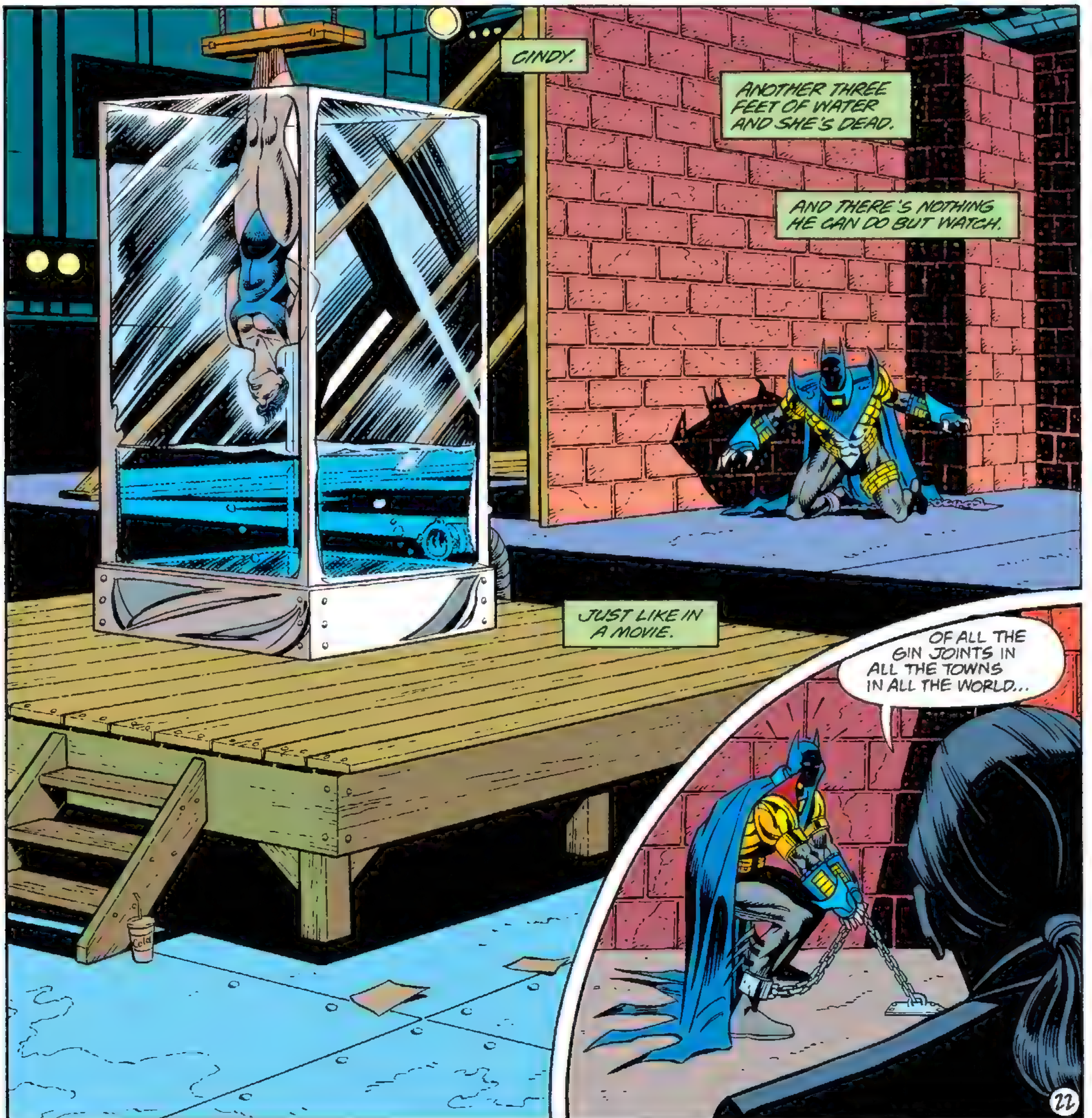
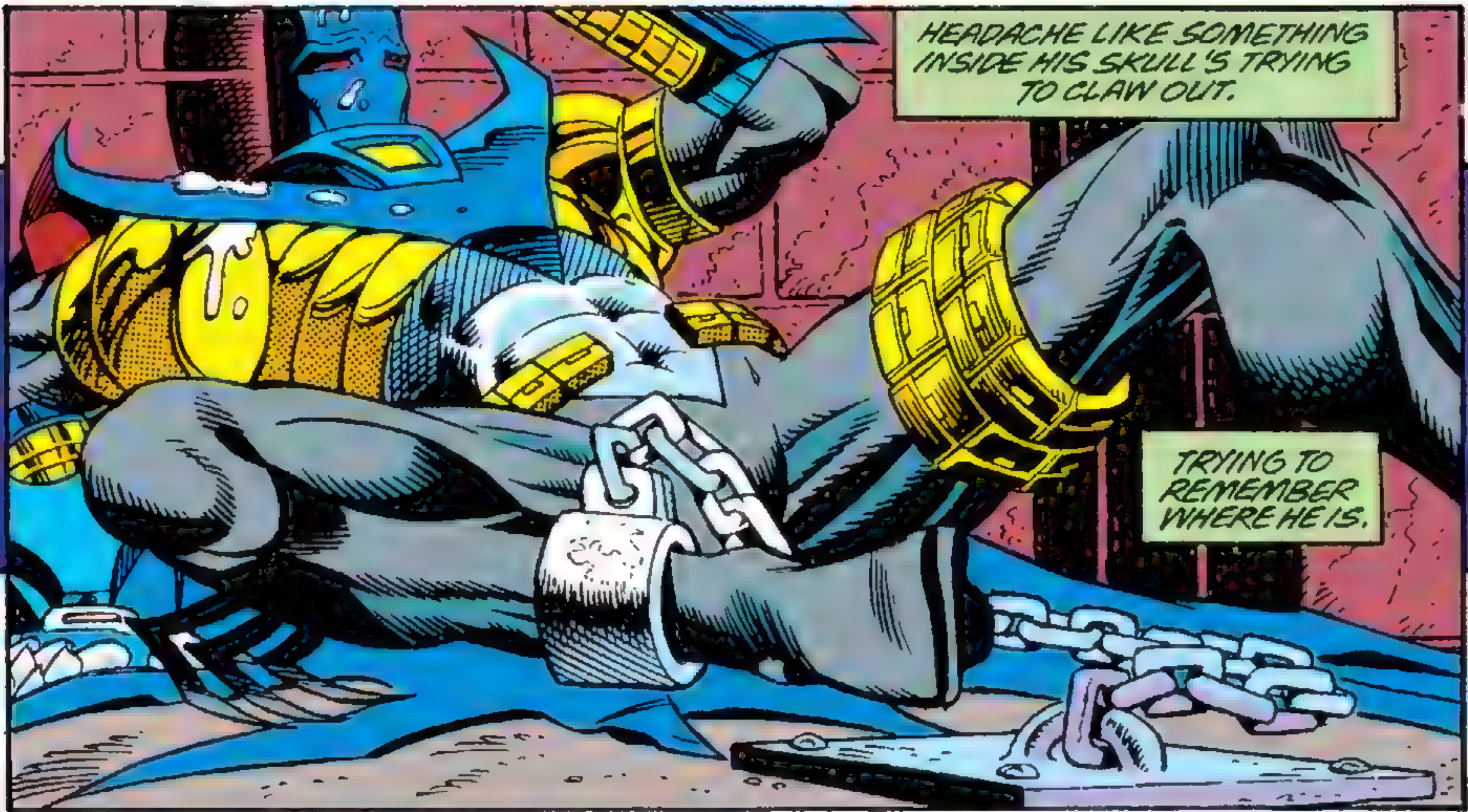
IS.

WHAT.

IT.

SEEMS.









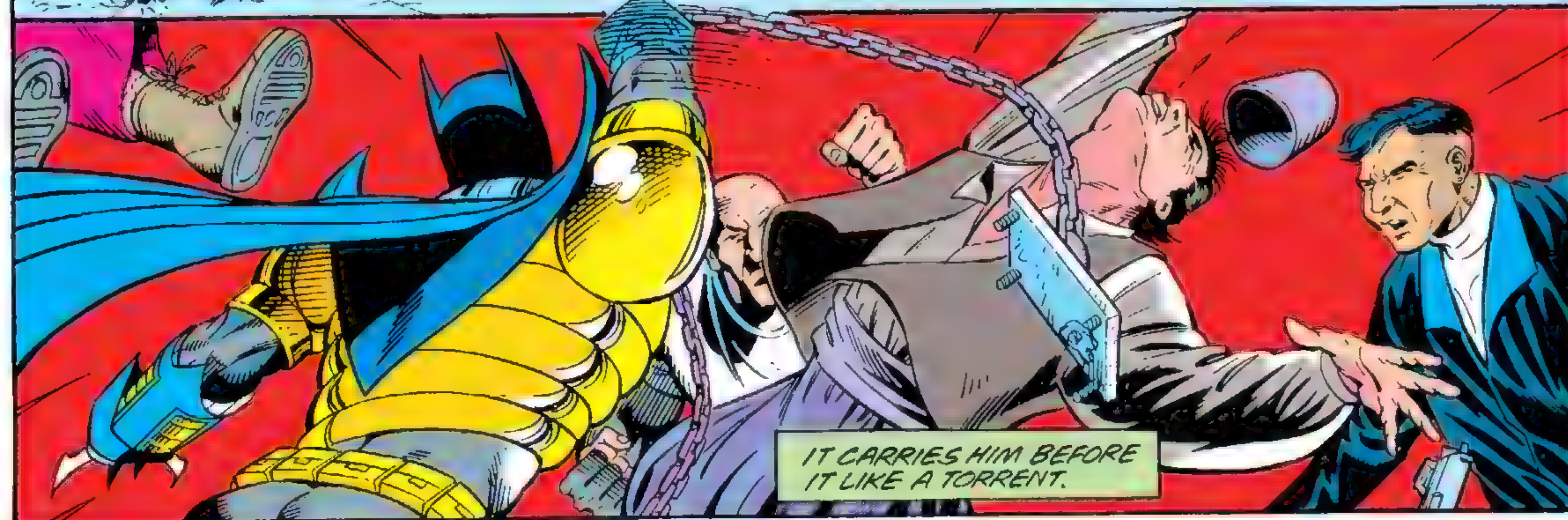
DC
DETECTIVE
COMICS
673 \$1.50 US
\$2.00 CAN
70p UK
APR 94

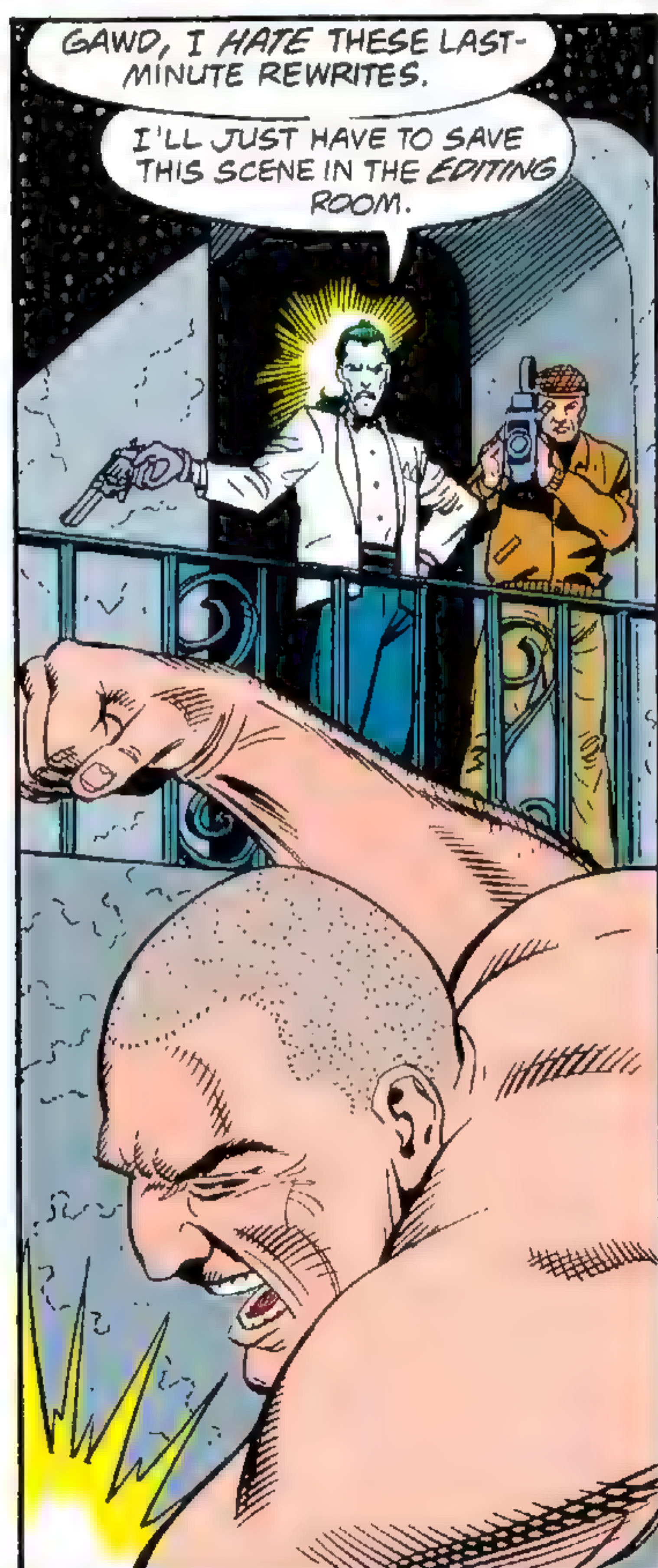
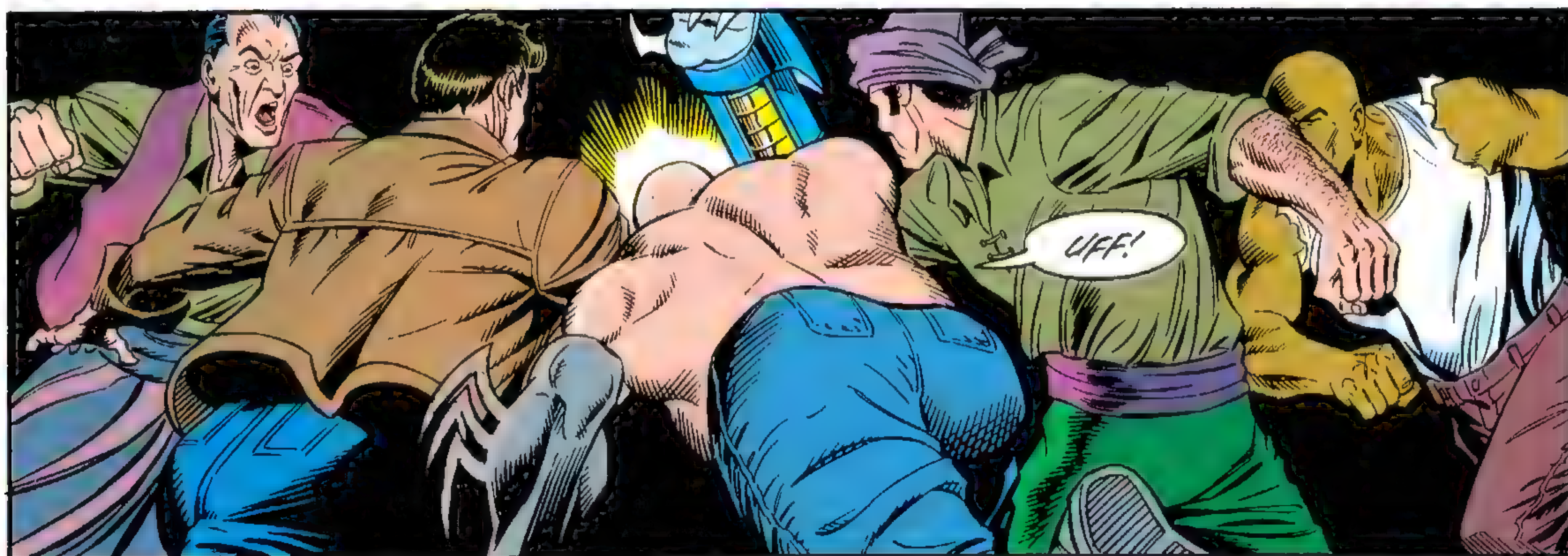
DIXON
NOLAN
HANNA

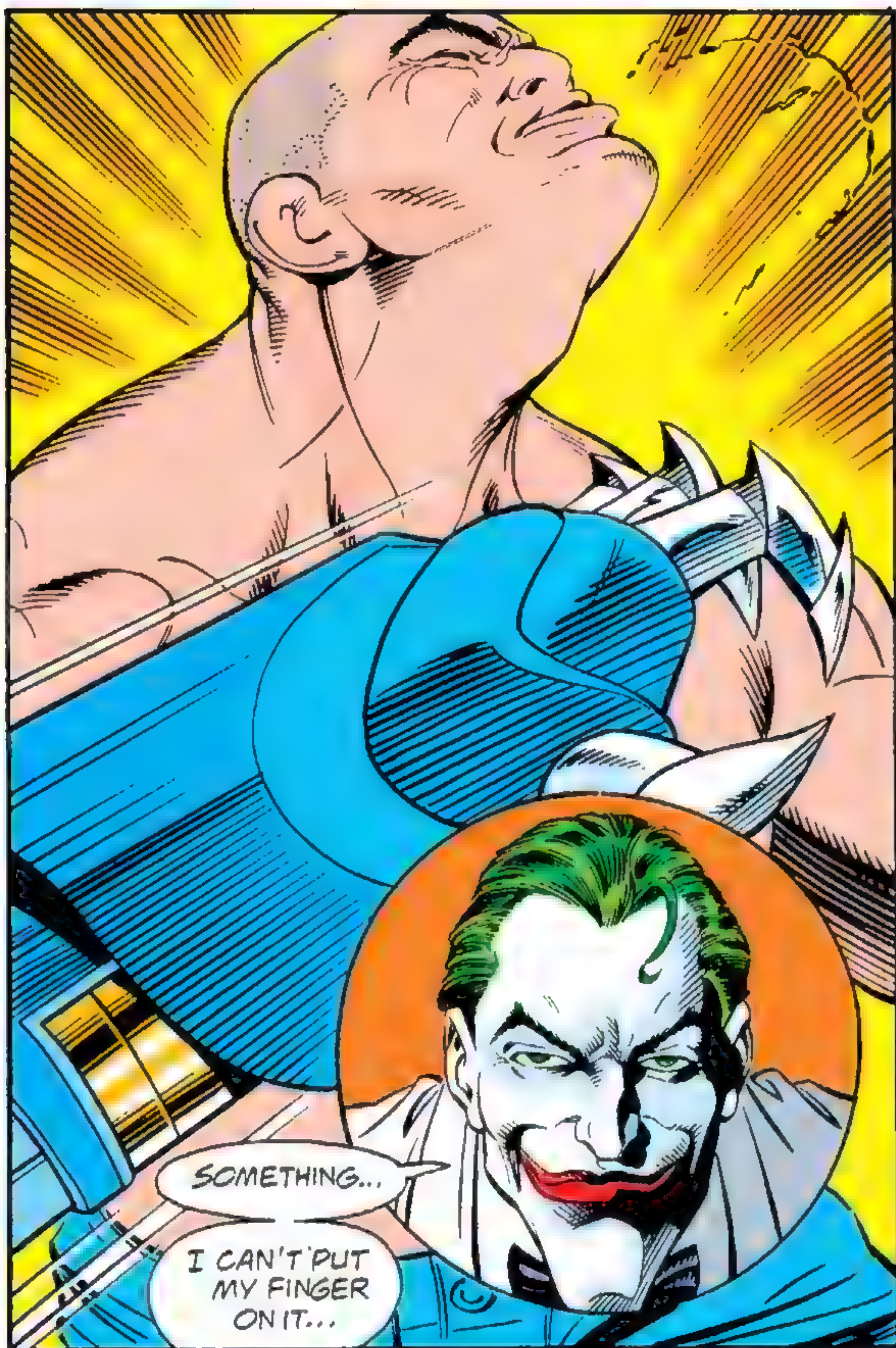
APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

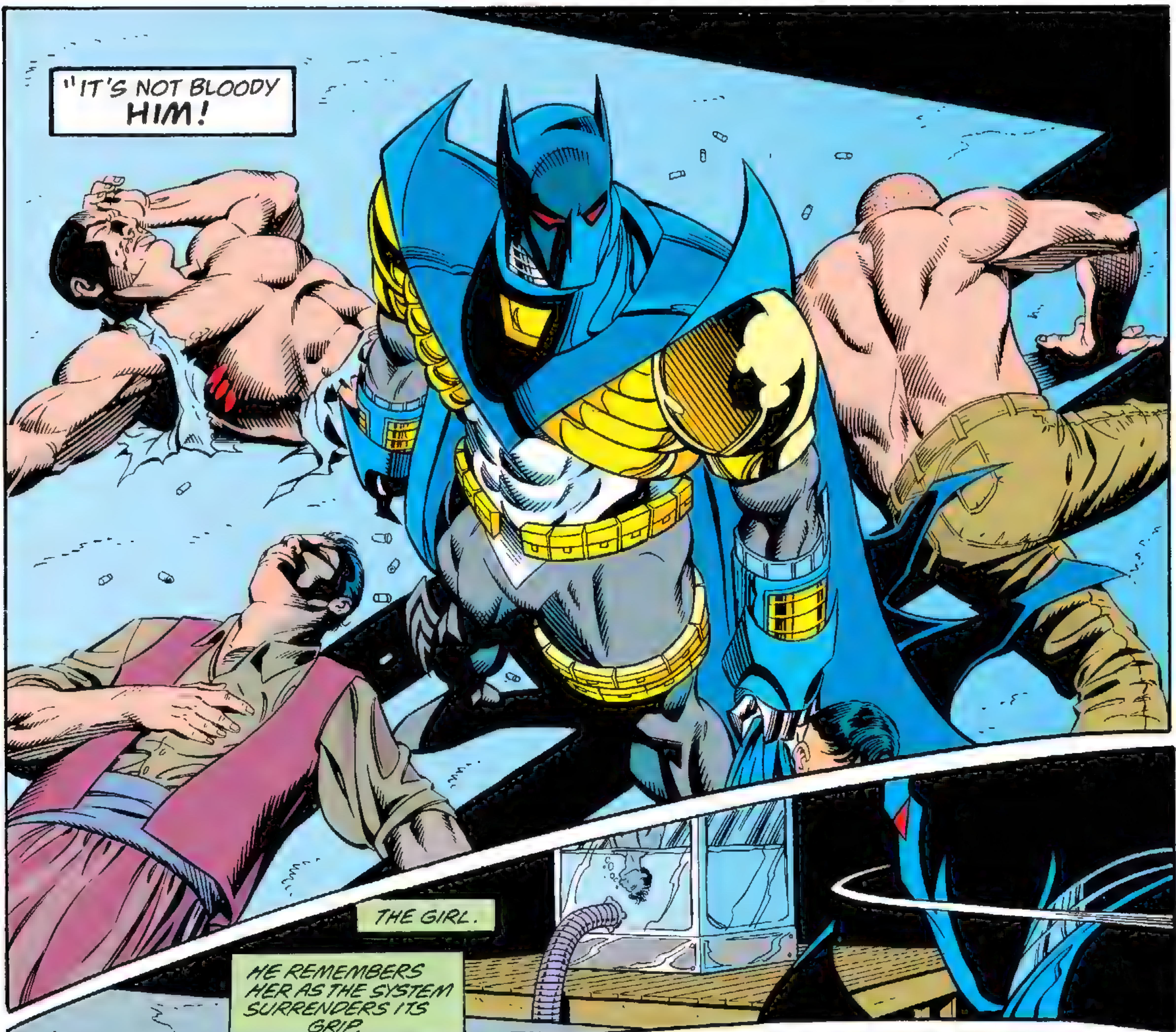








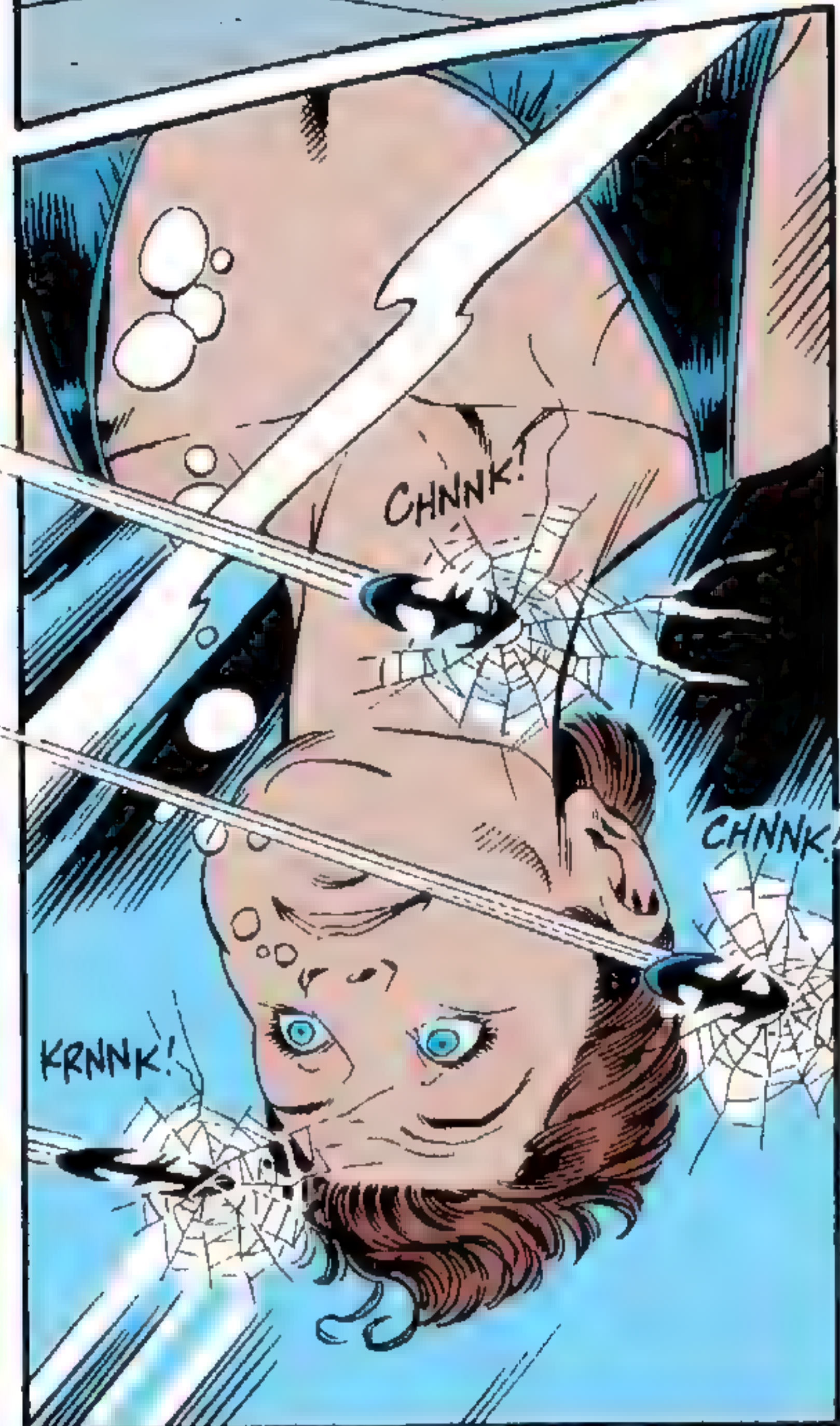




"IT'S NOT BLOODY HIM!"

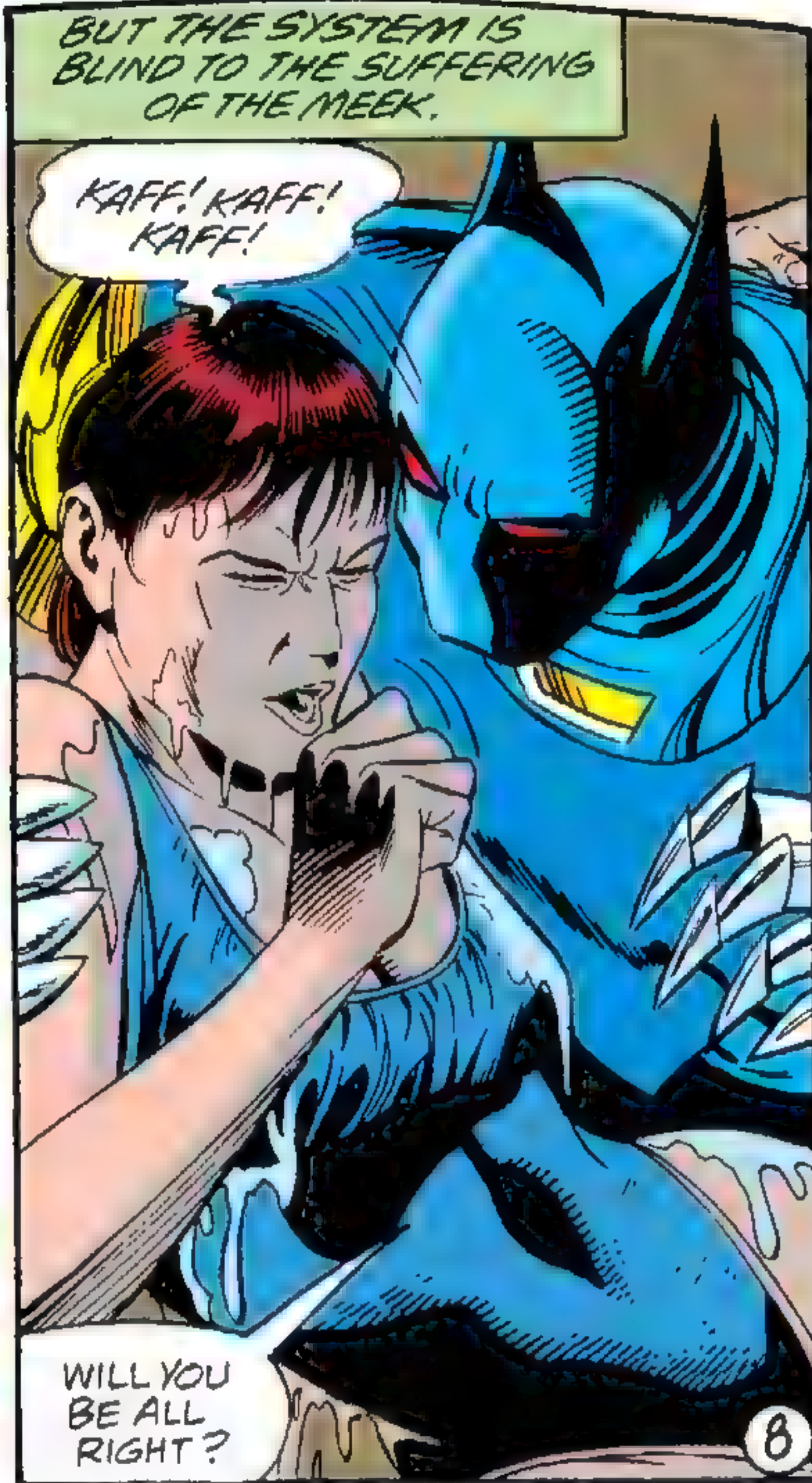
THE GIRL.

HE REMEMBERS HER AS THE SYSTEM SURRENDERS ITS GRIP.



THE CRUSADE IS TO REDEEM AS WELL AS AVENGE.

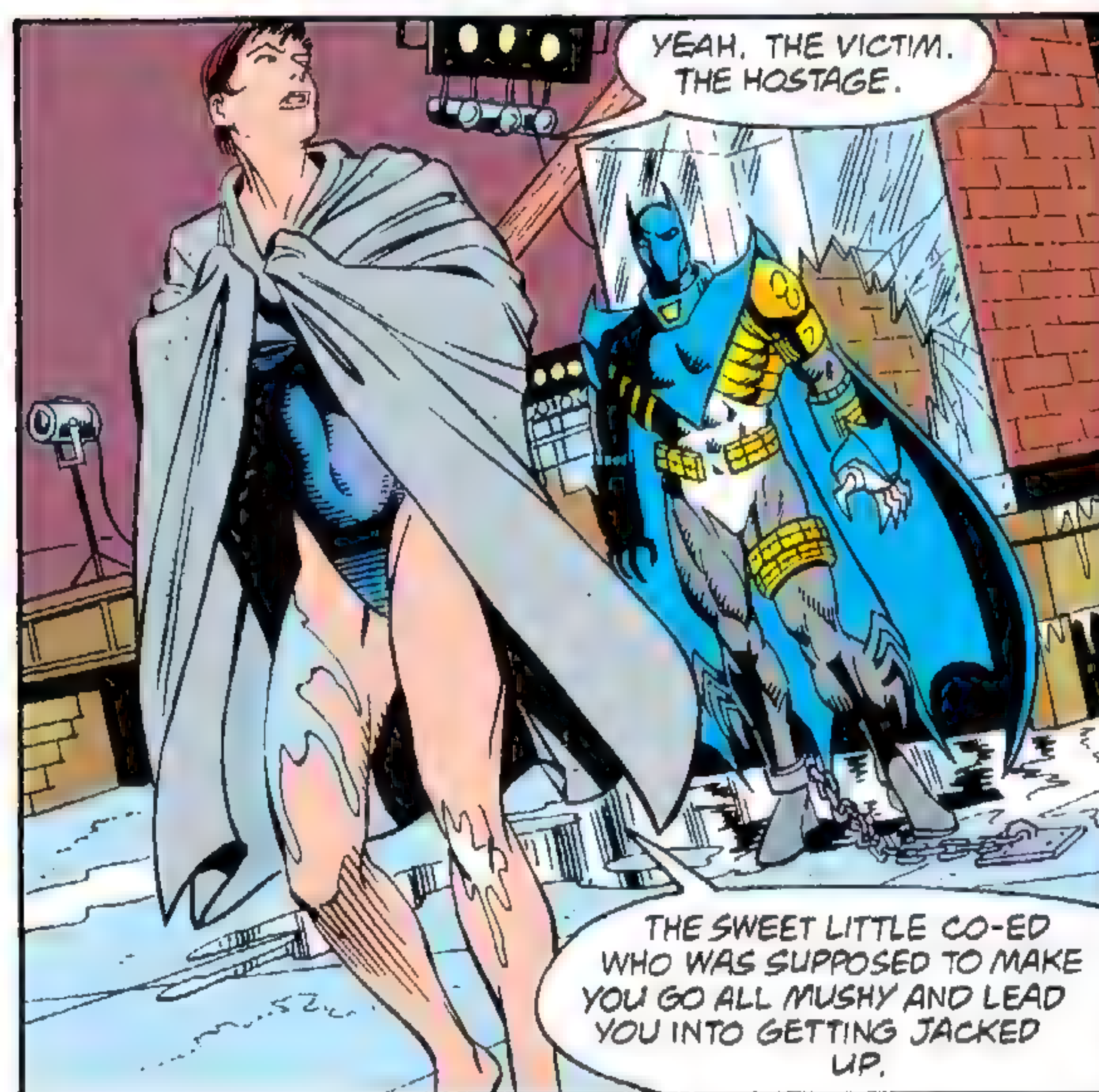
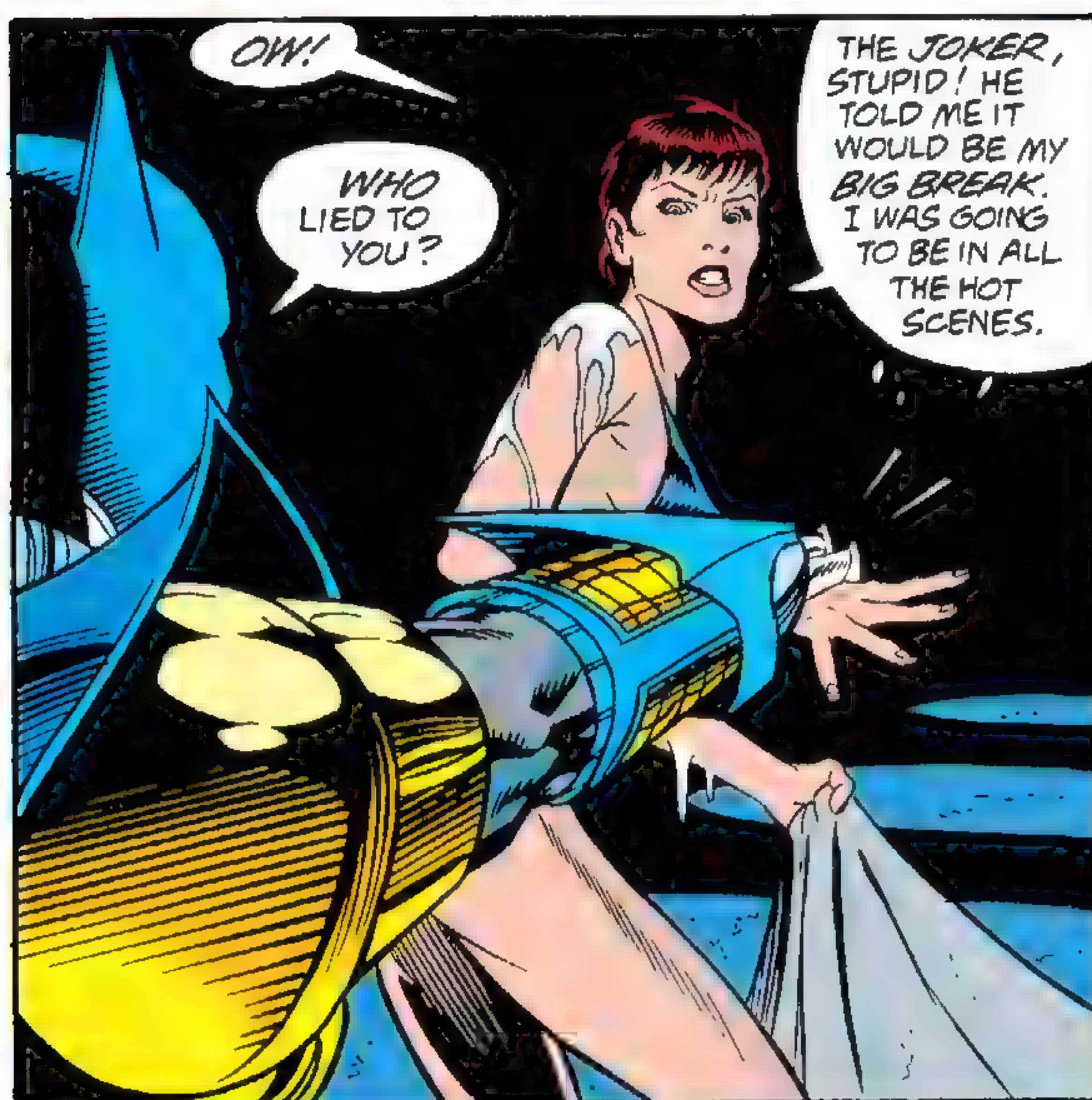
TO SPARE THE INNOCENT FROM HARM WHILE PUNISHING THE WICKED.



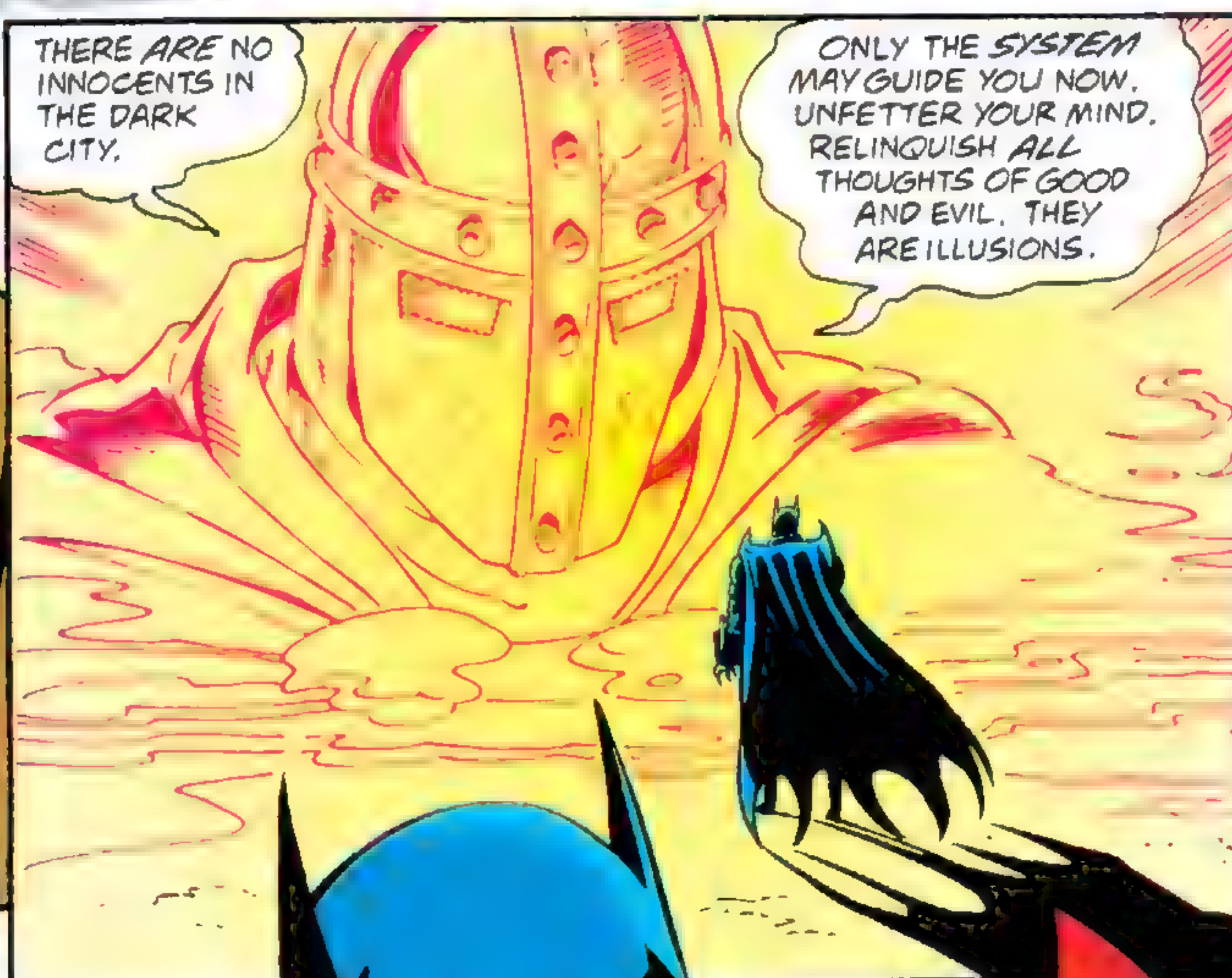
BUT THE SYSTEM IS BLIND TO THE SUFFERING OF THE MEEK.

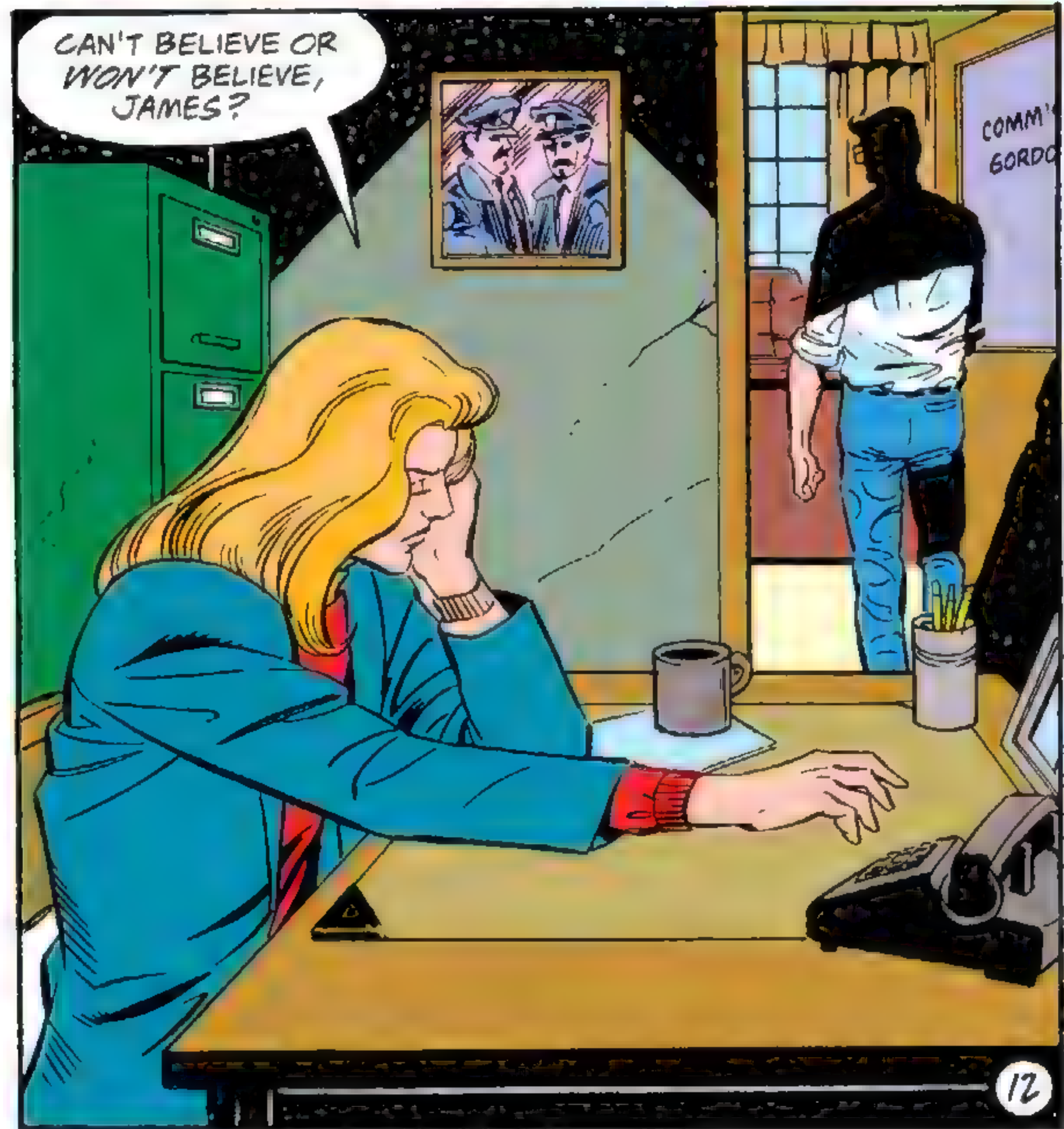
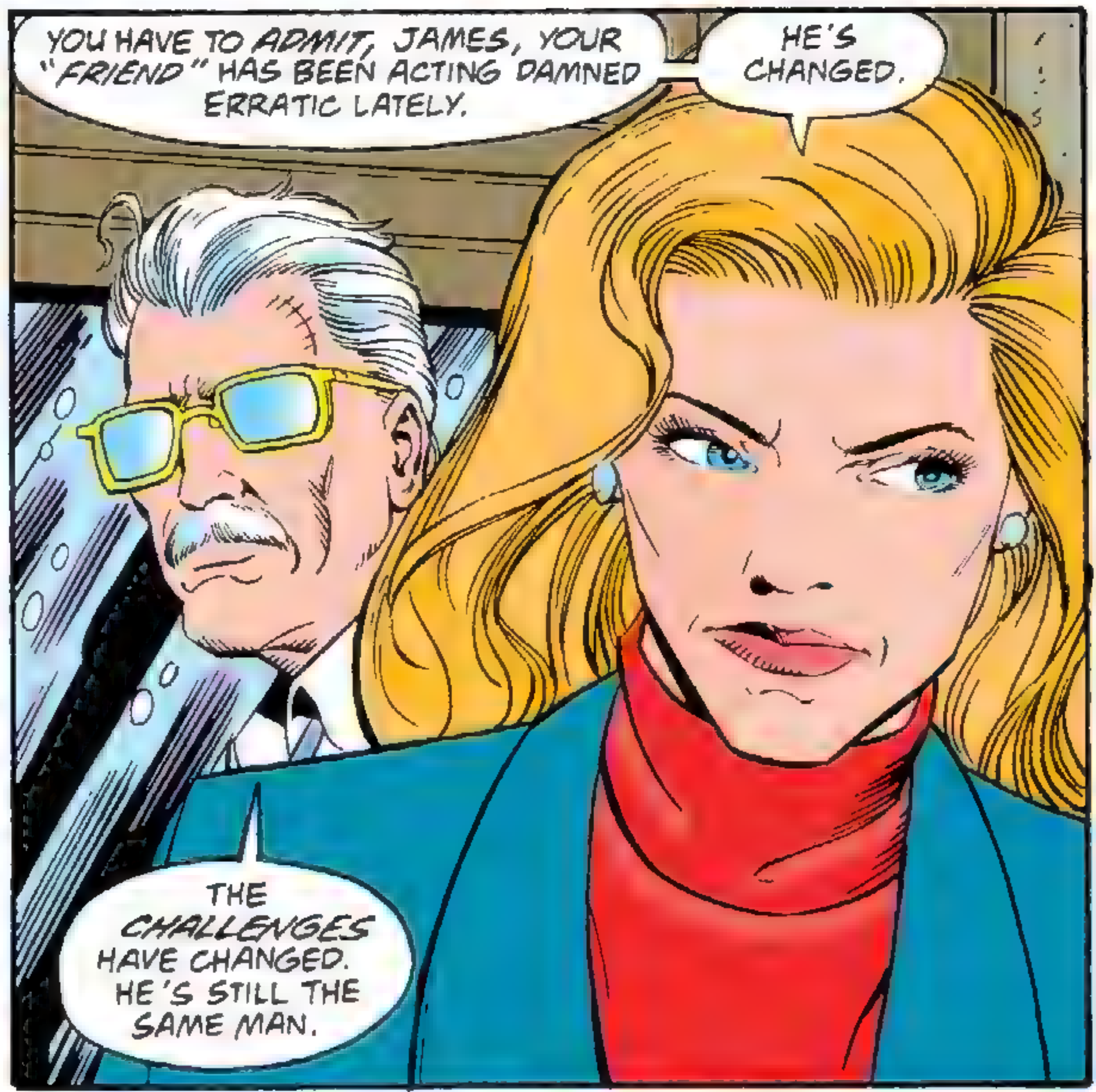
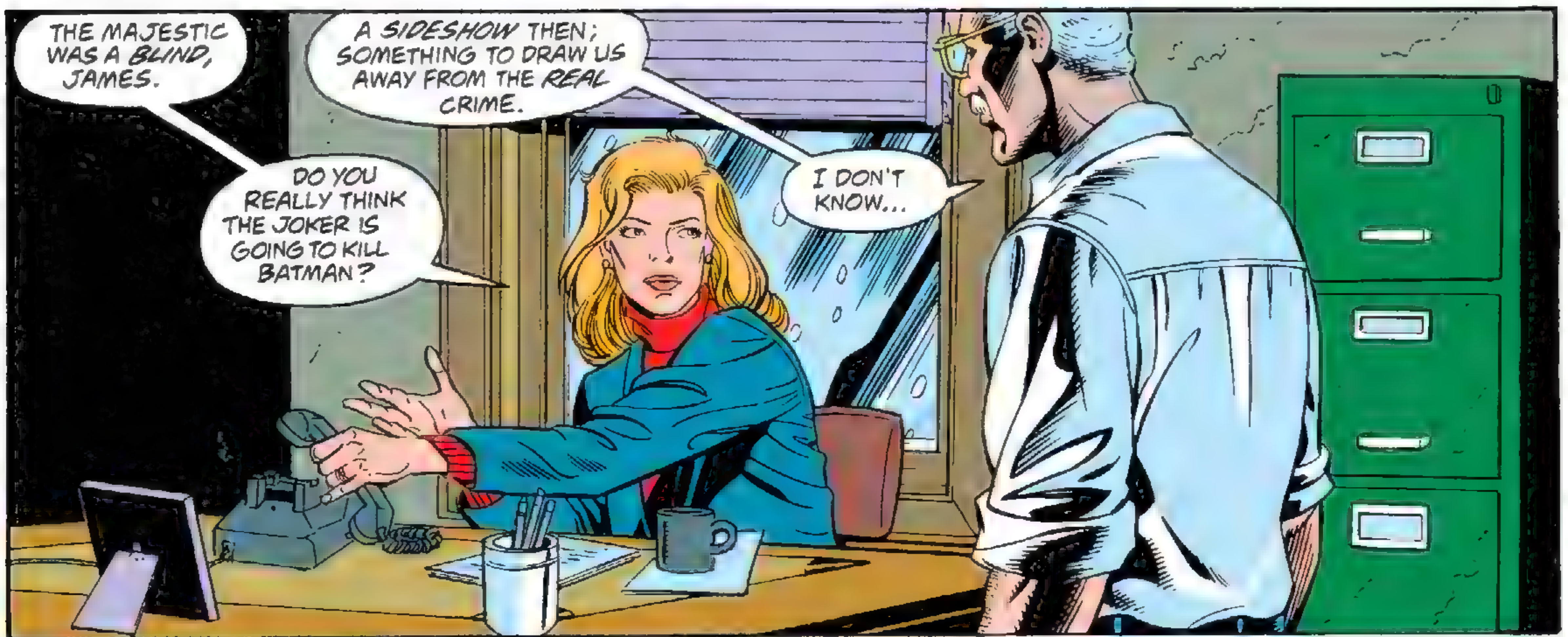
KAFF! KAFF! KAFF!

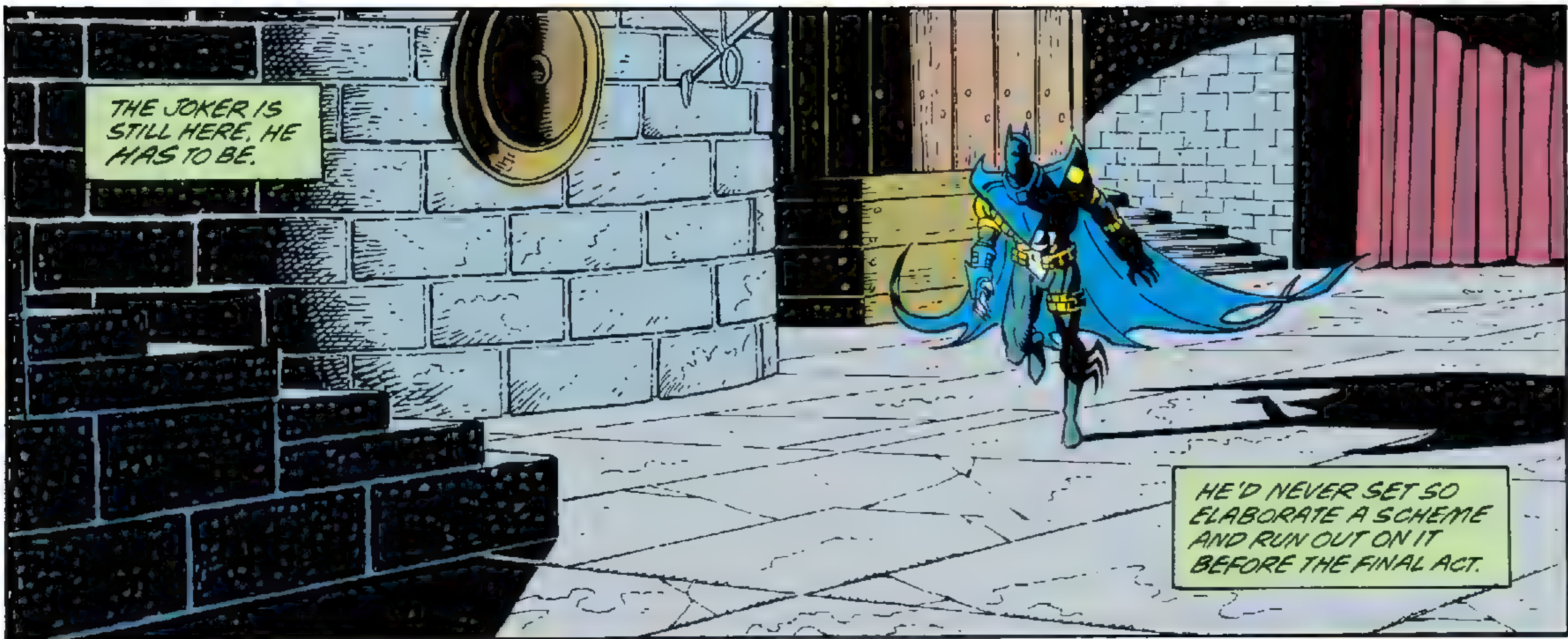
WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT?





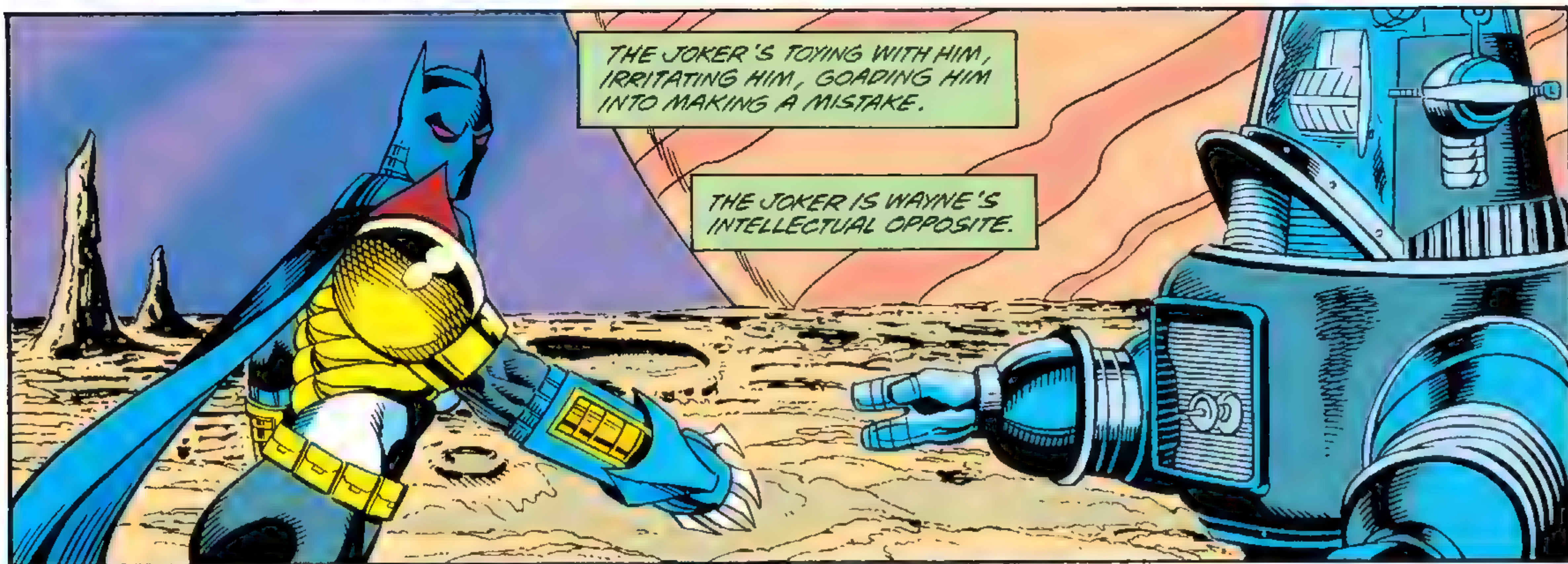






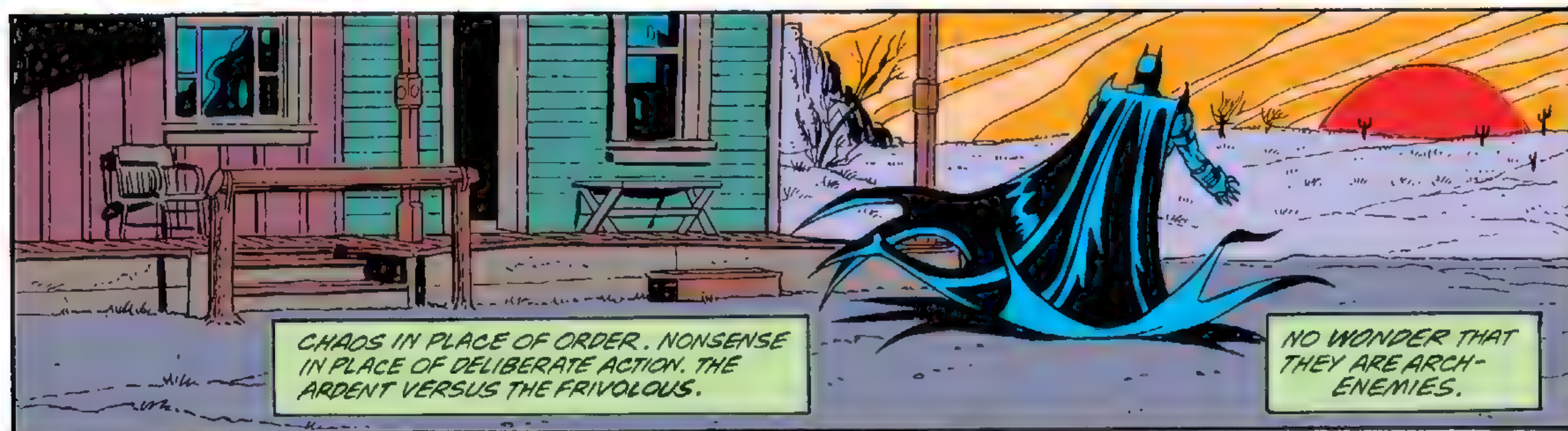
THE JOKER IS STILL HERE, HE HAS TO BE.

HE'D NEVER SET SO ELABORATE A SCHEME AND RUN OUT ON IT BEFORE THE FINAL ACT.



THE JOKER'S TOYING WITH HIM, IRRITATING HIM, GOADING HIM INTO MAKING A MISTAKE.

THE JOKER IS WAYNE'S INTELLECTUAL OPPOSITE.



CHAOS IN PLACE OF ORDER. NONSENSE IN PLACE OF DELIBERATE ACTION. THE ARDENT VERSUS THE FRIVOLOUS.

NO WONDER THAT THEY ARE ARCH-ENEMIES.



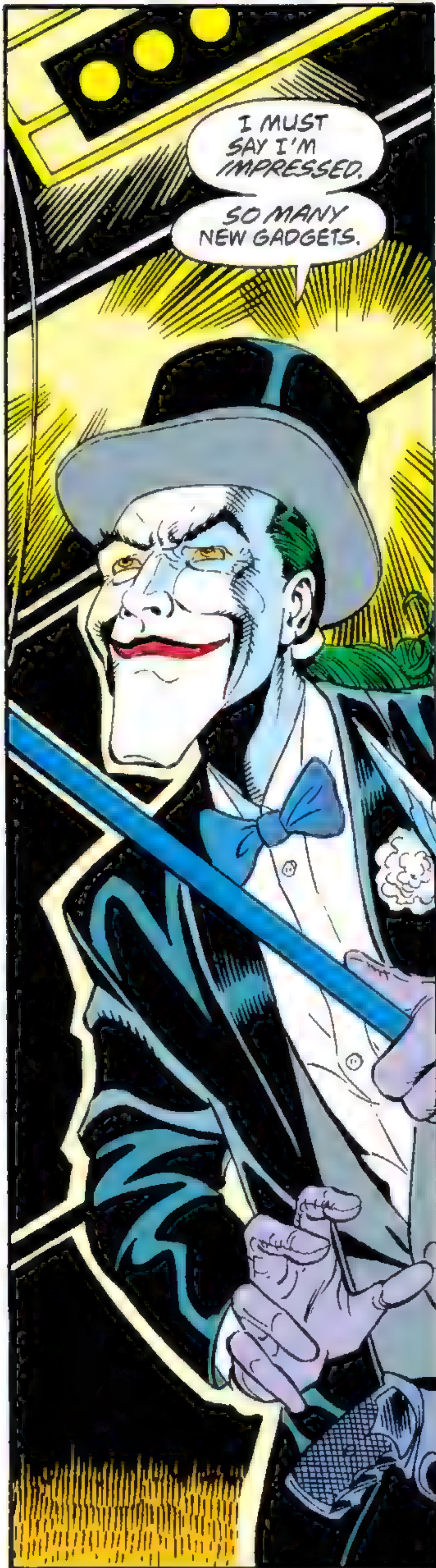
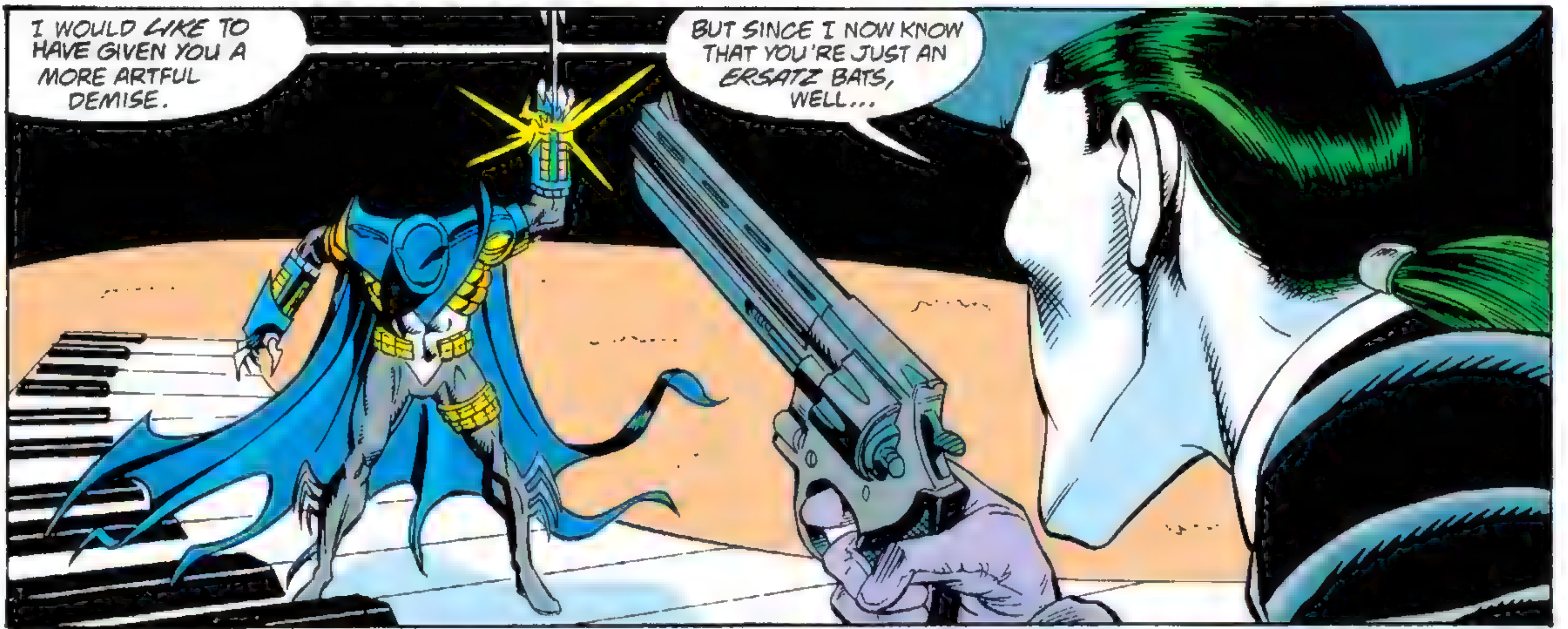
BUT HE'S NOT WAYNE.

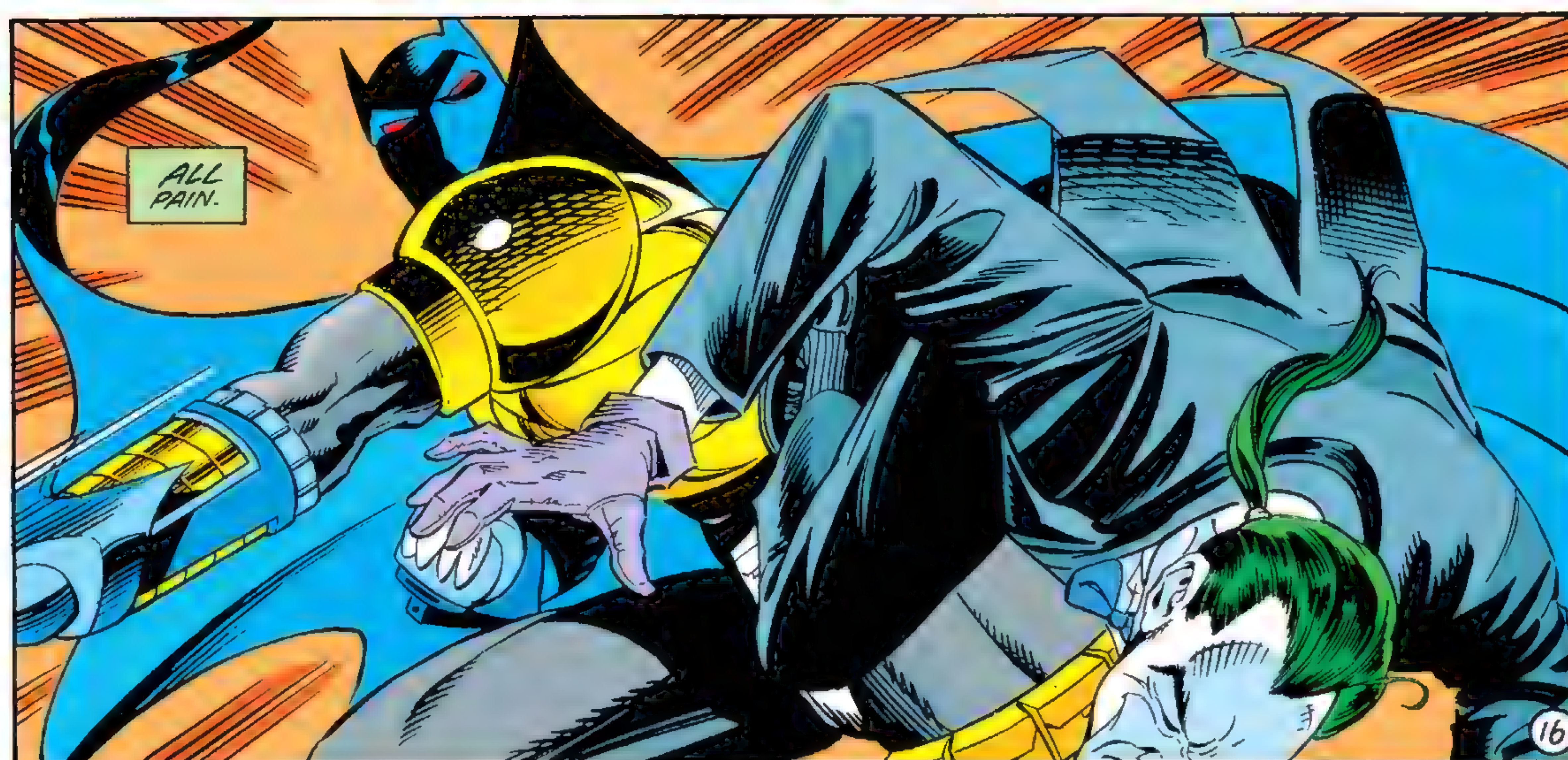
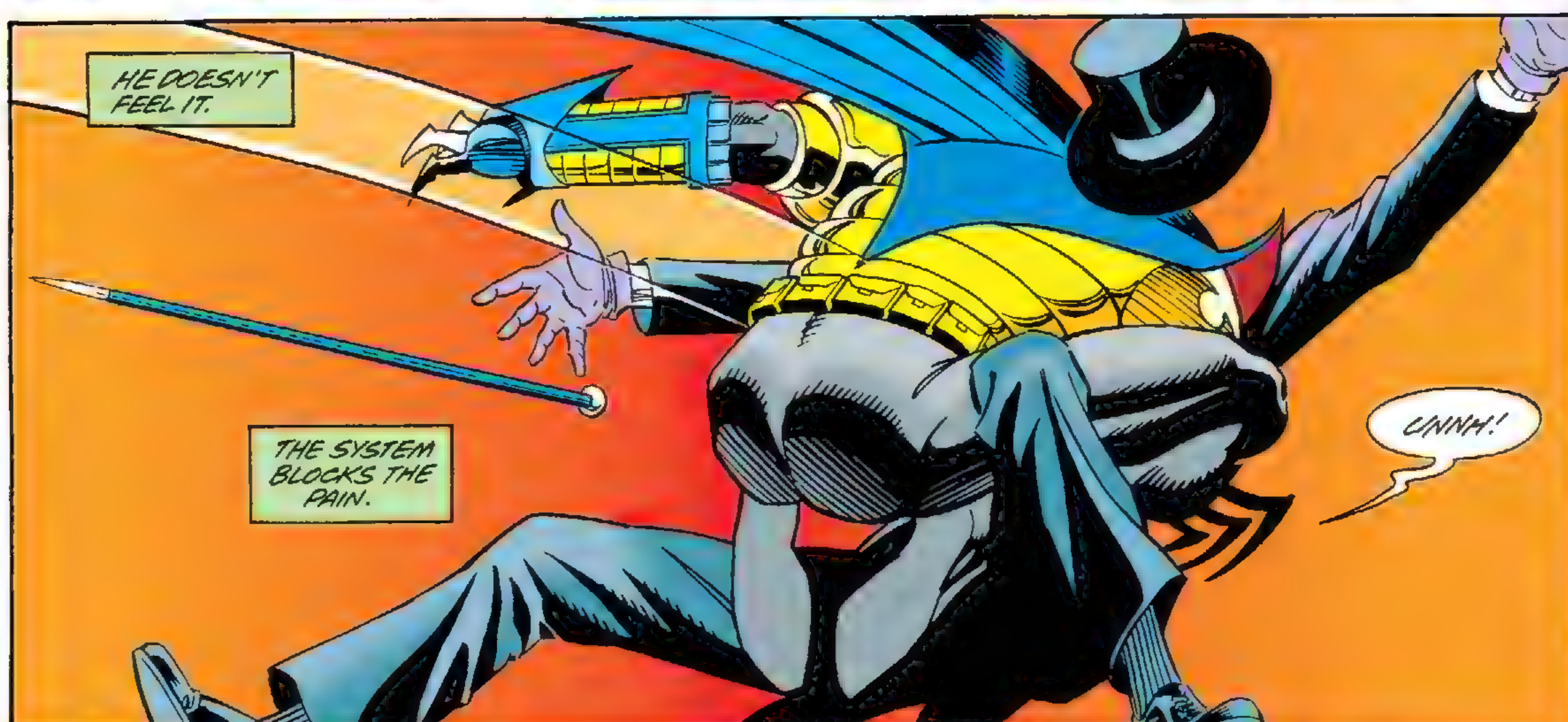
HE WILL NOT BE GOADED

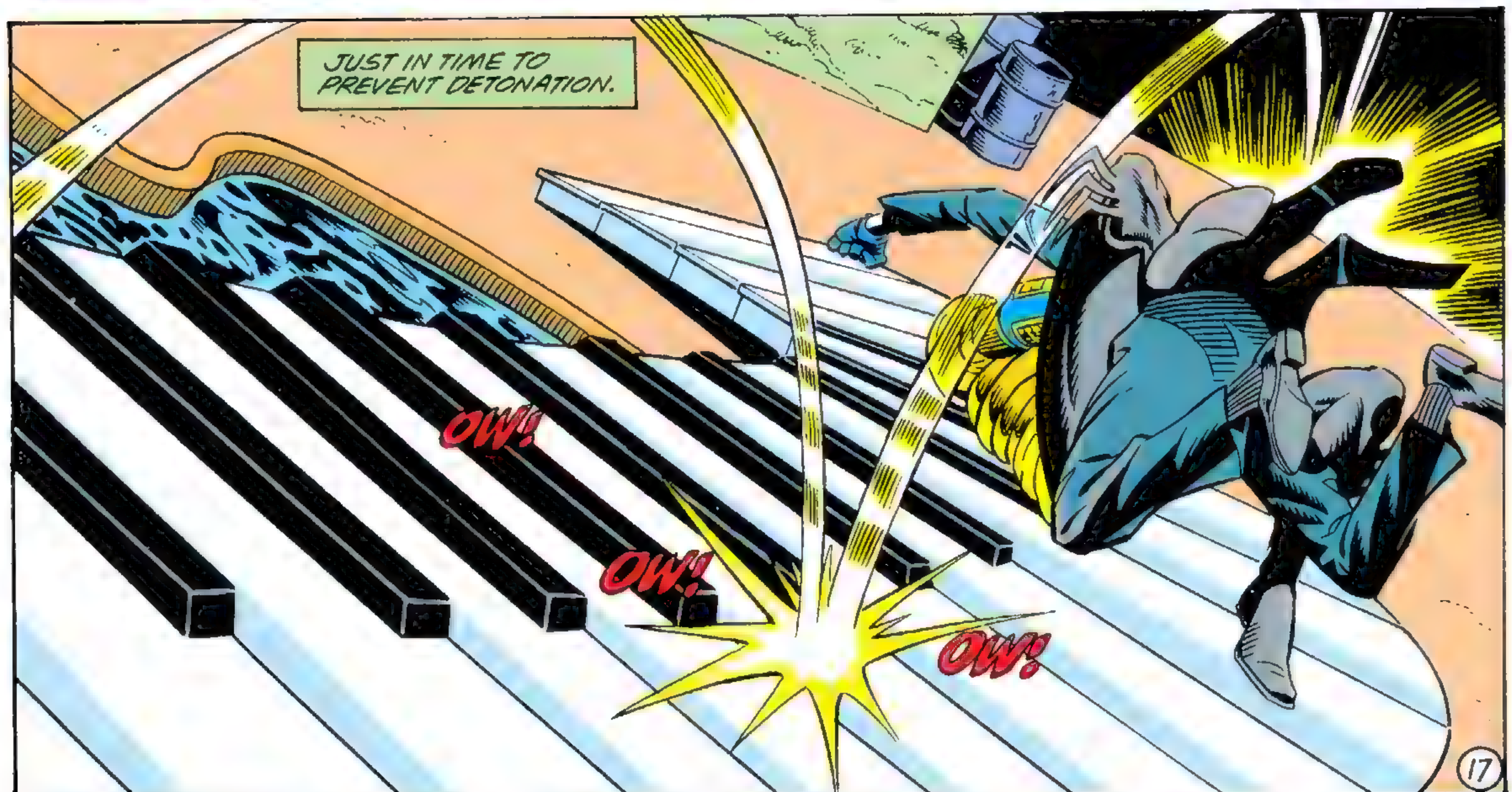
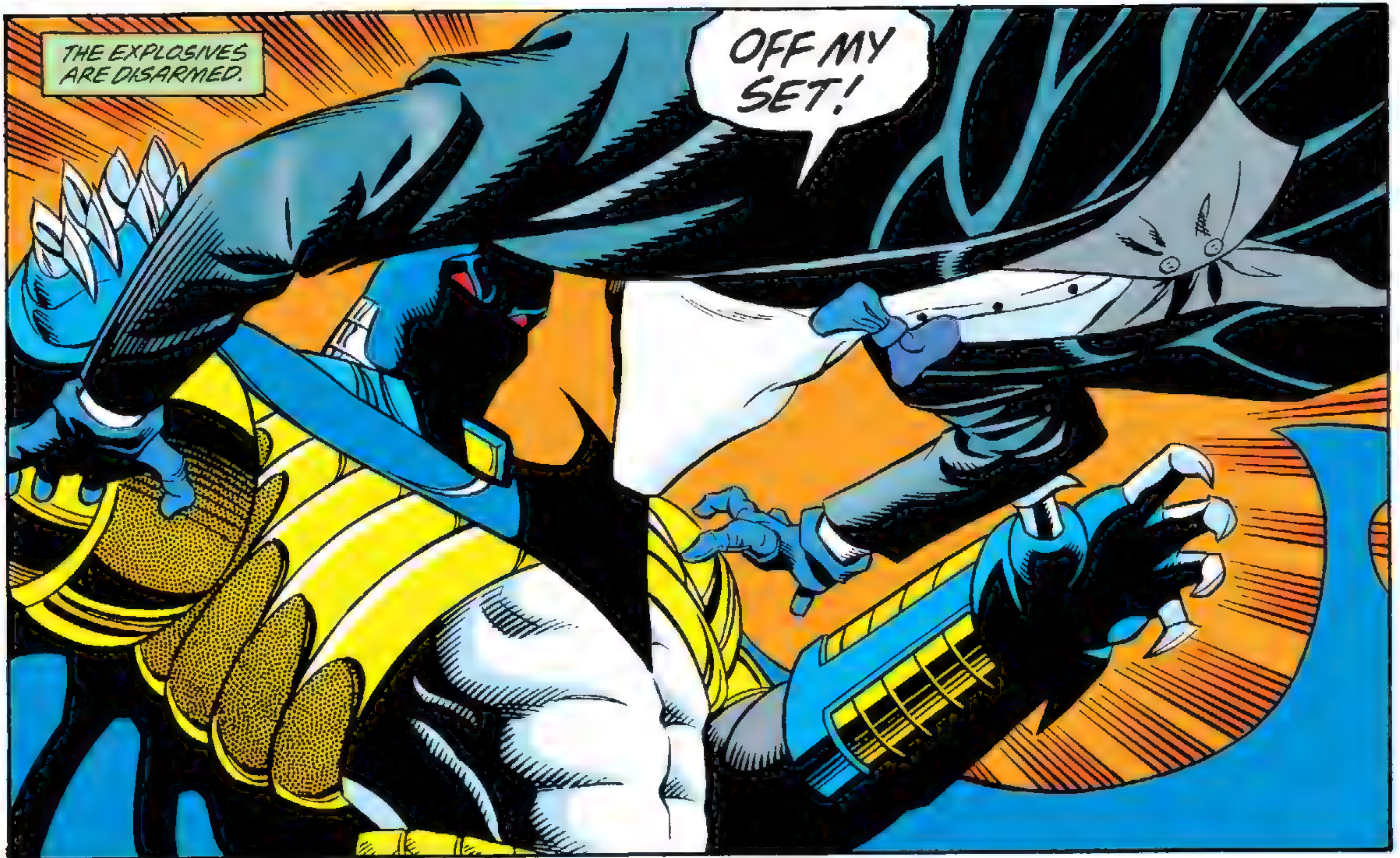
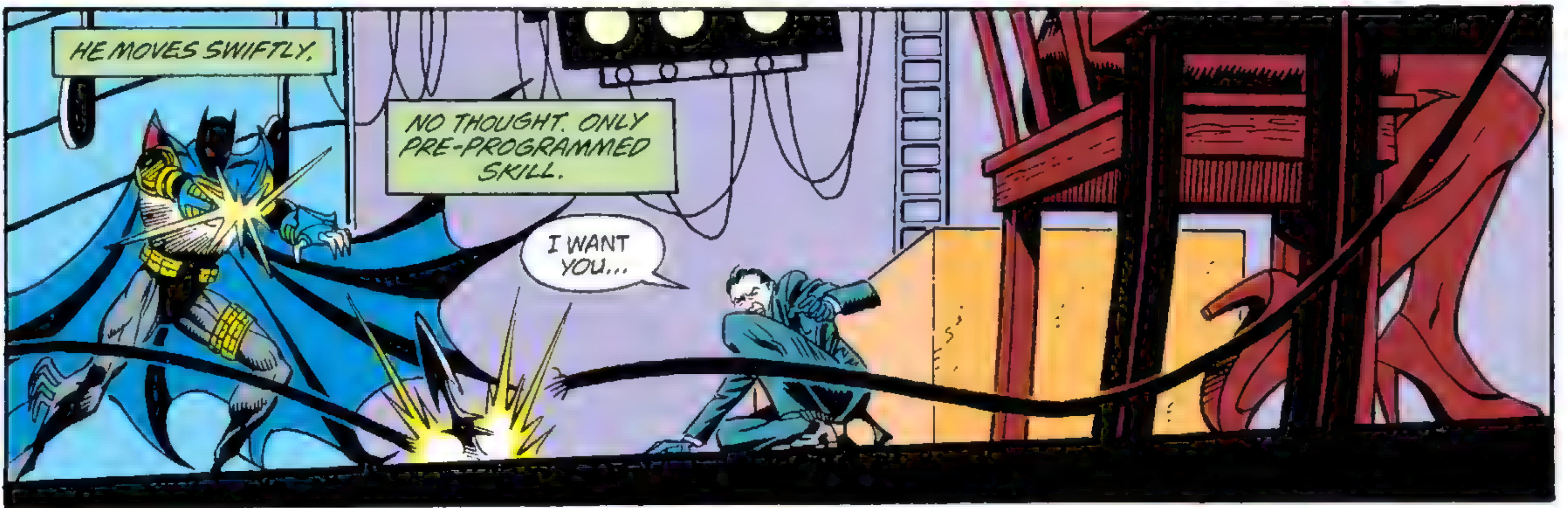


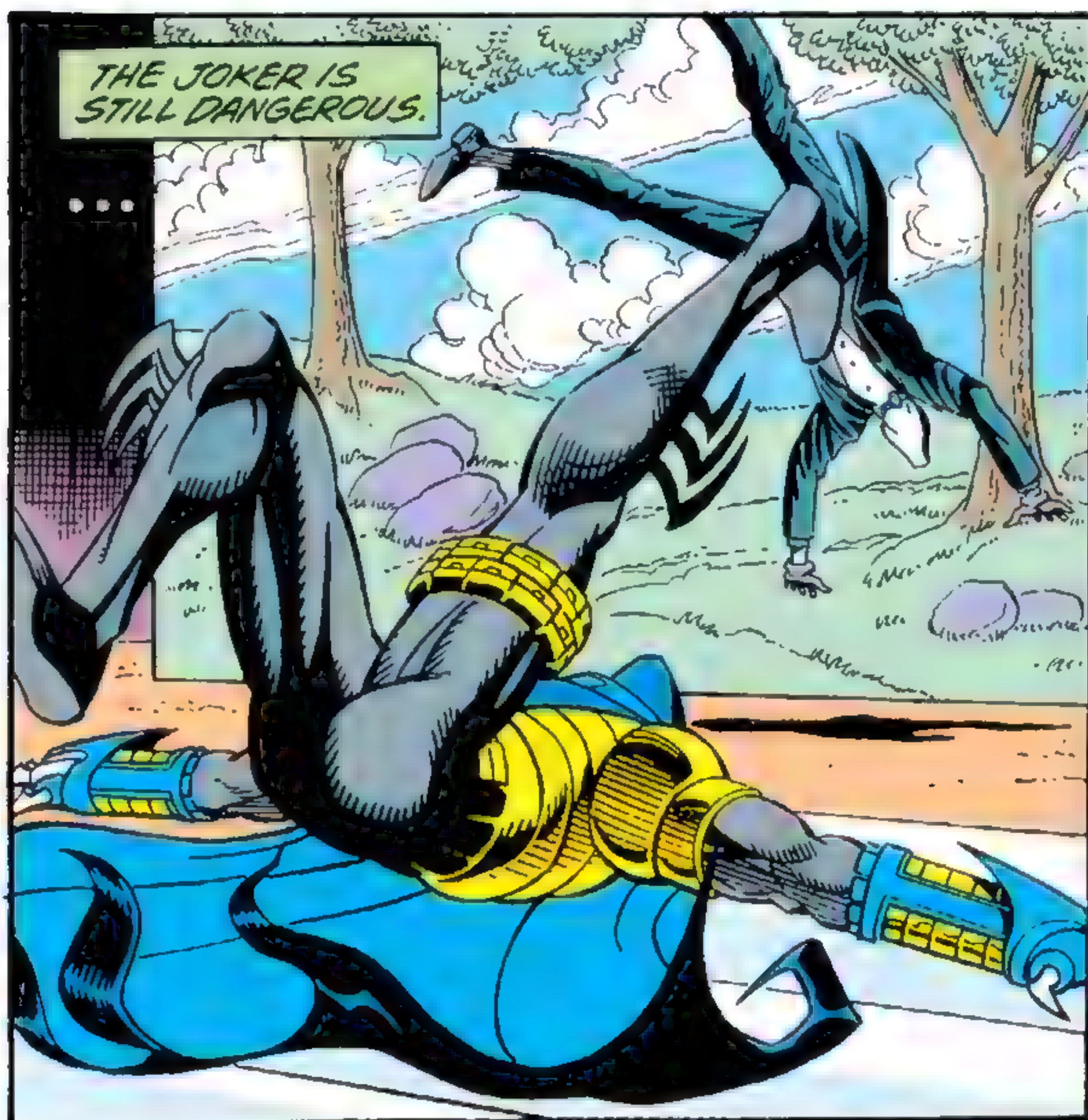
♪ Gotta Dance!

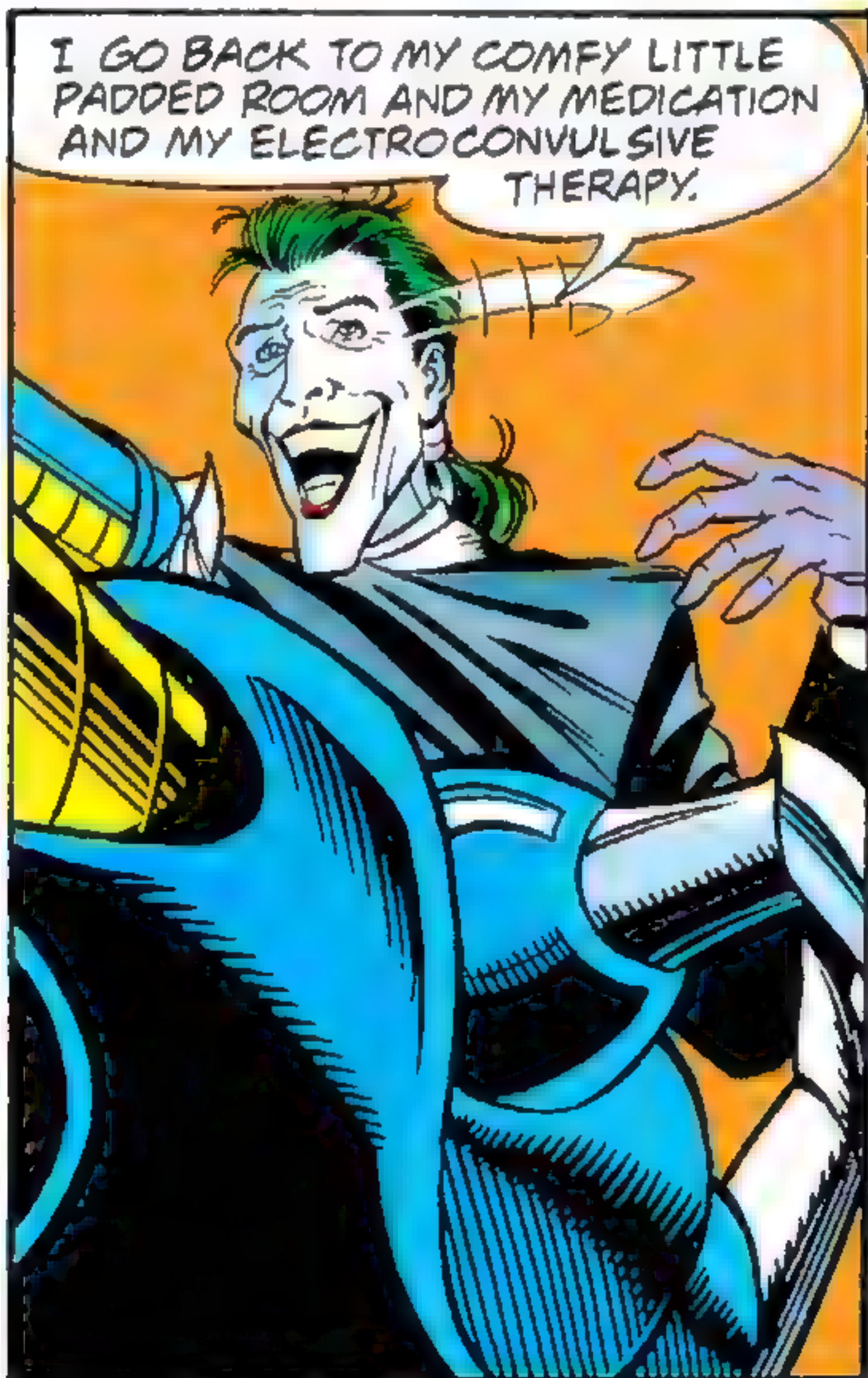












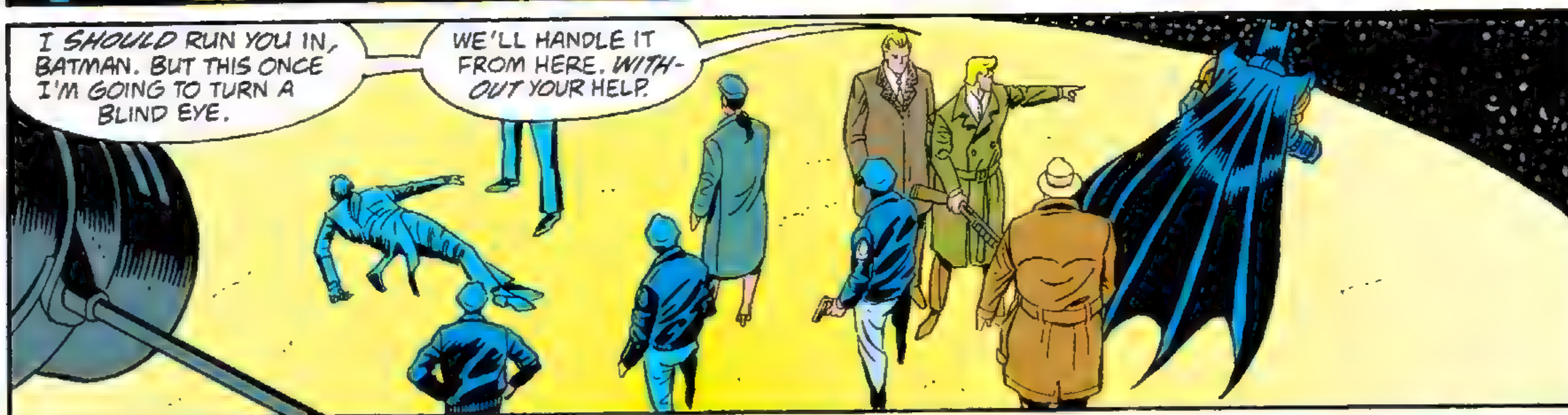


THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, MASKED MAN.



MAYBE YOU FIGURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO WHAT YOU WERE ABOUT TO DO.

BUT YOU'RE WRONG.



I SHOULD RUN YOU IN, BATMAN. BUT THIS ONCE I'M GOING TO TURN A BLIND EYE.

WE'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE. WITHOUT YOUR HELP.



Y'KNOW, LIEUTENANT, PERSONALLY, I THINK WE SHOULD'VE WAITED OUTSIDE UNTIL THE BAT-FREAK WAS FINISHED.

I COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT YOU THINK, BULLOCK.

THE DAY WE TURN THIS CITY OVER TO MONSTERS LIKE THAT...

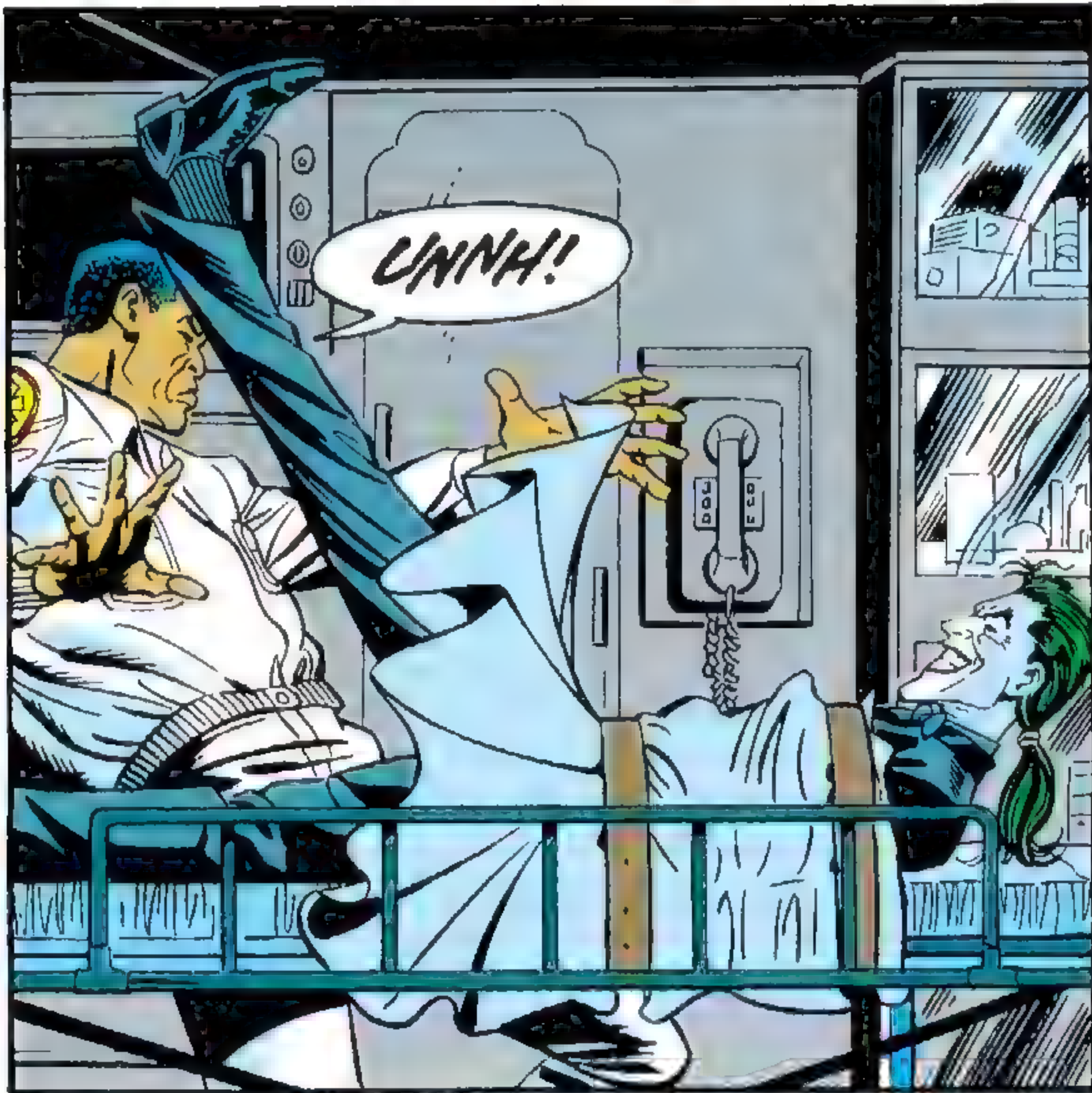


...IS THE DAY GORDON CAN HAVE MY BADGE.

WE BETTER CALL AN AMBULANCE FOR THIS ONE, CAZ. HE'S PRETTY BANGED UP.

EMT'S ARE ON THEIR WAY. WE BUZZED THEM WHEN WE GOT THE "SHOTS FIRED" CALL.







KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE

B A T M A N®



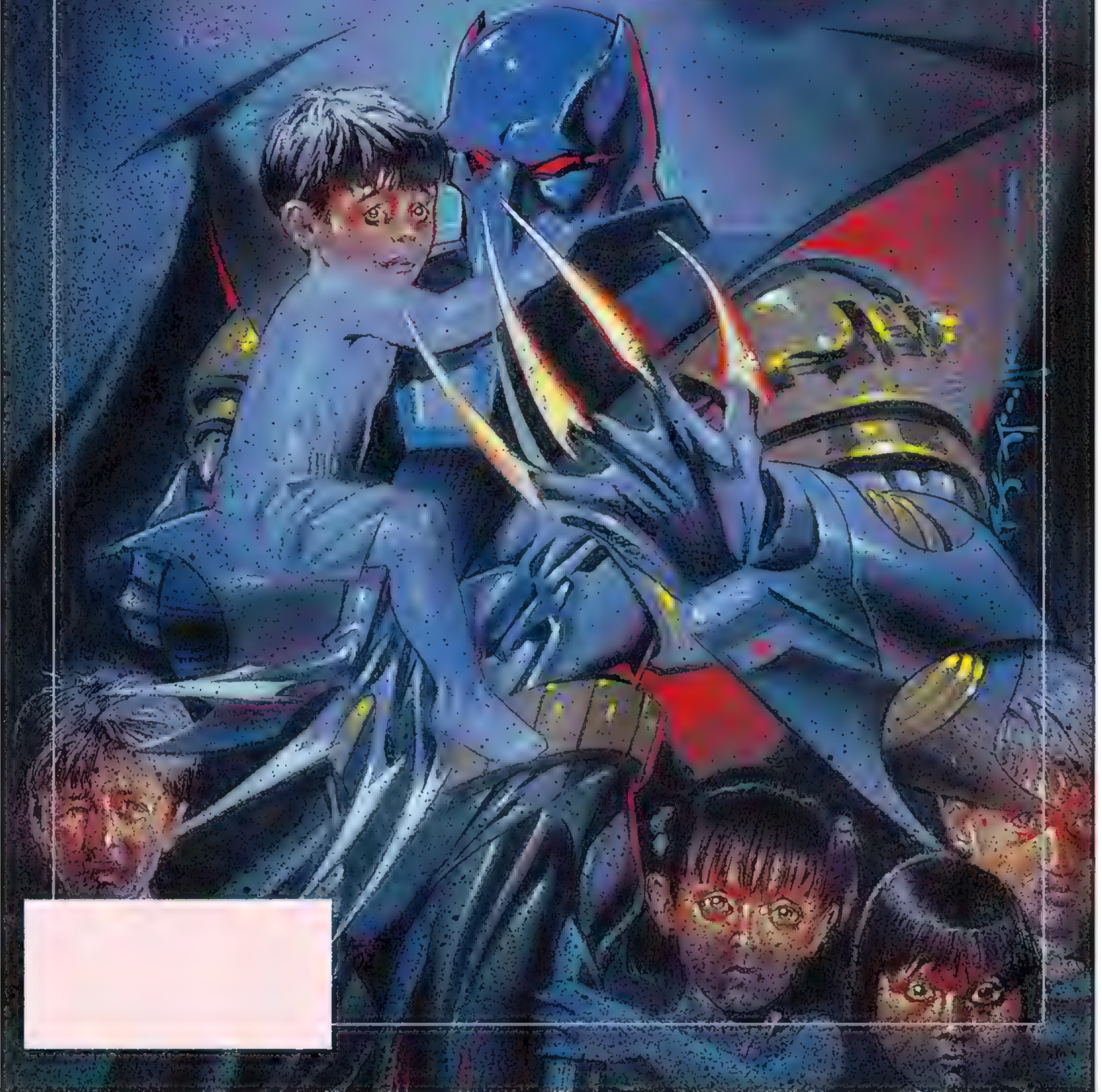
NO 24 FEB 94
175 UK £125 CAN 225

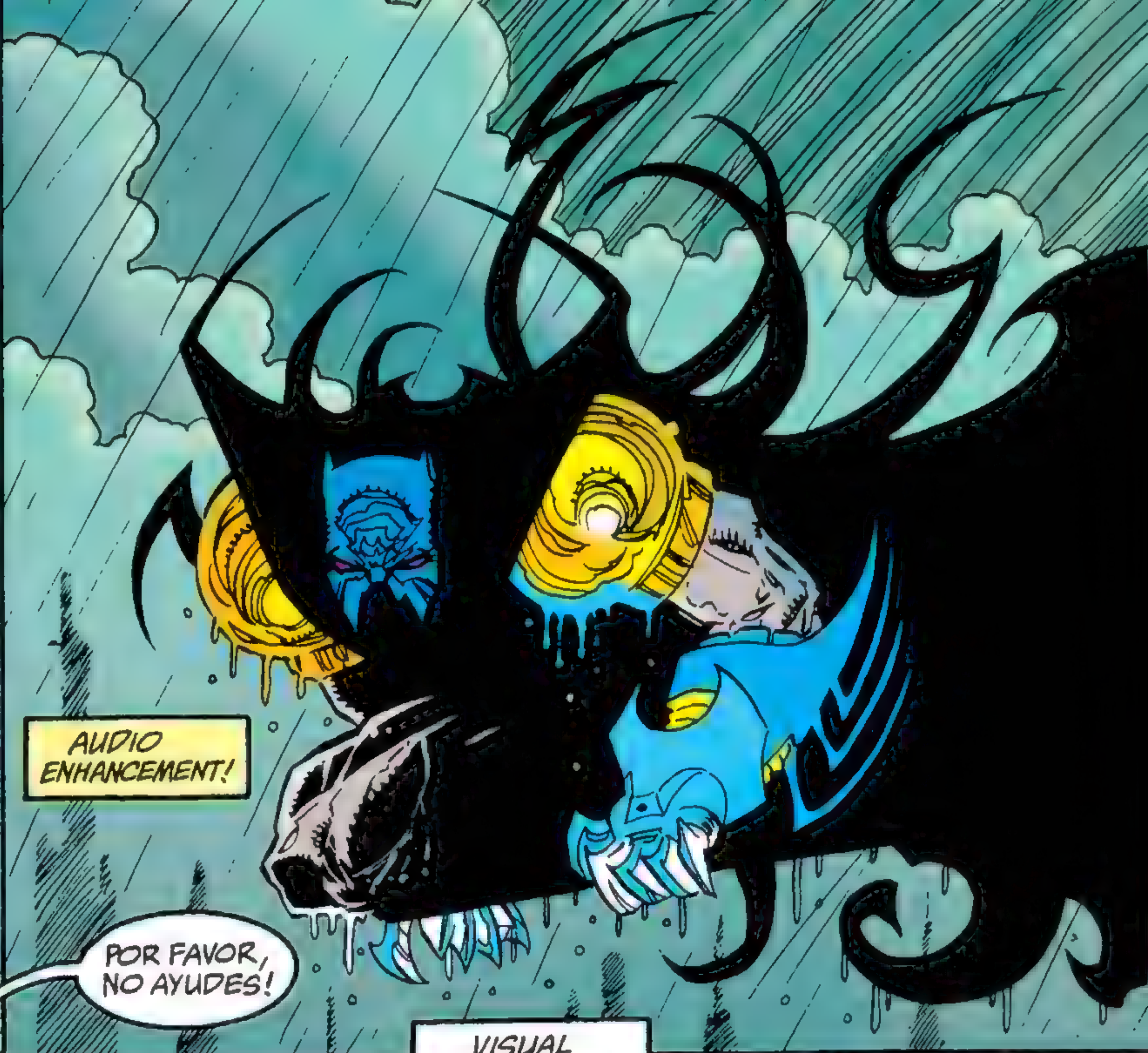
SHADOW OF THE BAT™

THE IMMIGRANT

• ROSEMARY'S BABY •

BY ALAN GRANT & VINCE GIARRANO

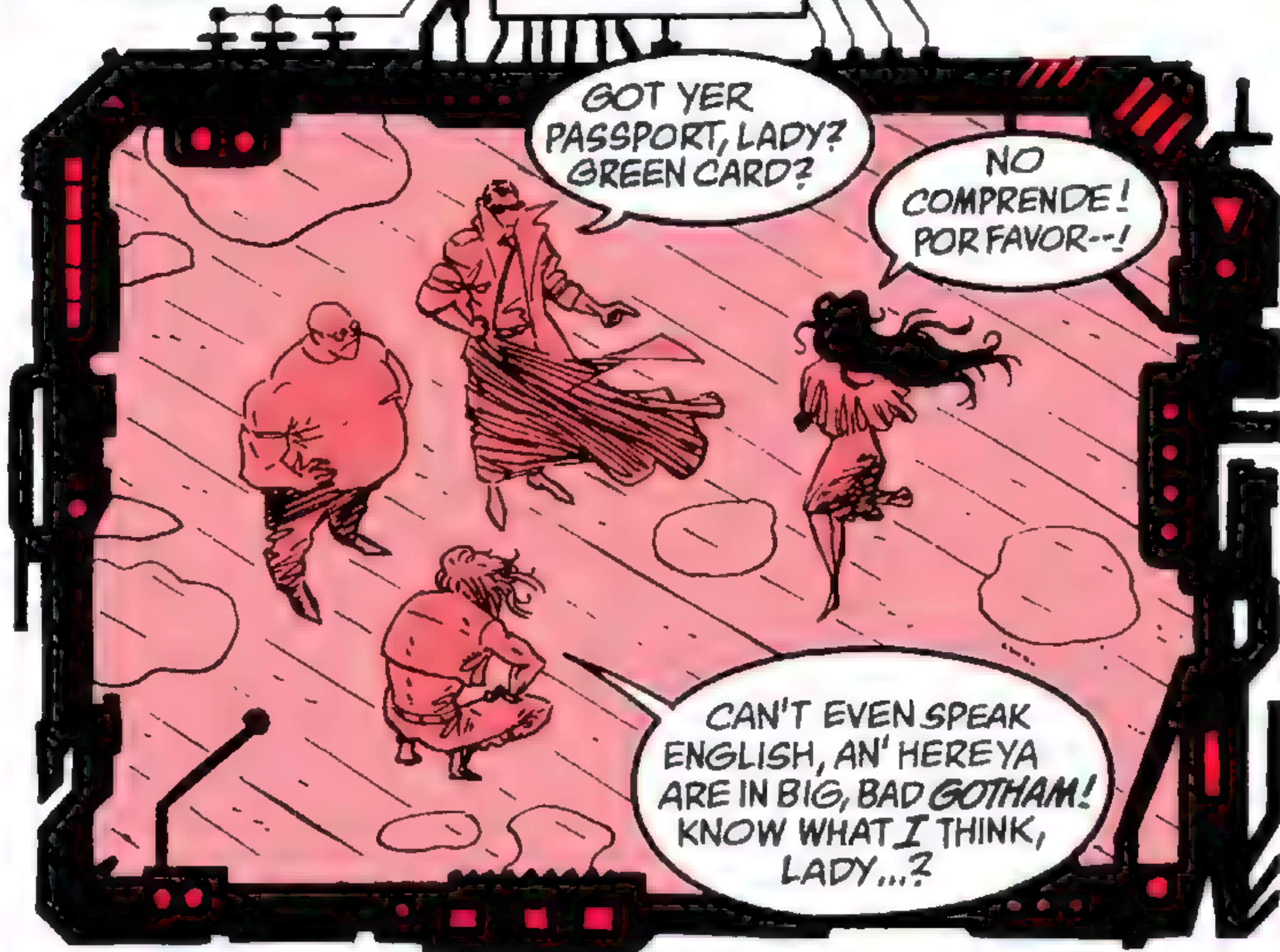




AUDIO
ENHANCEMENT!

POR FAVOR,
NO AYUDES!

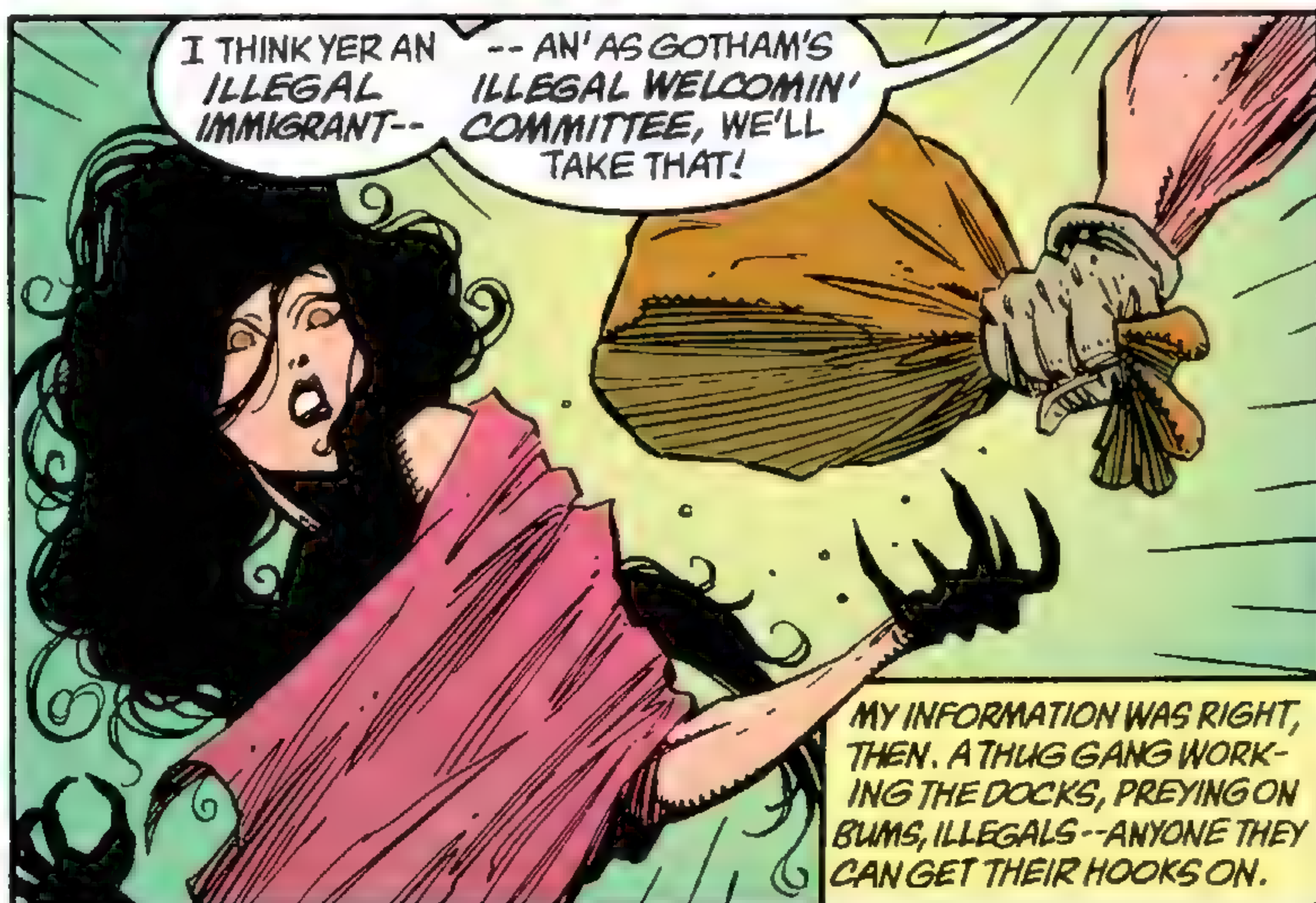
VISUAL
ENHANCEMENT!



GOT YER
PASSPORT, LADY?
GREEN CARD?

NO
COMPRENDE!
POR FAVOR--!

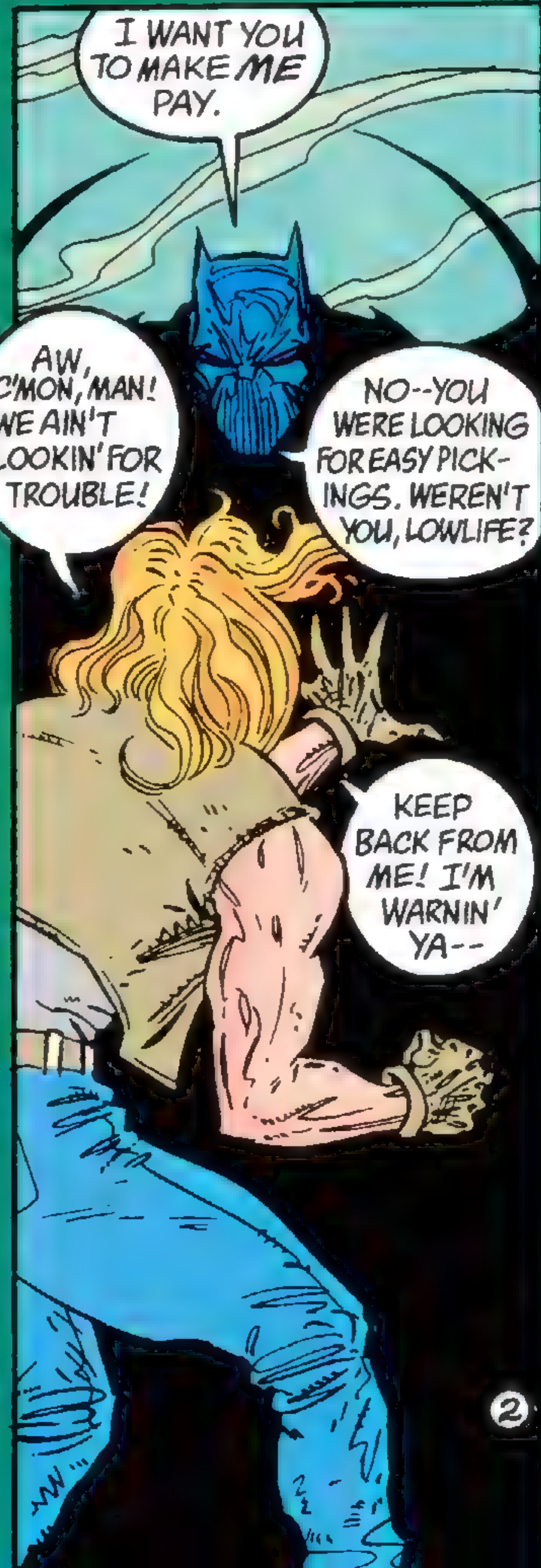
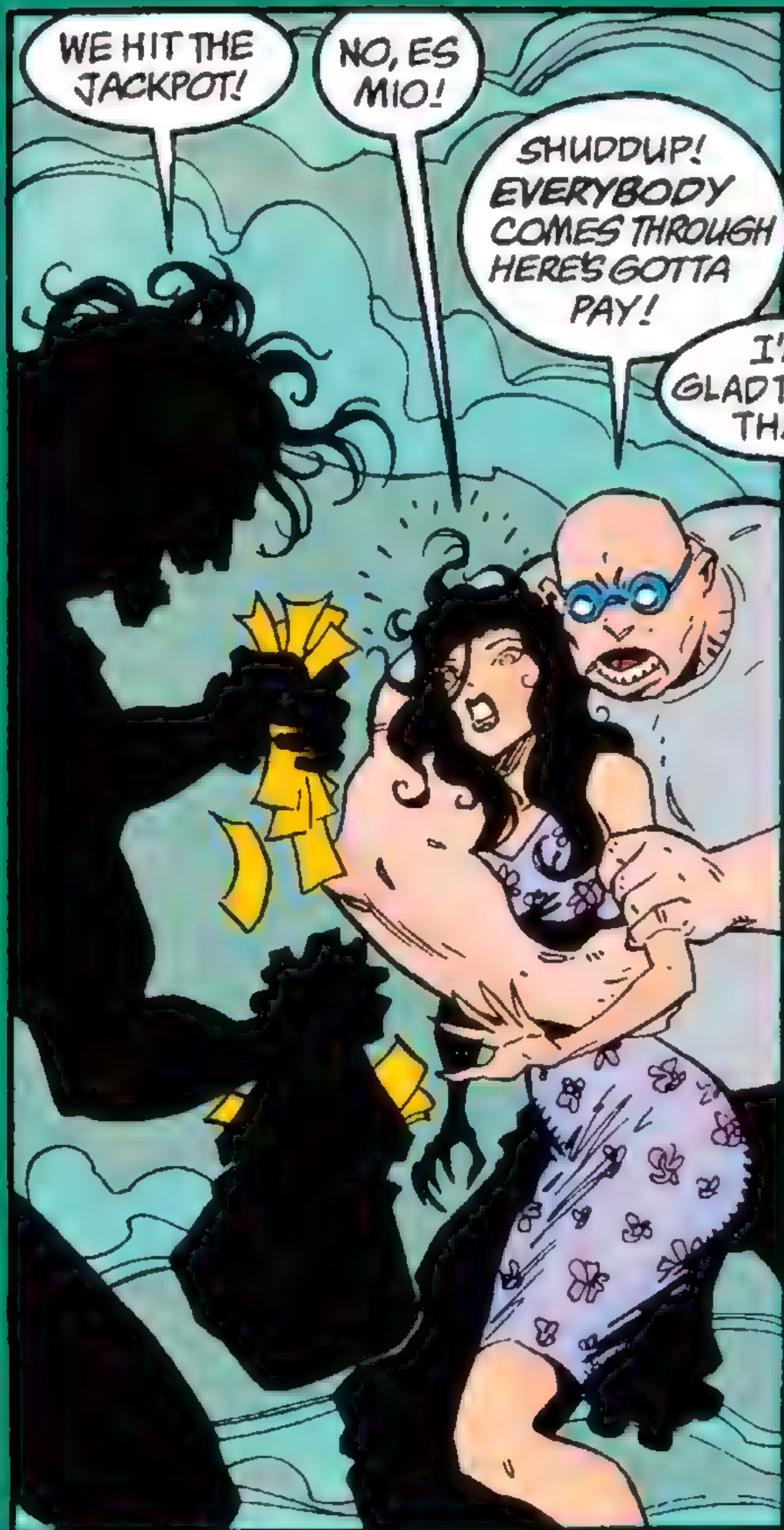
CAN'T EVEN SPEAK
ENGLISH, AN' HEREYA
ARE IN BIG, BAD GOTHAM!
KNOW WHAT I THINK,
LADY...?



I THINK YER AN
ILLEGAL
IMMIGRANT--

-- AN' AS GOTHAM'S
ILLEGAL WELCOMIN'
COMMITTEE, WE'LL
TAKE THAT!

MY INFORMATION WAS RIGHT,
THEN. A THUG GANG WORK-
ING THE DOCKS, PREYING ON
BUMS, ILLEGALS--ANYONE THEY
CAN GET THEIR HOOKS ON.



HE CAN'T LOSE ANY MORE
FACE IN FRONT OF HIS FRIENDS.
HE MAKES HIS MOVE--

--AND IT'S OVER.

HARDLY EVEN A WORKOUT...
BUT THEN I'M DOING THIS FOR
THEIR GOOD, NOT MINE.

BASH!

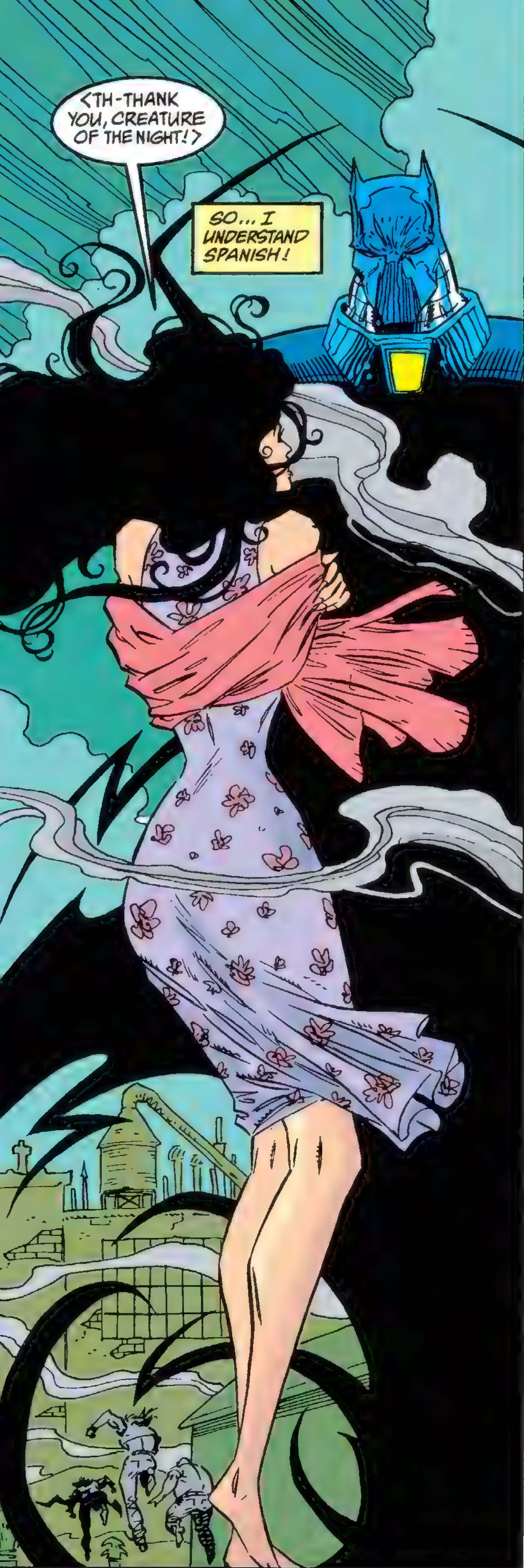
KRAK!

NO POINT INVOLVING
THE POLICE, EITHER.
FEAR IS THE ONLY
LANGUAGE SCUM
LIKE THEM UNDER-
STAND.

NEXT TIME I SEE
YOU OUT AFTER DARK,
YOU SPEND A MONTH
IN THE HOSPITAL.

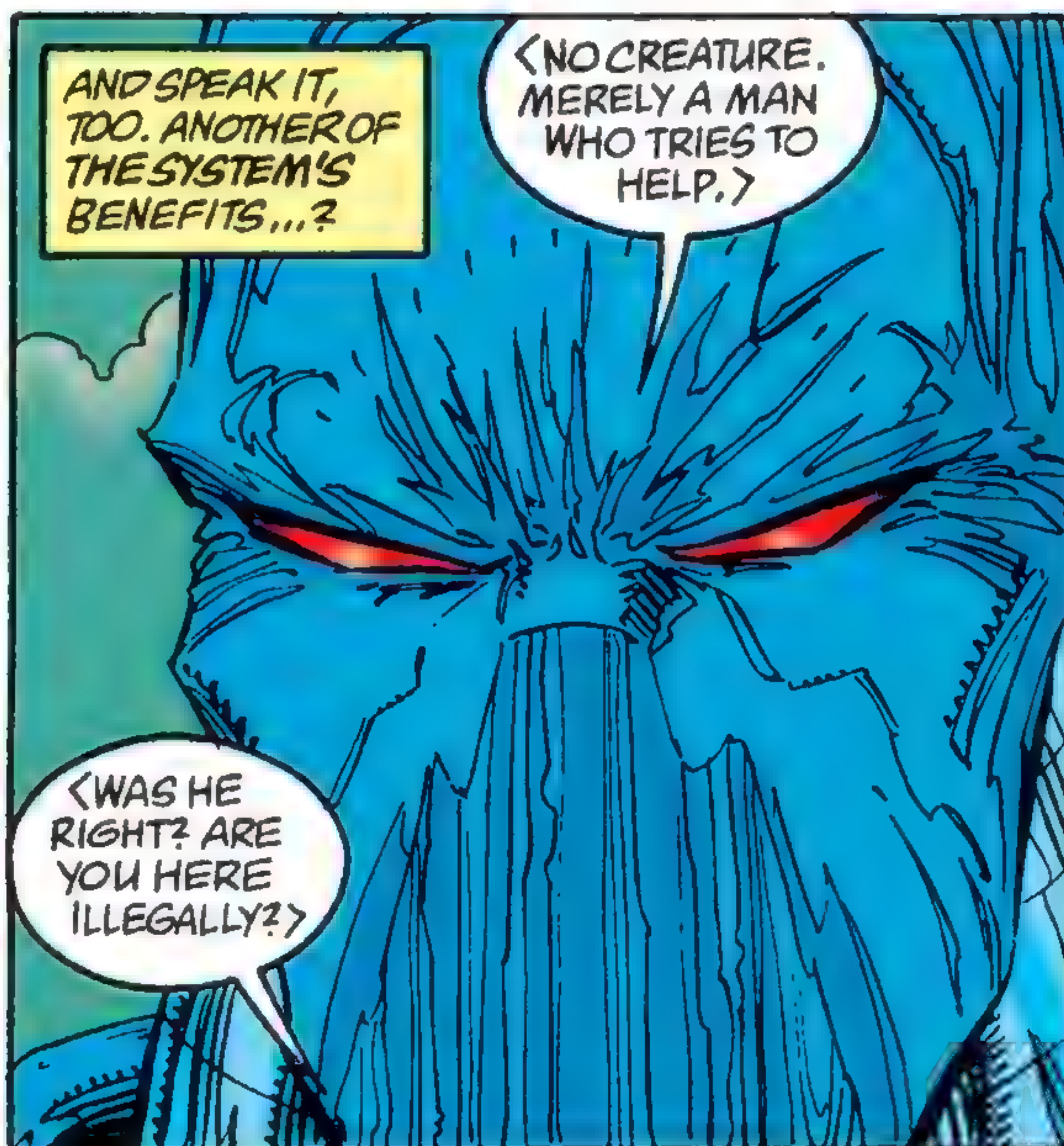
THINK
ABOUT IT!

SHHNKK



<TH-THANK
YOU, CREATURE
OF THE NIGHT!>

SO... I
UNDERSTAND
SPANISH!



AND SPEAK IT,
TOO. ANOTHER OF
THE SYSTEM'S
BENEFITS...?

<NO CREATURE.
MERELY A MAN
WHO TRIES TO
HELP.>

<WAS HE
RIGHT? ARE
YOU HERE
ILLEGALLY?>

<I CANNOT LIE TO
THE ONE WHO SAVED ME.
YES, I SMUGGLED AWAY
ON THE BOAT THAT CAME
THIS MORNING. AND
WAITED TILL NOW
BEFORE I LEFT IT.>



<WHY? WHY
HAVE YOU COME
TO GOTHAM?>



<TO BUY
BACK MY
BABY!>

ROSEMARY WAS 25 GOING
ON 90 WHEN THE BABY WAS
BORN.

SHE AND RAOUL HAD FIVE OTHER
MOUTHS TO FEED FROM THEIR
SMALL PIECE OF LAND...

...BUT FAMILY IS FAMILY, AND
LOVE NEEDS NO LUXURIES
TO FLOURISH!

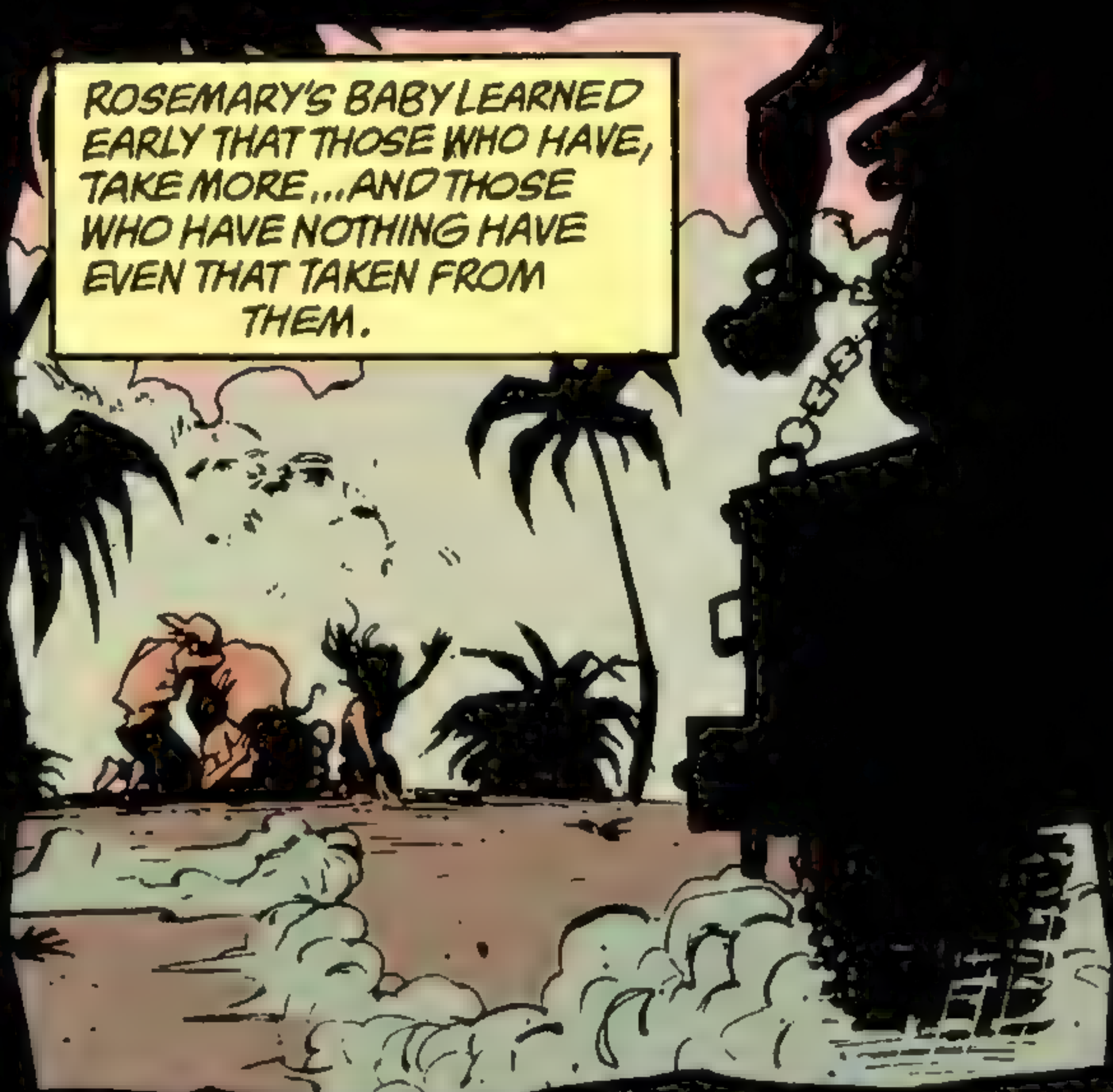
AFTER THE HARVEST THE
GUERRILLAS CAME, TO TAKE
THE TAX ON FOOD THAT PAID
FOR THE CIVIL WAR. THERE
WASN'T ENOUGH, OF COURSE--
THERE NEVER WAS.

JUST SUFFICIENT
FOR EXISTENCE.

A WEEK LATER, THE
MILITARY CAME--

--AND TOOK RAOUL AND
THREE OTHERS AWAY
FOR ACTIONS LIABLE
TO SUBVERT THE STATE.

ROSEMARY'S BABY LEARNED
EARLY THAT THOSE WHO HAVE,
TAKE MORE... AND THOSE
WHO HAVE NOTHING HAVE
EVEN THAT TAKEN FROM
THEM.



WEEKS PASSED, AND HARD TIMES GOT
HARDER. ONLY MONEY COULD GET RAOUL
OUT OF JAIL-- BUT WITHOUT HIM, THE
FAMILY WOULD PERISH.



ROSEMARY WAS WEAK, OLD BEFORE HER
TIME. SHE HAD ONLY ONE THING ANYONE
WOULD BUY--



< I WANT MY
BABY BACK!
I HAVE THE
MONEY! >

< WILL...
WILL YOU
HELP ME? >

< NO. >

< I DON'T
HELP
CRIMINALS. >



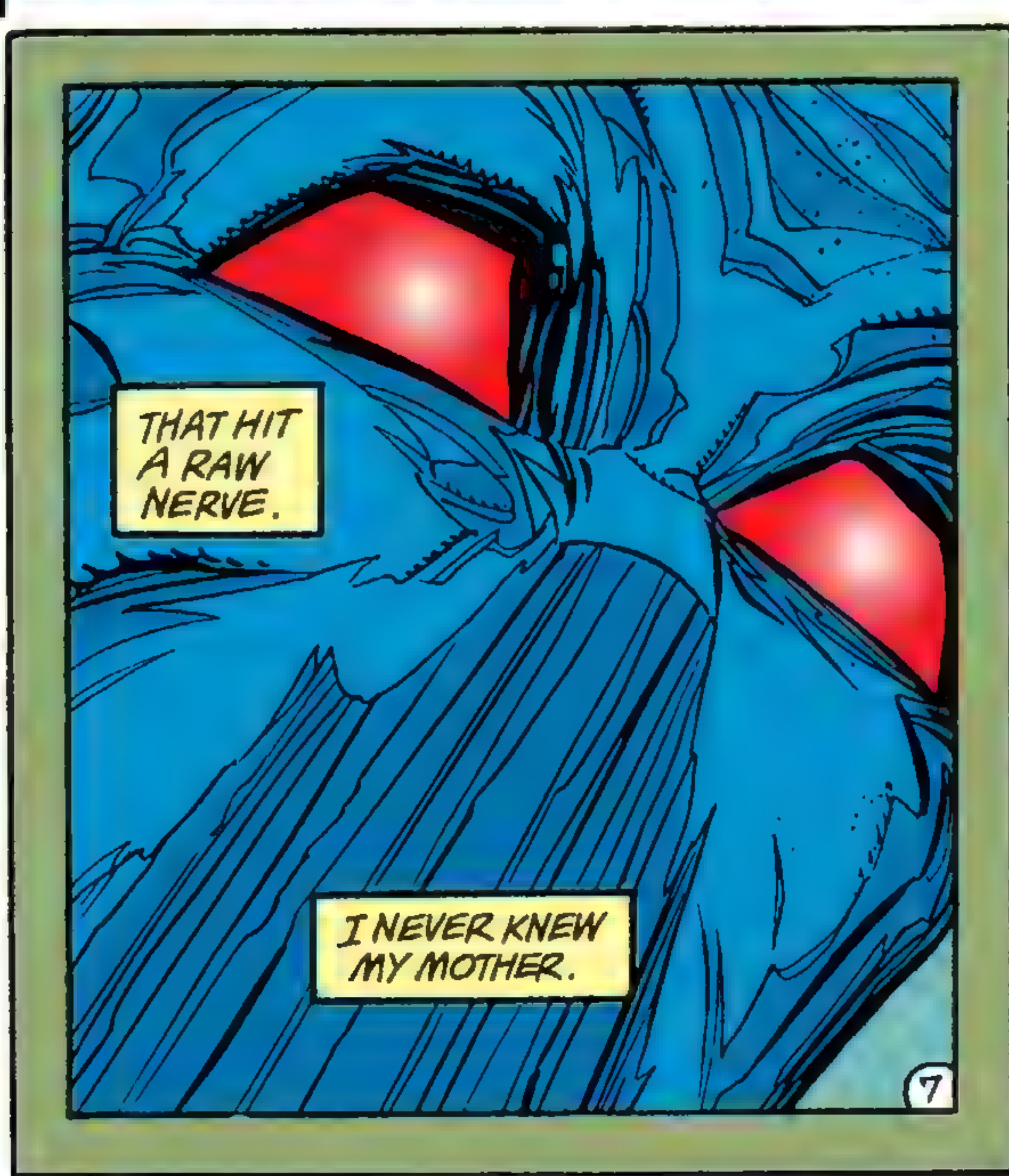
< THEN YOU
ARE LIKE ALL
THE OTHER
PIGS...! >

< DIDN'T YOU HAVE
A MOTHER? IF SHE
HAD LOST YOU, WOULDN'T
SHE HAVE HUNTED THE
WHOLE WORLD TO
FIND YOU AGAIN? >



THAT HIT
A RAW
NERVE.

I NEVER KNEW
MY MOTHER.



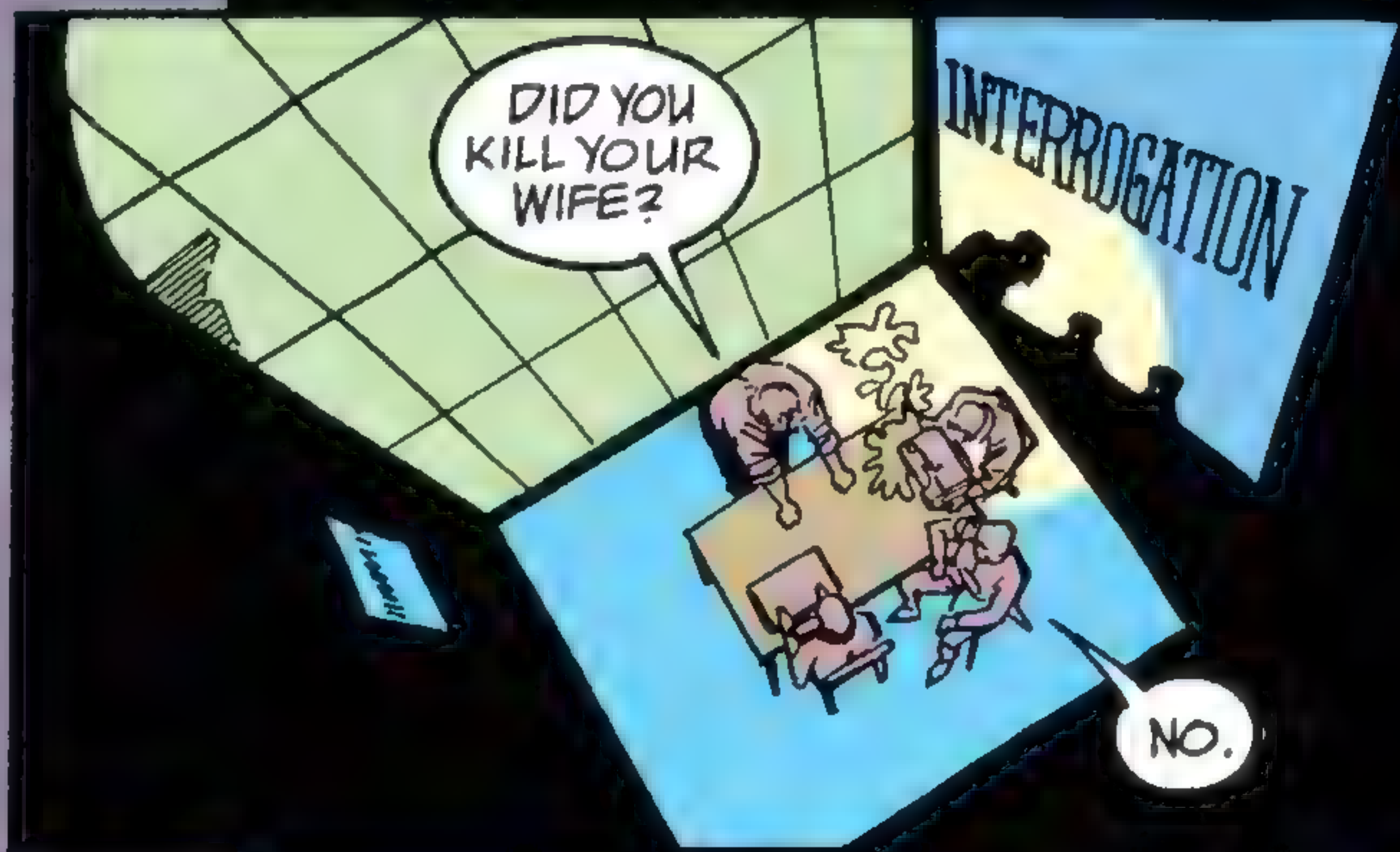


DID YOU
LEAVE YOUR
HOUSE THAT
NIGHT?

YES.

YOU WERE
OUT WALKING
FOR AROUND
ONE HOUR?

YES.



DID YOU
KILL YOUR
WIFE?

NO.



MACHINE
SAYS HE
DIDN'T DO
IT, SIR.

AND THAT'S THE **THIRD**
TEST TO WHICH MY CLIENT
HAS VOLUNTARILY SUB-
MITTED. BUT THAT'S IT,
COMMISSIONER-- I
MUST INSIST YOU
RELEASE HIM!

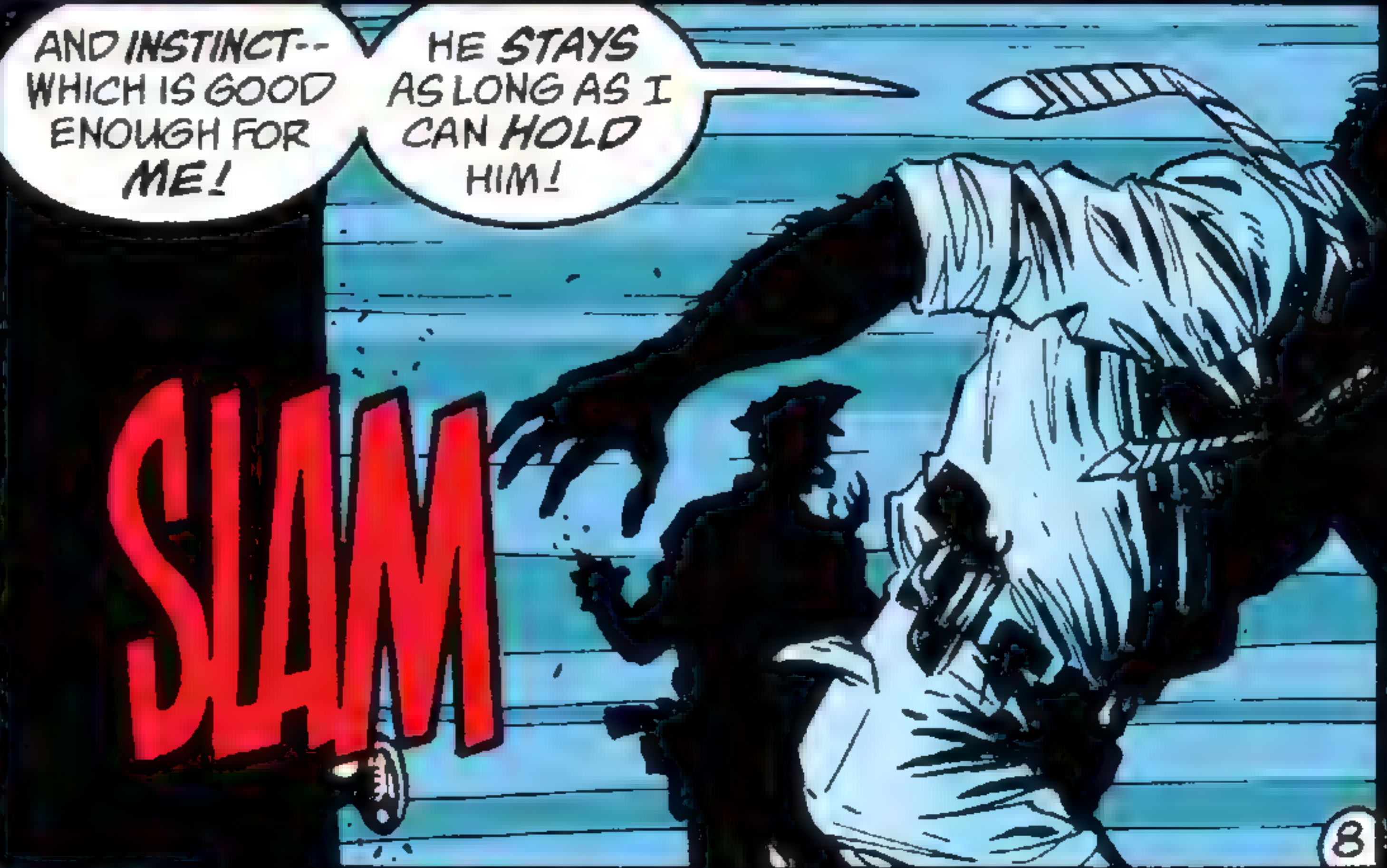


MACHINES
CAN BE
WRONG!

THREE TIMES,
COMMISSIONER?

I
KNOW
HE DID
IT!

THERE'S NO
EVIDENCE--NO FINGER-
PRINTS--NO MURDER WEAPON--
NO WITNESSES! YOU'VE NOTHING
TO BACK YOU UP EXCEPT A
HIGHLY **DUBIOUS** MOTIVE!



AND INSTINCT--
WHICH IS GOOD
ENOUGH FOR
ME!

HE STAYS
AS LONG AS I
CAN HOLD
HIM!

SLAM





ROSEMARY'S
BABY FETCHED
FIFTY U.S.
DOLLARS.

<IT'S
TIME!>



<I-I DON'T
KNOW IF IT'S
THE RIGHT
THING--!>

<YOU MADE
A BARGAIN,
ROSEMARY. YOU
CANNOT GO BACK
ON IT NOW!>



<THIS WAY YOUR
CHILD WILL HAVE A
BETTER LIFE. RICH
PARENTS--A FINE
HOUSE--AN EDUCA-
TION...WHILE HERE
THERE IS ONLY
POVERTY AND
DISEASE!>

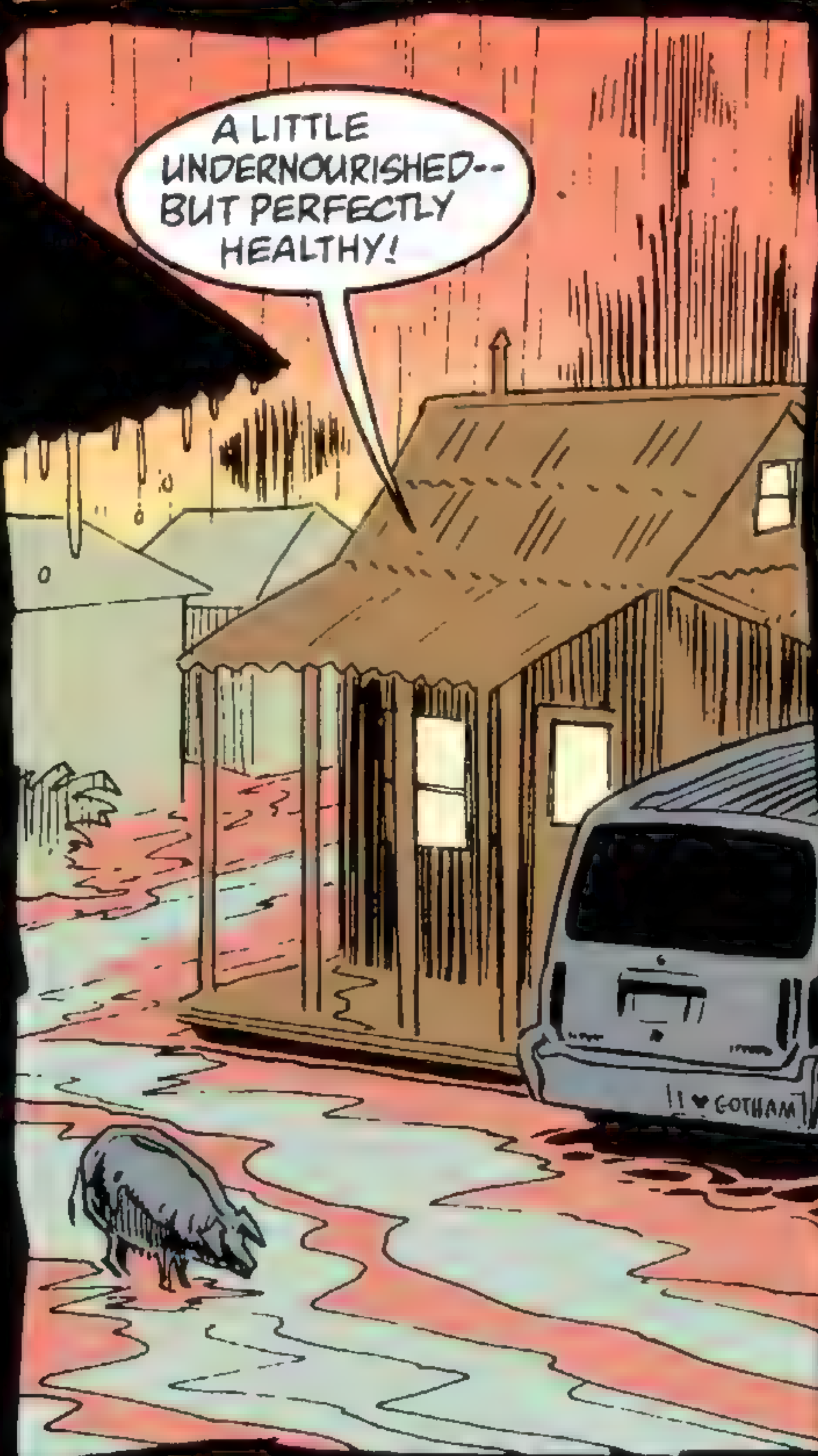
<WHERE?
WHERE WILL
YOU TAKE
HIM...?>



<CALIFORNIA...
LAND OF GOLD AND
SILVER!>



<MOTHER OF ALL MOTHERS FORGIVE ME, FOR I HAVE DONE AN EVIL THING...>

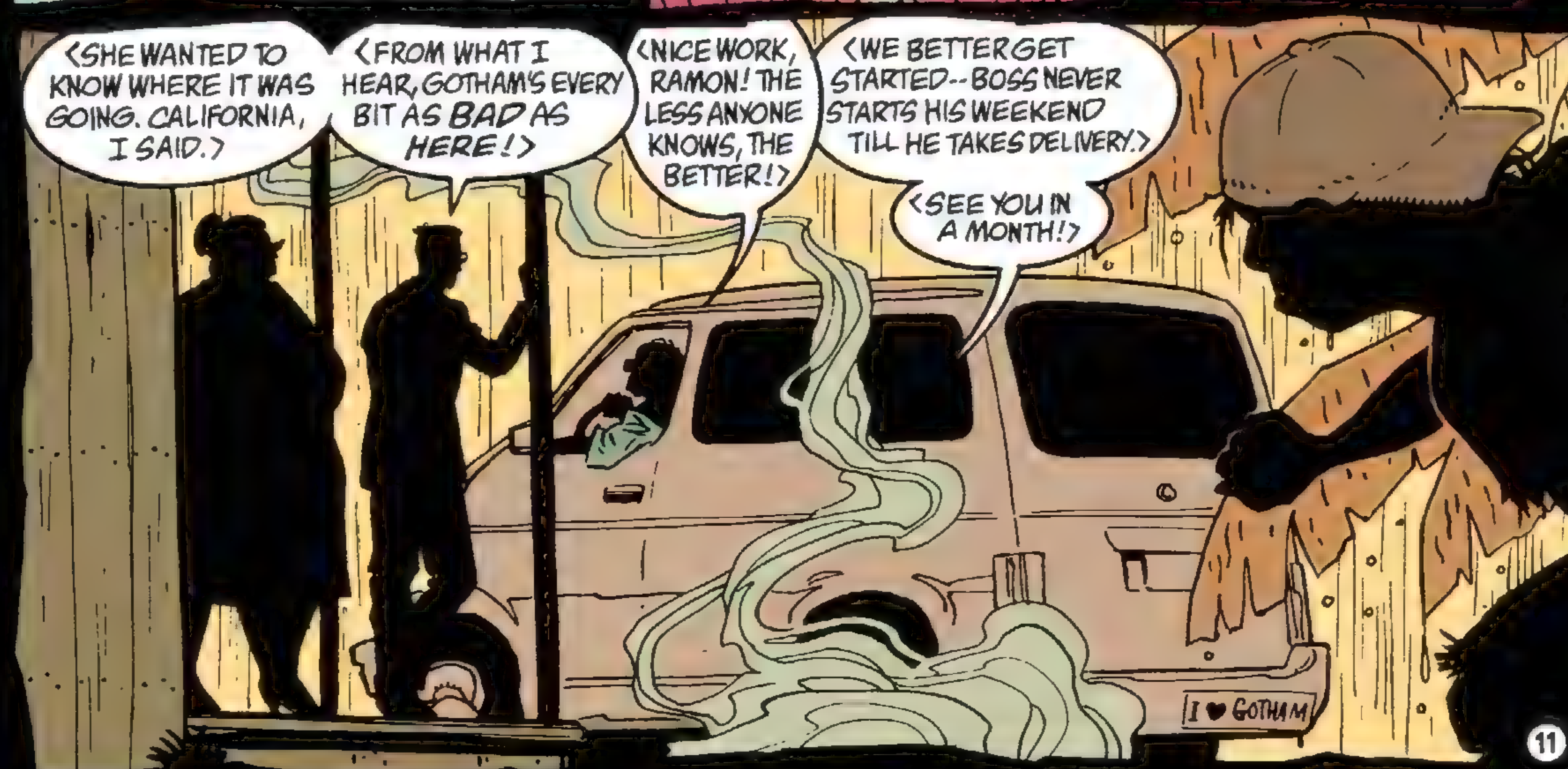


A LITTLE UNDERNOURISHED-- BUT PERFECTLY HEALTHY!



<THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, WE AGREED...?>

<ALWAYS A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU, MRS. ORTEGA.>



<SHE WANTED TO KNOW WHERE IT WAS GOING. CALIFORNIA, I SAID.>

<FROM WHAT I HEAR, GOTHAM'S EVERY BIT AS BAD AS HERE!>

<NICE WORK, RAMON! THE LESS ANYONE KNOWS, THE BETTER!>

<WE BETTER GET STARTED-- BOSS NEVER STARTS HIS WEEKEND TILL HE TAKES DELIVERY.>

<SEE YOU IN A MONTH!>



--SO SHE'S
COME LOOKING
FOR THE KID.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT
EXPOSES BABY-SMUGGLING
RACKET-- JUST WHAT
GOTHAM P.D. NEEDS!

WHERE
IS SHE
NOW?



I LEFT HER ON THE STREET.
I'LL SEND HER INTO MAIN DESK.
MAYBE YOU COULD HAVE
MONTOKA LOOK OUT FOR
HER.

WAIT!



WE'RE HOLDING A GUY
ON SUSPICION OF
KILLING HIS WIFE FOR
THE INSURANCE PAY-
OFF. I'VE NO EVIDENCE,
ONLY A GUT INSTINCT
THAT HE'S GUILTY--

--AND HE'S
BEAT THE LIE
DETECTOR
THREE
TIMES!

I DON'T
LIKE TO ASK,
BUT... ANY
SUGGES-
TIONS?



THE
MACHINE'S
BROKEN.

HE'S
INNOCENT.

OR SELF-
HYPNOSIS.

KAE
FF



HYPNOSIS--OF
COURSE! HE HYPNOTIZED
HIMSELF BEFORE HE
DID IT--TO MAKE HIM
FORGET HE'D DONE
IT AFTERWARDS!

THANKS.
YOU SHOULD HAVE
BEEN A DETECTIVE!



NO. JUST THAT THE
SYSTEM'S TAUGHT ME
A LOT ABOUT WHAT
HYPNOSIS CAN DO.

I AM WHAT I
SHOULD HAVE BEEN.
WHAT I WAS ALWAYS
DESTINED TO BE.

I AM
**THE
BATMAN!**

GARRANO

RAOUL WOULD ROT BEFORE
HE EVER CAME TO TRIAL.
FIFTY DOLLARS WAS A
FORTUNE -- ENOUGH TO
BUY HIS FREEDOM --

BUT RAOUL WAS
ALREADY FREE.

<--DEAD!
KILLED OUTRIGHT
WHILE ESCAPING!
THERE WERE MANY
WITNESSES!>

<--DECENT
THING, ALREADY
BURIED--!>

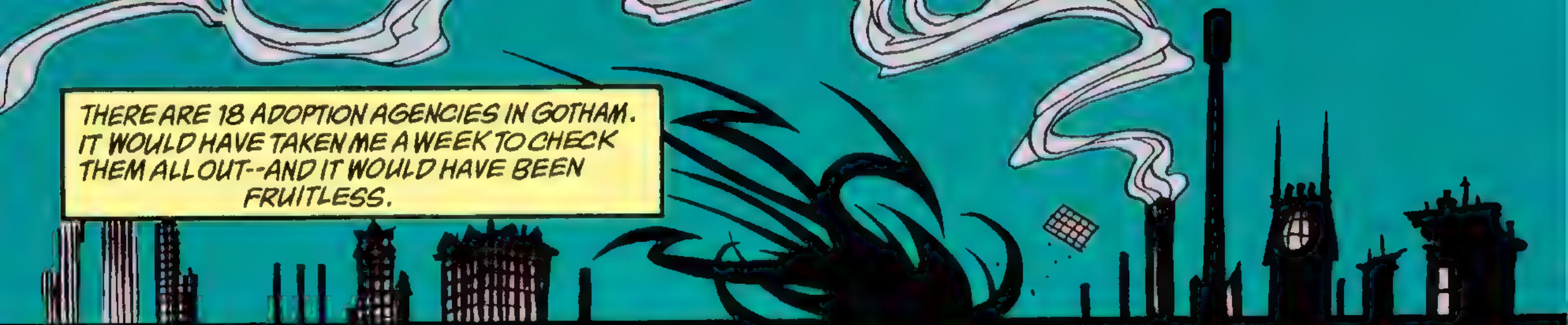
<THE DEATH
CERTIFICATE. IT'S
OFFICIAL, SEE!>

PIECES OF PAPER...THEY
TOOK AWAY HER HUSBAND
AND HER BABY--LIVING,
BREATHING PEOPLE--AND
ALL SHE HAD LEFT WAS
PIECES OF PAPER.

IT WASN'T
ENOUGH.

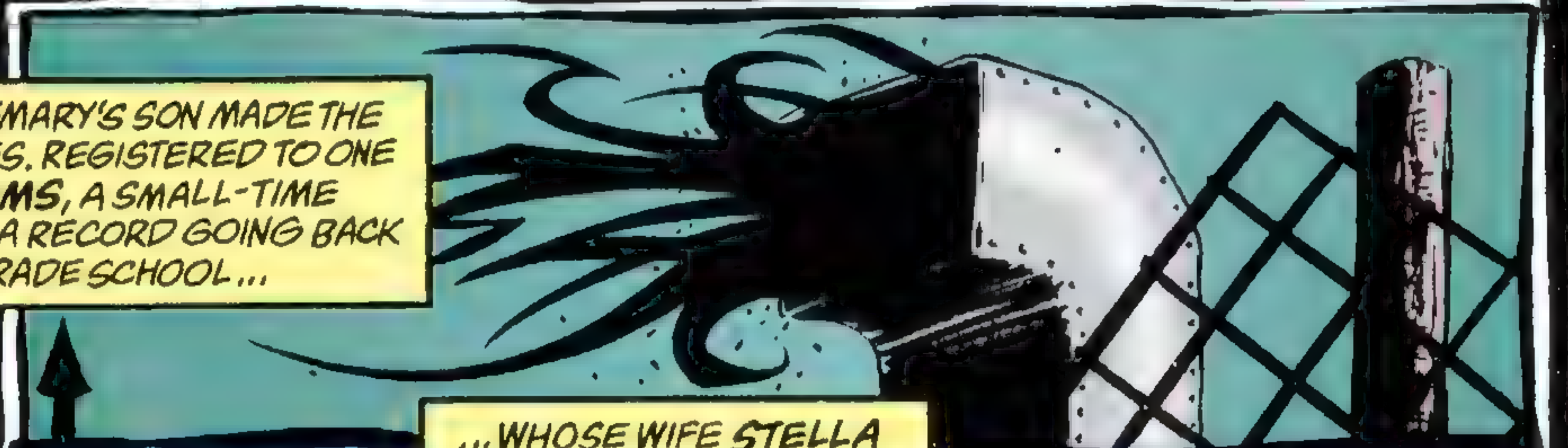
SHE COULDN'T BRING
RAOUL BACK, BUT--

MAYBE...

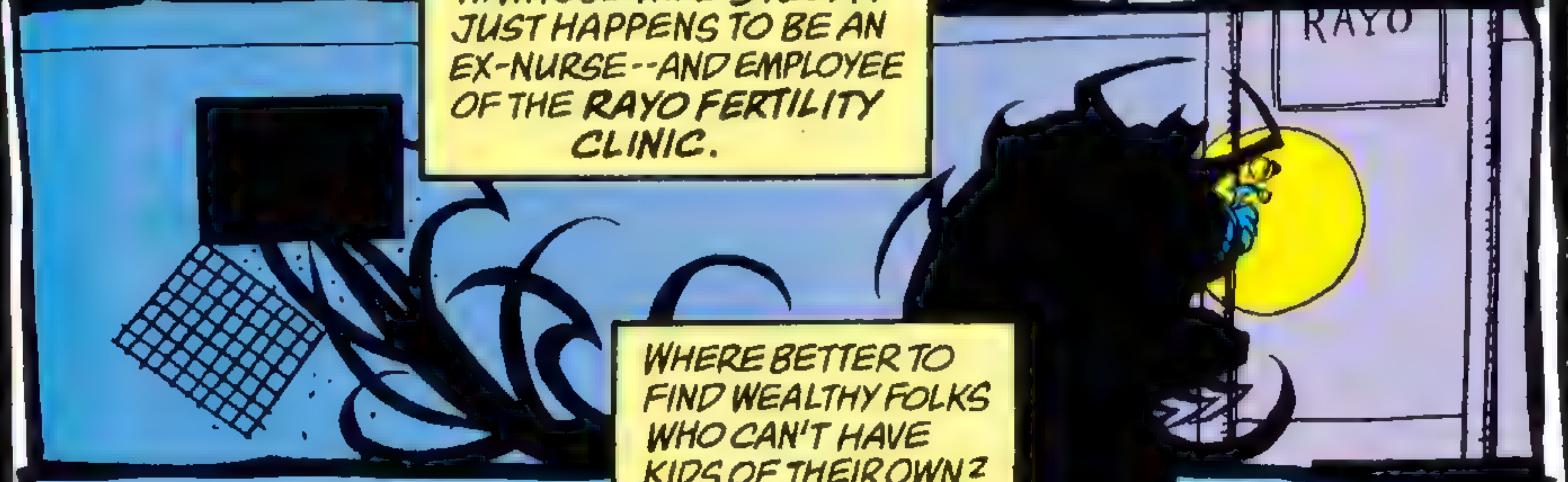


THERE ARE 18 ADOPTION AGENCIES IN GOTHAM.
IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN ME A WEEK TO CHECK
THEM ALL OUT--AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
FRUITLESS.

RAYO FERTILITY CLINIC



LUCKY ROSEMARY'S SON MADE THE
R.V.'S PLATES. REGISTERED TO ONE
LONNY ZIMMS, A SMALL-TIME
HOOD WITH A RECORD GOING BACK
TO GRADE SCHOOL...



...WHOSE WIFE STELLA
JUST HAPPENS TO BE AN
EX-NURSE--AND EMPLOYEE
OF THE RAYO FERTILITY
CLINIC.

WHERE BETTER TO
FIND WEALTHY FOLKS
WHO CAN'T HAVE
KIDS OF THEIR OWN?



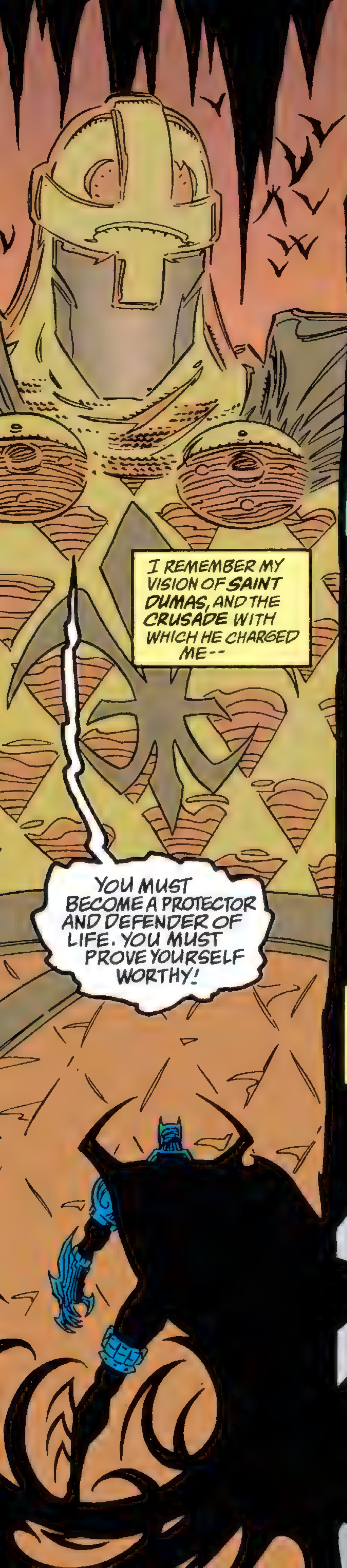
DIDN'T EXPECT TO TURN UP
ANYTHING USEFUL IN THE
COMPUTER FILES--AND I DON'T.
DETAILS ON THE TRADE IN HUMAN
MISERY WOULD HARDLY BE
READILY ACCESSIBLE.



BUT THERE ARE OTHER--
IF SLOWER--WAYS TO LEARN.



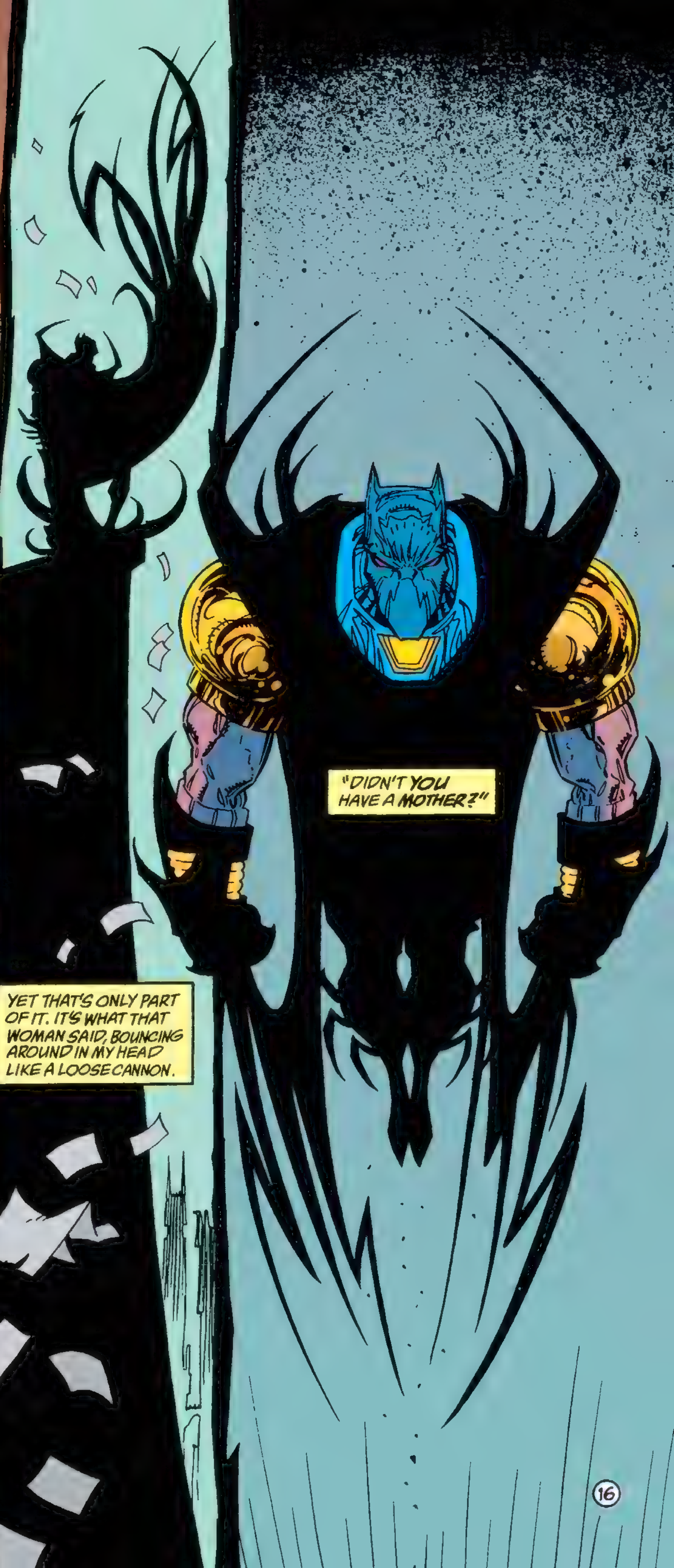
NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME,
I ASK MYSELF WHY I'M
DOING THIS. I HATE
DETECTIVE WORK AND ALL
THE BOREDOM IT ENTAILS.



I REMEMBER MY
VISION OF SAINT
DUMAS, AND THE
CRUSADE WITH
WHICH HE CHARGED
ME--

YOU MUST
BECOME A PROTECTOR
AND DEFENDER OF
LIFE. YOU MUST
PROVE YOURSELF
WORTHY!

YET THAT'S ONLY PART
OF IT. IT'S WHAT THAT
WOMAN SAID, BOUNCING
AROUND IN MY HEAD
LIKE A LOOSE CANNON.



"DIDN'T YOU
HAVE A MOTHER?"

BAD NEWS,
I'M AFRAID, MR.
AND MRS.
LEEMING--

DOCTOR
RAYO

--OUR TESTS SHOW THAT EVEN WITH OUR
MOST ADVANCED TREATMENT, THERE'S NO
POSSIBILITY OF YOU HAVING A BABY. I CAN
EXPLAIN IN TECHNICAL TERMS--

NO NEED, DOCTOR
RAYO. I'M SURE YOU'RE
RIGHT.

DON'T WORRY,
HONEY. WE CAN
ALWAYS ADOPT.

UMM, THAT MIGHT NOT BE SO
EASY, MR. LEEMING. THERE'S A
THREE-YEAR WAITING LIST, AND
EVEN THEN IT'S NOT GUARANTEED.
YOUR AGE WOULD TELL AGAINST
YOU, AND IF YOU'VE EVER BROKEN
THE LAW -- EVEN A TRAFFIC
VIOLATION -- YOU CAN
FORGET IT!

OH, DAVID!
AND I SO
WANTED A
BABY!

DON'T UPSET
YOURSELF, DARLING!
PLEASE...!

WELL, PERHAPS ALL
ISN'T LOST, YOU KNOW.
THERE ARE WAYS
AND MEANS...

I'VE LISTENED TO 17
HOURS OF TAPES IN THE
PAST TWO DAYS. RAYO
HAS A CHARMING
BEDSIDE MANNER,
BUT IT'S STARTING
TO REALLY GRATE.

--CAN'T
TALK HERE.
MEET ME
TONIGHT--

BUT
FINALLY--

--DELANEY
PLAZA--SHALL
WE SAY SEVEN?

AND DON'T
WORRY. I'M SURE
I'LL BE ABLE TO
HELP YOU!

WRRUNN

17



IT'S NOT ILLEGAL, IS IT? NOT STOLEN BABIES OR ANY-THING?

OH, NO, NO, NO! EVERY-THING'S PERFECTLY ABOVE BOARD. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT CHILDREN WHOSE MOTHERS GAVE THEM UP GLADLY IN ORDER THAT THEY'D HAVE A PROPER LIFE IN A CIVILIZED CITY!

THE ONLY PROBLEM MIGHT BE THE PRICE. WE HAVE CERTAIN VERY COSTLY OVERHEADS, YOU SEE, AND--

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE WANT A BABY, DOCTOR RAYO. MONEY'S NO PROBLEM!

--IS A CERTAIN ALTERNATIVE ADOPTION SERVICE TO WHICH I CAN INTRODUCE YOU.

THEN HOW DOES THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS SOUND...?



COME HERE--

LIKE THE KEY TO TEN YEARS IN JAIL!

--I WANT A WORD WITH YOU!



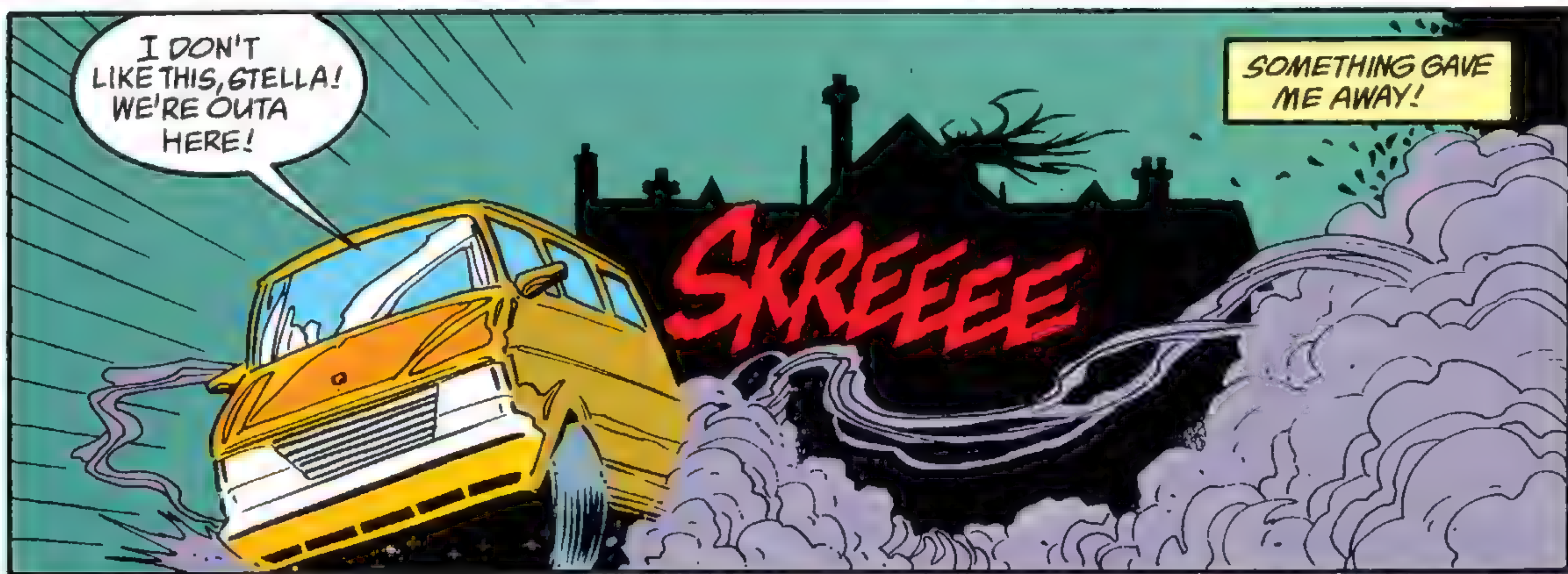
GOOD
TO BE HOME,
BABE--

--AND ANOTHER
FIVE THOU RICHER! EASIER
THAN NURSING, HUH?



BUT THAT'S
THE DOCTOR'S
SIGNAL EVERY-
THING'S ALL
RIGHT!

FUNNY...
THE LIGHT AIN'T
ON!

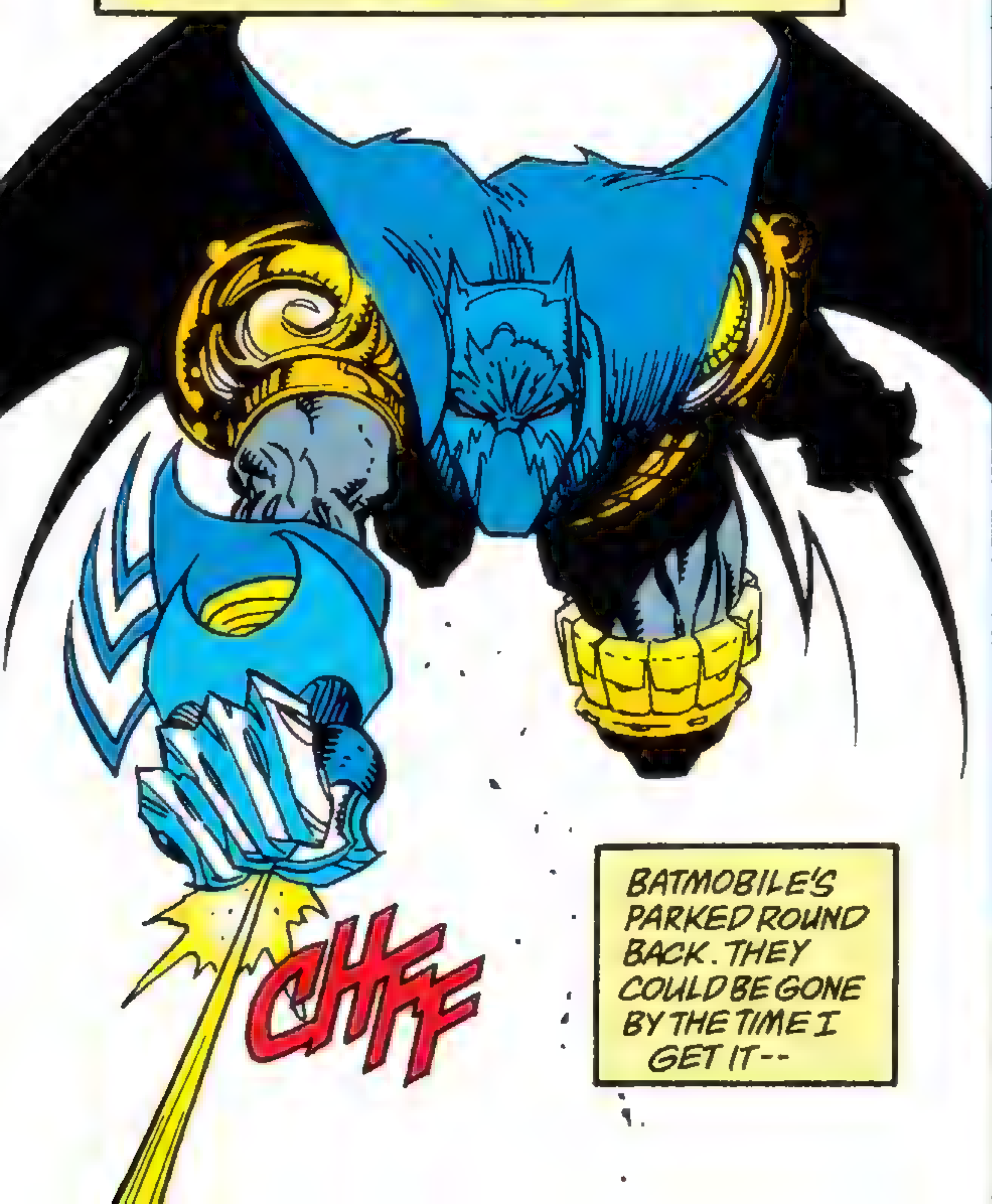


I DON'T
LIKE THIS, STELLA!
WE'RE OUTA
HERE!

SOMETHING GAVE
ME AWAY!

SKREEEE

THAT VAN'S FULL OF BABIES-- SOME POOR
MOTHER'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS.



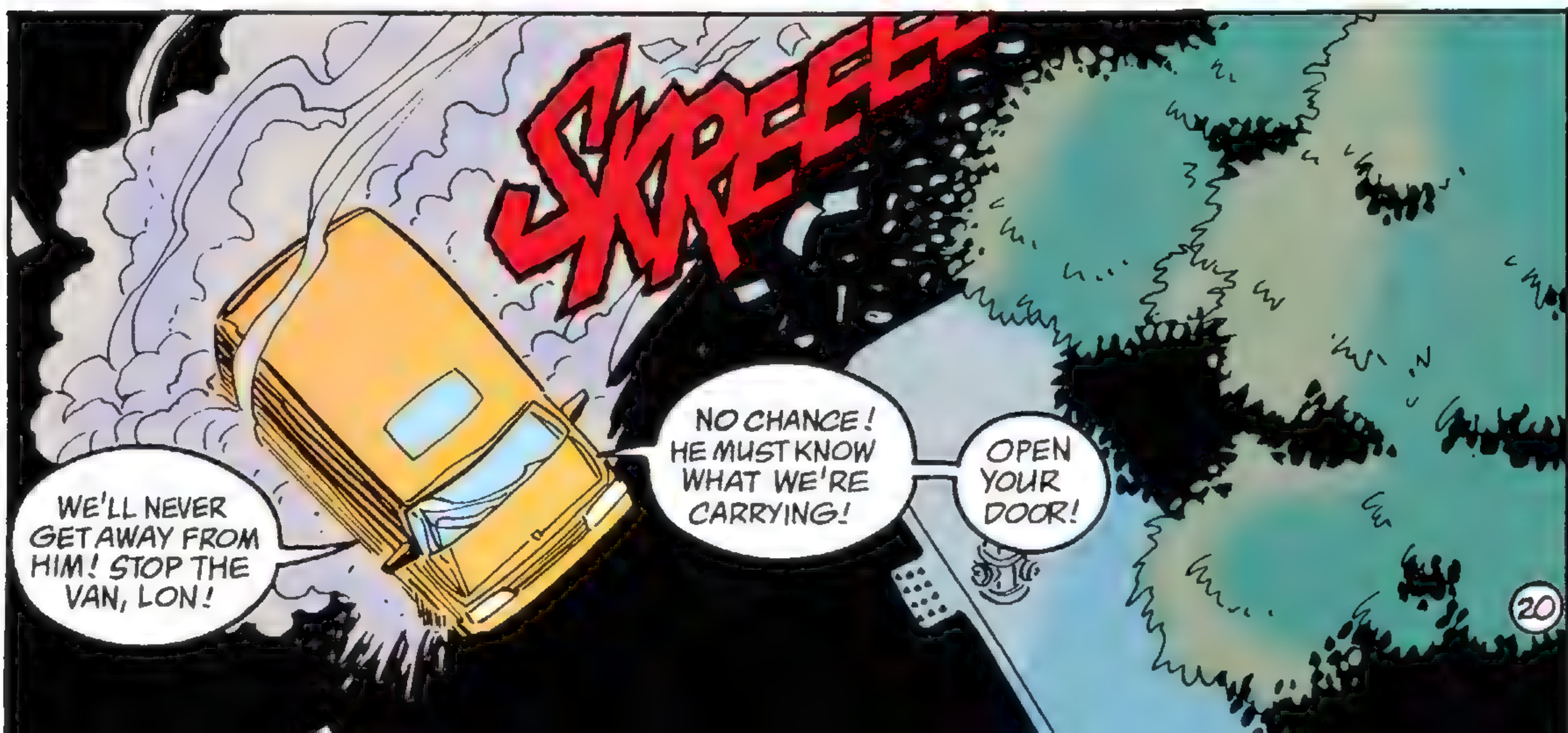
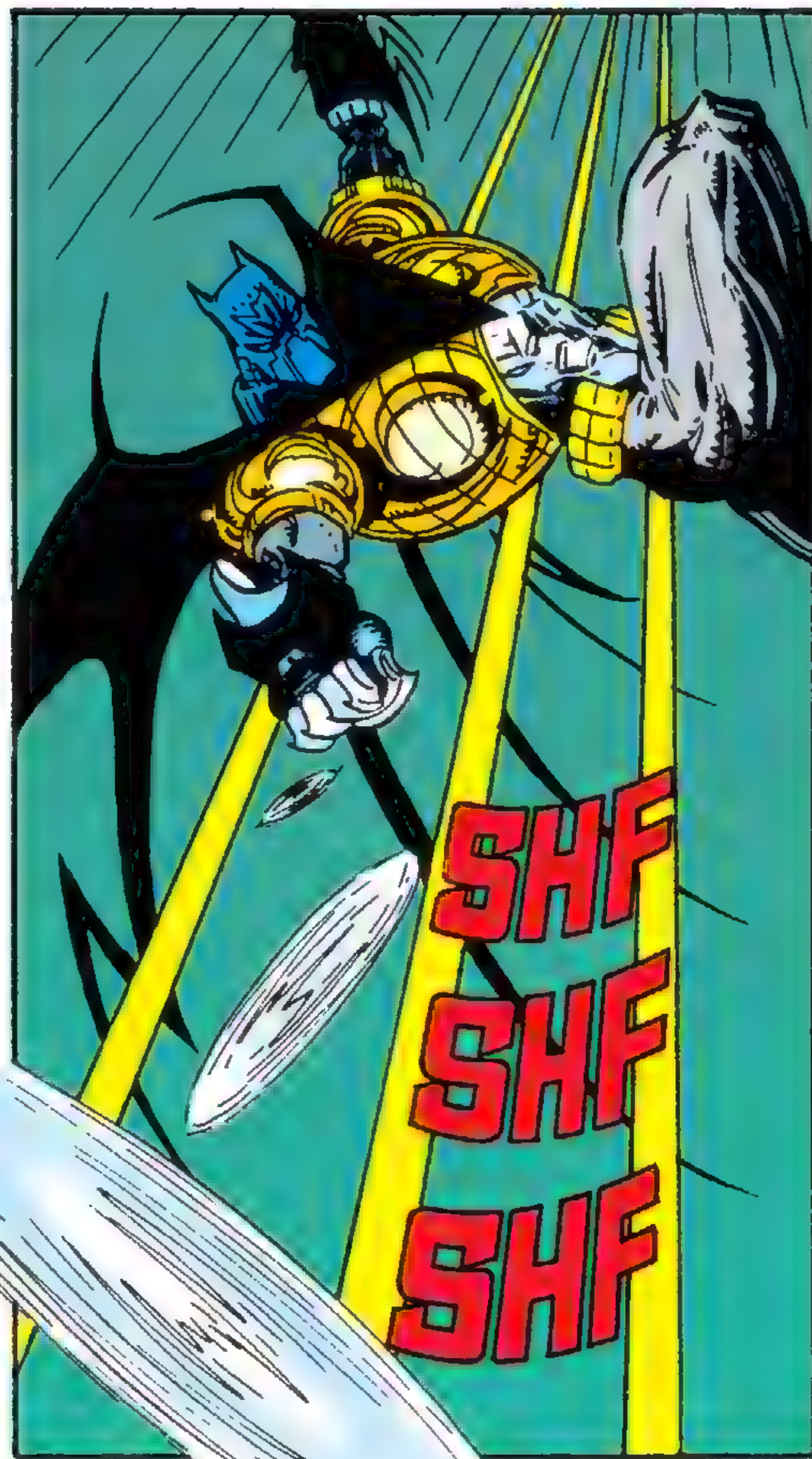
CHFF

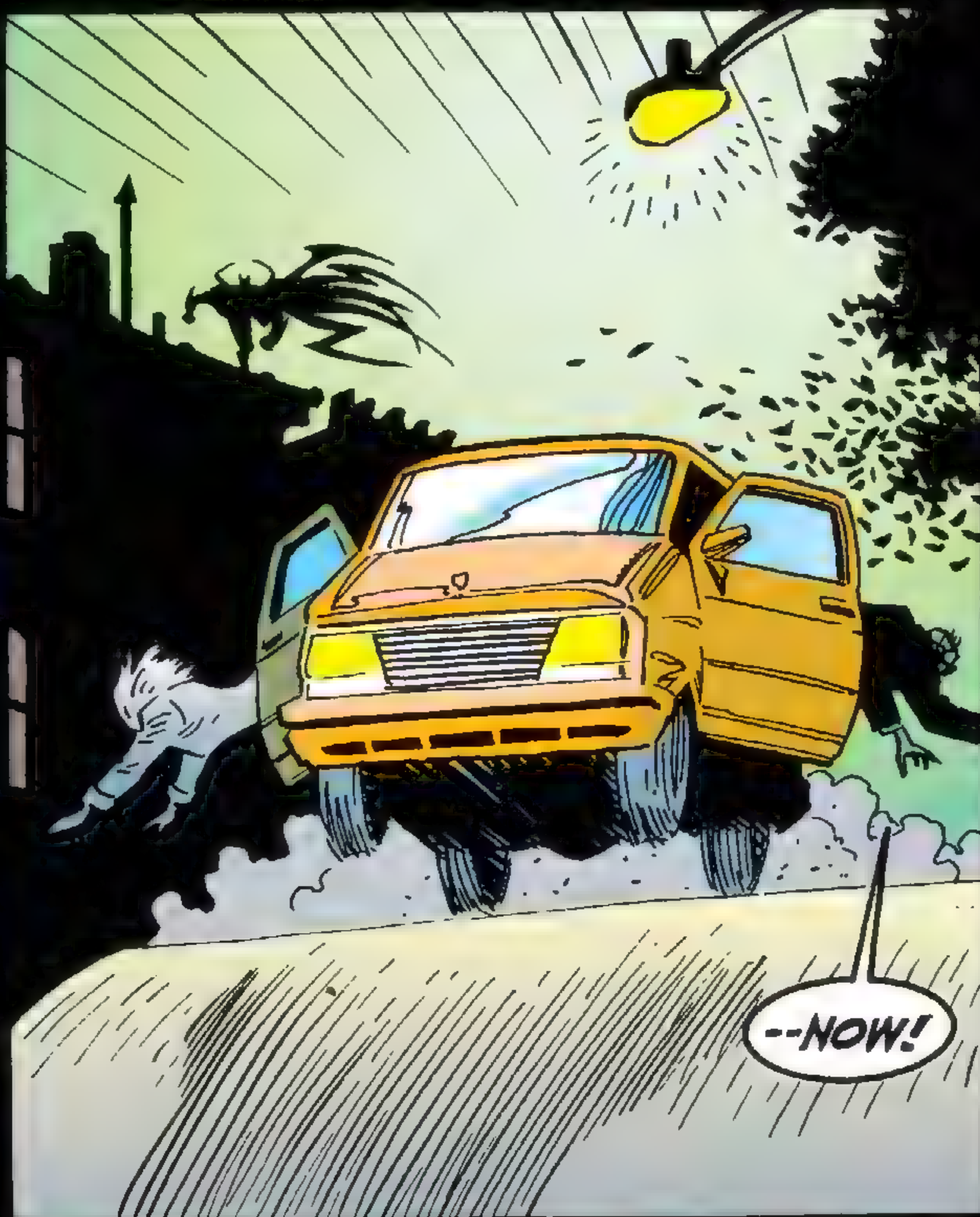
BATMOBILE'S
PARKED ROUND
BACK. THEY
COULD BE GONE
BY THE TIME I
GET IT--

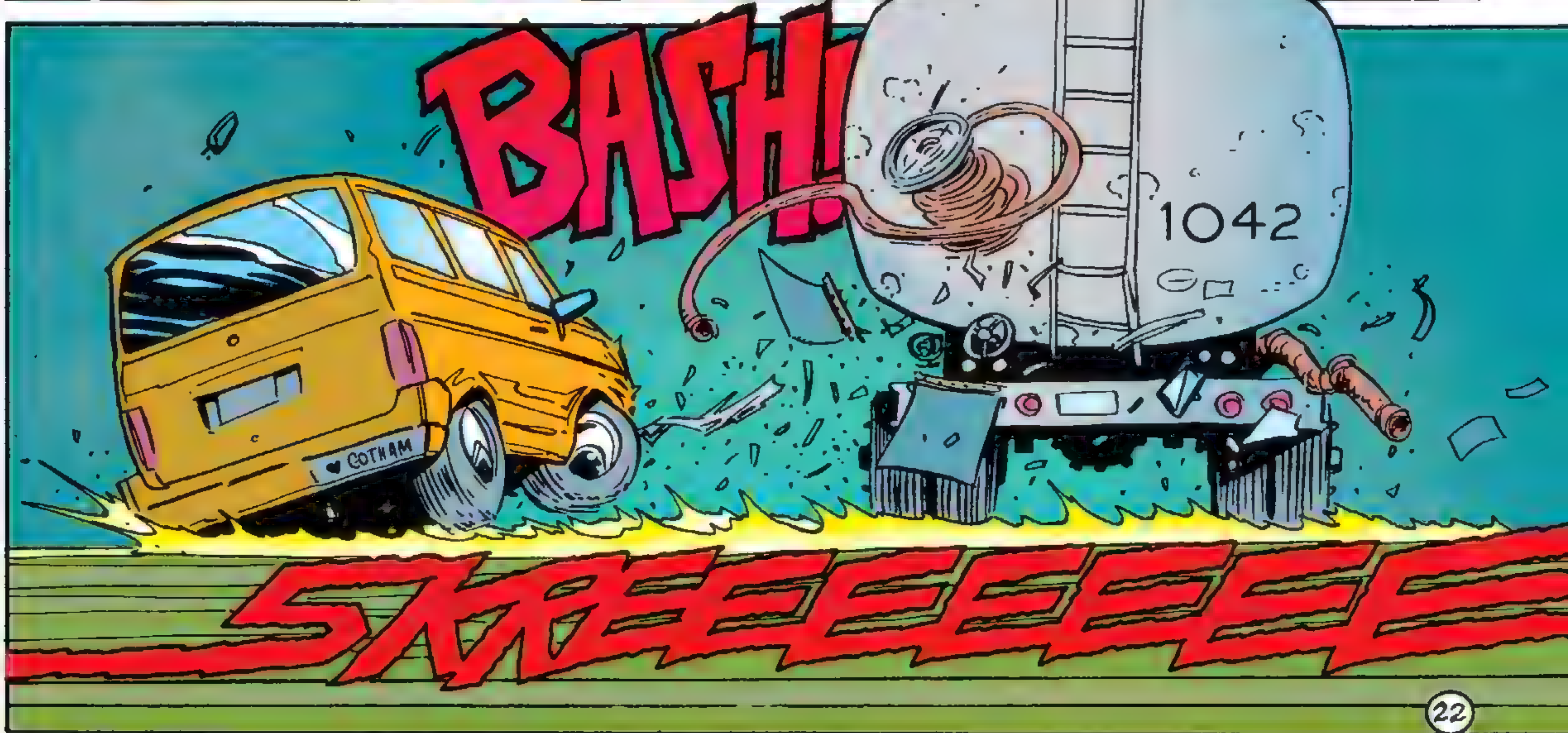
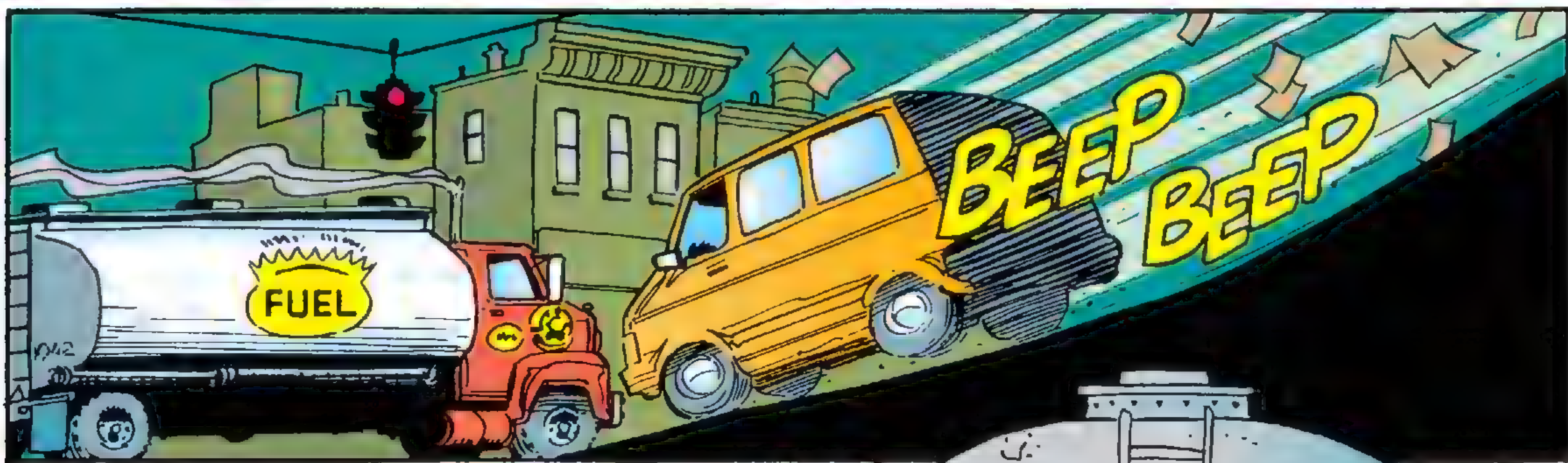
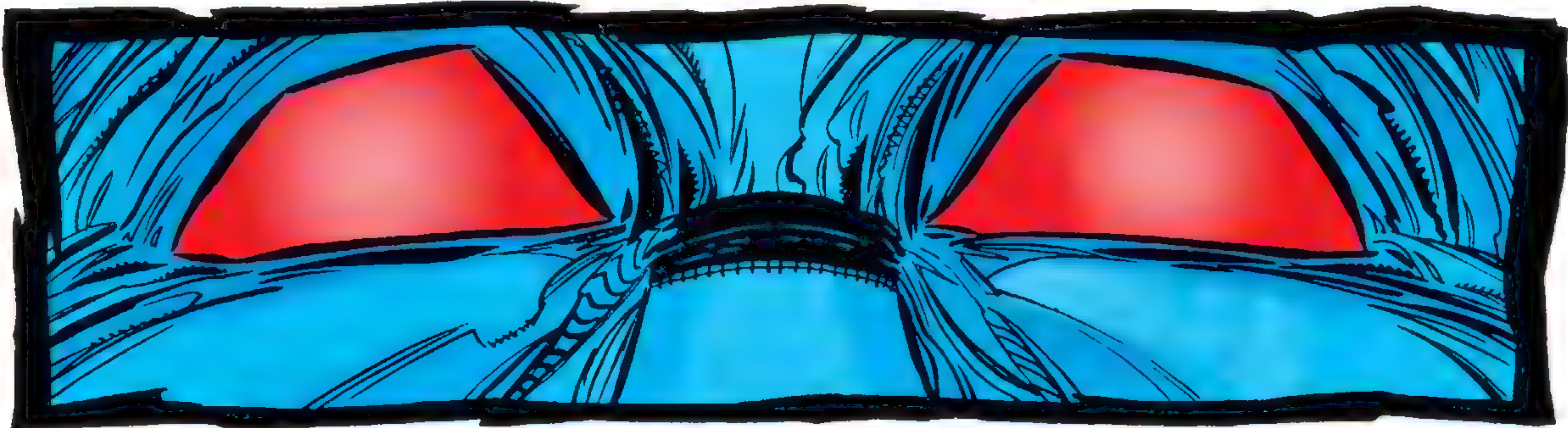
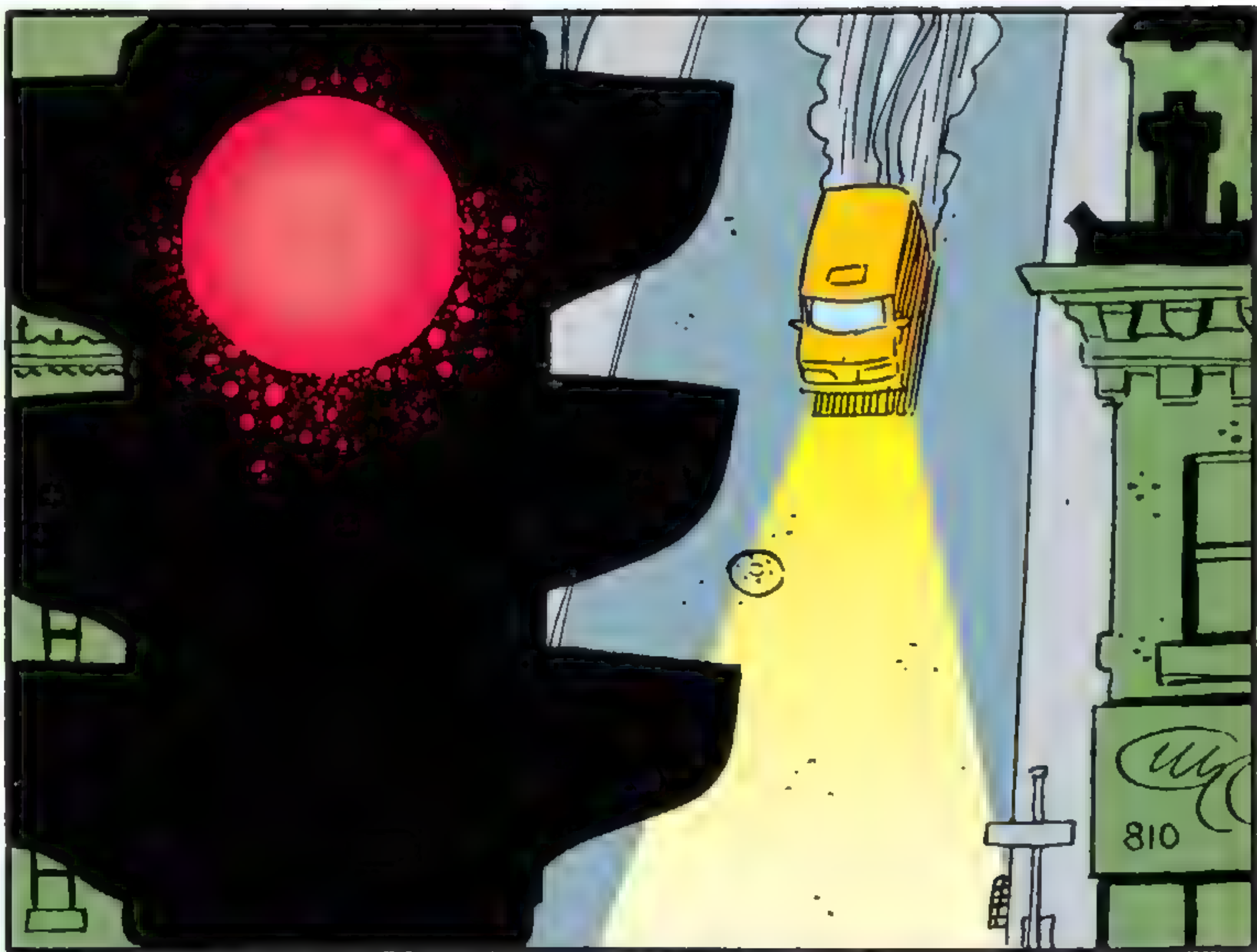


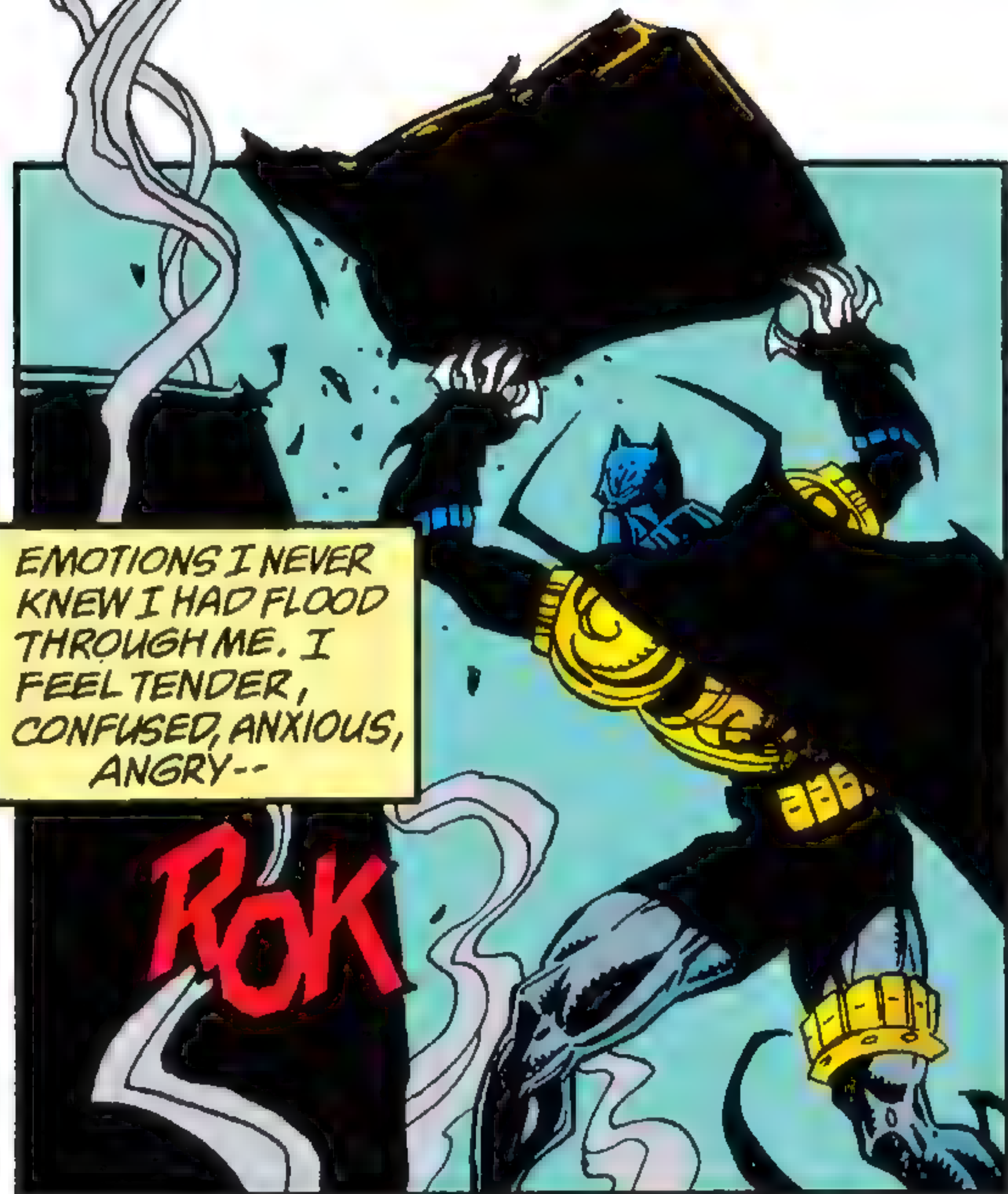
CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOR
LONG--THEY'RE SURE TO
LOSE ME.

HAVE TO CUT THEM OFF
AT THE INTERSECTION--!









EMOTIONS I NEVER
KNEW I HAD FLOOD
THROUGH ME. I
FEEL TENDER,
CONFUSED, ANXIOUS,
ANGRY--

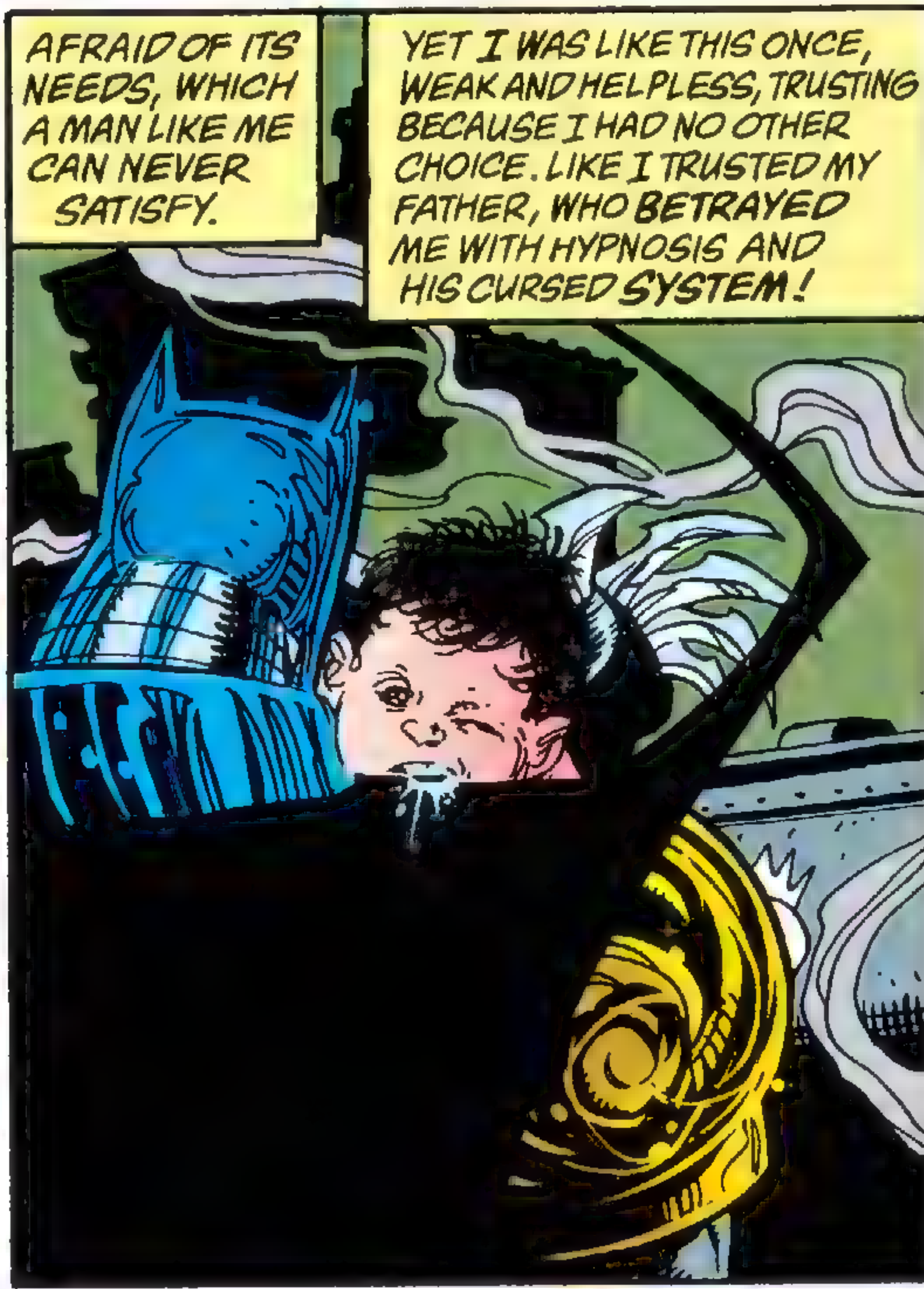
Rok



IF EVEN ONE OF
THEM IS HURT...!

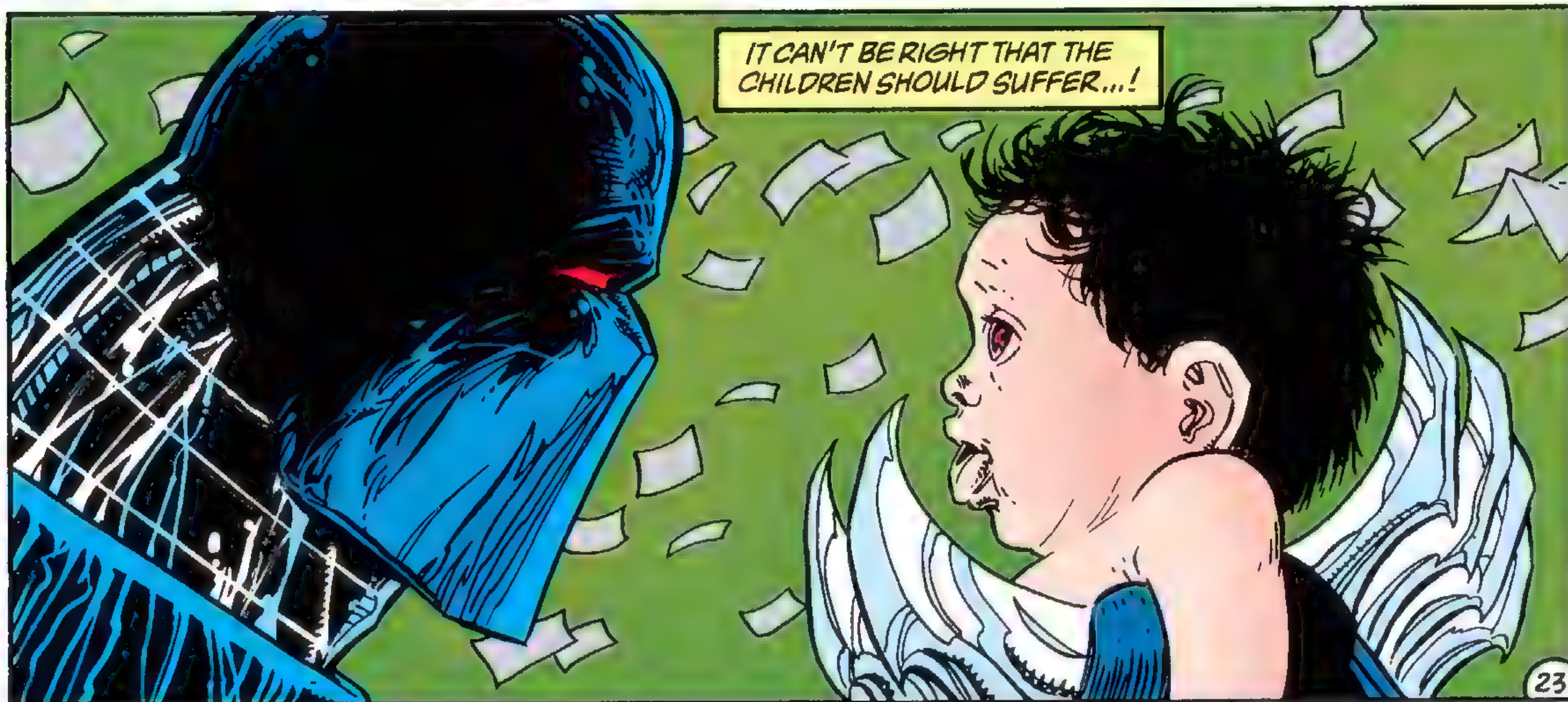


IT'S SO SMALL AND FRAGILE,
JERKING AROUND LIKE SOME
TINY DINOSAUR. I FEEL
UNEASY, AWKWARD, AFRAID
OF HURTING IT.



AFRAID OF ITS
NEEDS, WHICH
A MAN LIKE ME
CAN NEVER
SATISFY.

YET I WAS LIKE THIS ONCE,
WEAK AND HELPLESS, TRUSTING
BECAUSE I HAD NO OTHER
CHOICE. LIKE I TRUSTED MY
FATHER, WHO BETRAYED
ME WITH HYPNOSIS AND
HIS CURSED SYSTEM!



IT CAN'T BE RIGHT THAT THE
CHILDREN SHOULD SUFFER...!

ROSEMARY'S BABY WAS ADOPTED BY J.D. LOWTHER AND HIS WIFE, MARNA, FOR THE SUM OF \$35,000.

THEY HAD NO REGRETS. DESPERATE FOR A CHILD, THEY WOULD GIVE IT EVERYTHING THEY COULD, LOVE IT AS IF IT REALLY WAS THEIR OWN...

BRRRING DOORBELL, HON! I'LL GET IT!



...EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T.

J.D. RAN A CEMENT FRANCHISE. BUSINESS WAS SMOOTH. THE KID WOULD GROW UP TO THE GOOD LIFE, NEVER KNOWING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

MY MOTHER...

I ALLOW MYSELF TO THINK ONE MORE TIME ABOUT HER-- WHO SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HOW SHE FELT ABOUT ME... THEN I LOCK THE THOUGHTS AWAY.

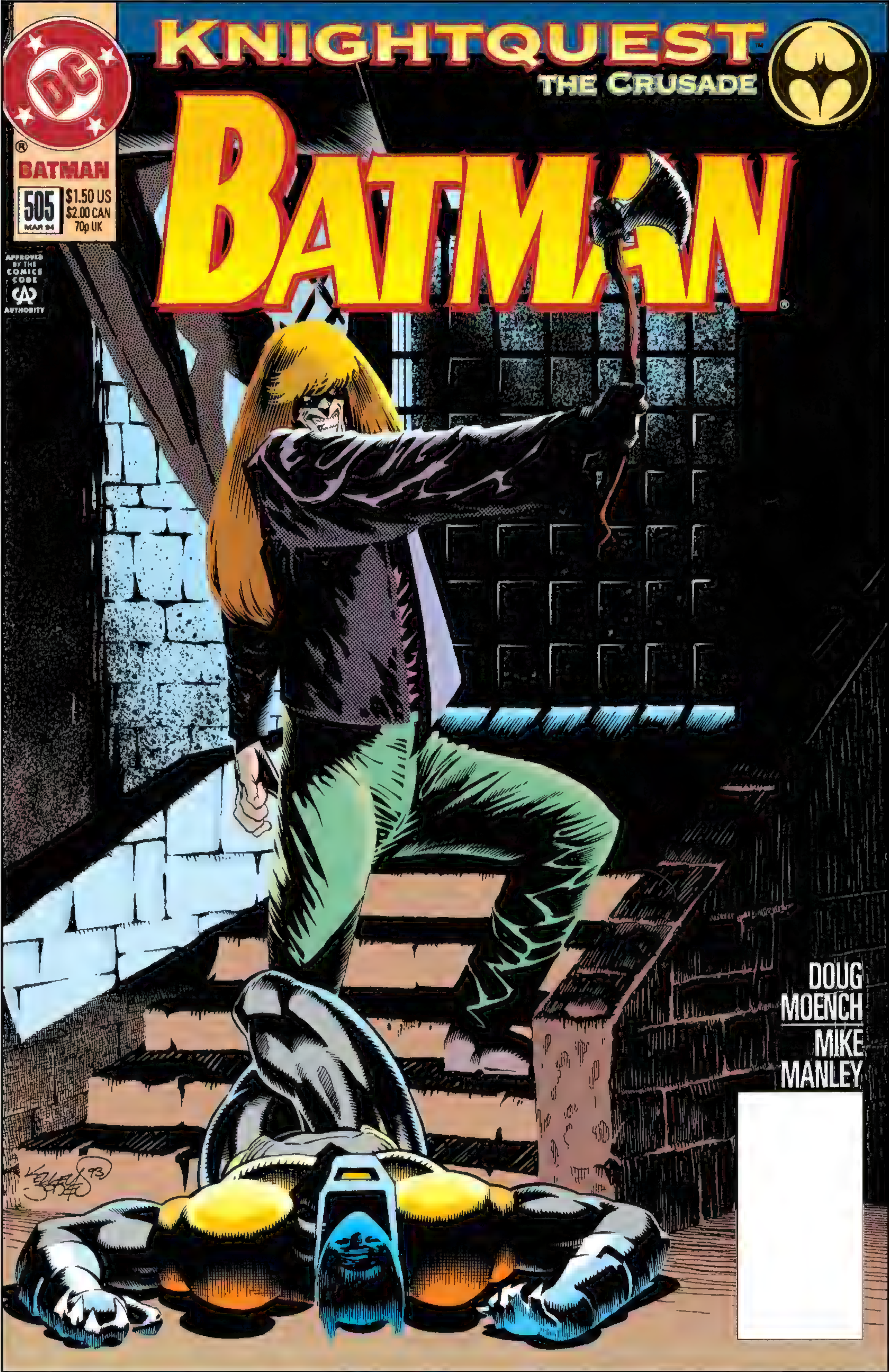
MAYBE ONE DAY I'LL FIND OUT ABOUT HER. BUT FOR NOW, IT'S NIGHT IN BAD CITY--

--AND I AM THE BATMAN!



**NEXT:
BLOOD
KIN!**

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



BLOOD KIN

"REPORTED GUNSHOTS,
POSSIBLE DOMESTIC
DISTURBANCE"--
HORROR REDUCED TO
THE FORMALITY OF A
POLICE RADIO
DISPATCH.

STILL, IF NINE OUT
OF TEN IN-HOME
MURDERS ARE
COMMITTED BY
FAMILY MEMBERS
AND "LOVED ONES," A
GOOD GUESS... BUT
APPARENTLY WRONG.

THE SCENE IS NO LONGER
A HOME--IT'S A CHARNEL
HOUSE--AND THE VICTIMS
OF THIS "DISTURBANCE"
ACCOUNT FOR THE
ENTIRE FAMILY.

DOUG MOENCH · MIKE MANLEY · BOB WIACEK · ADRIENNE ROY
WRITER PENCLER INKER COLORIST
KEN BRUZENAK · JORDAN B. GORFINHEL · DENNY O'NEIL · BATMAN CREATED BY
LETTERER ASSISTANT EDITOR EDITOR BOB KANE



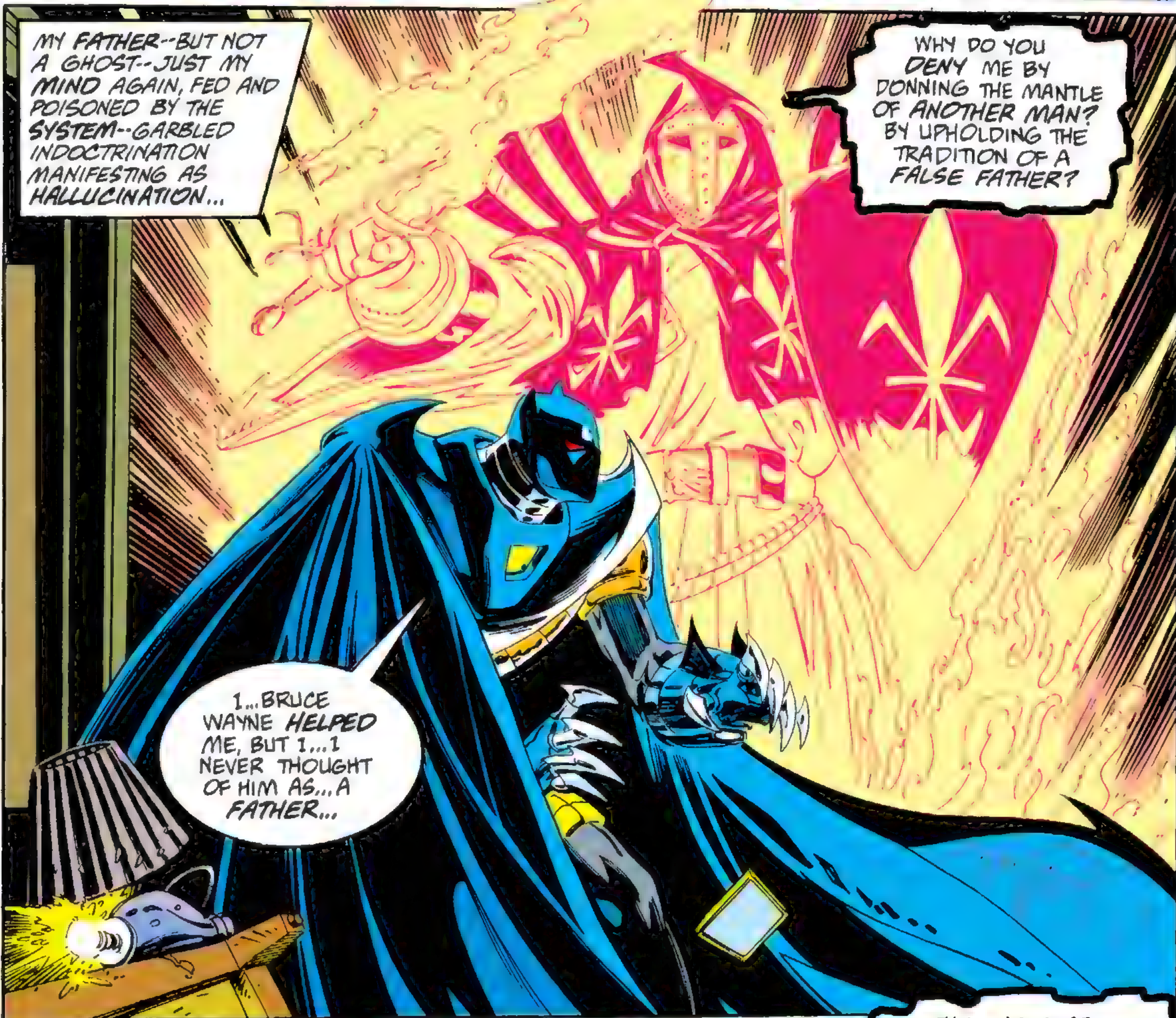
NO CASE OF MURDER-SUICIDE HERE, NOT WITH ALL FIVE BEATEN AND SHOT.

THEN
PLAYED.



AS IF DEATH WERE A MERE BYPRODUCT AND NOT ENOUGH IN ITSELF... AS IF THE KILLER TRIED TO PENE-TRATE LIFE AND GET AT THE VERY CORE OF--

FAITHLESS SON, YOU DO NOT BELONG HERE!



MY FATHER--BUT NOT A GHOST--JUST MY MIND AGAIN, FED AND POISONED BY THE SYSTEM--GARBLED INDOCTRINATION MANIFESTING AS HALLUCINATION...

WHY DO YOU DENY ME BY DONNING THE MANTLE OF ANOTHER MAN? BY UPHOLDING THE TRADITION OF A FALSE FATHER?

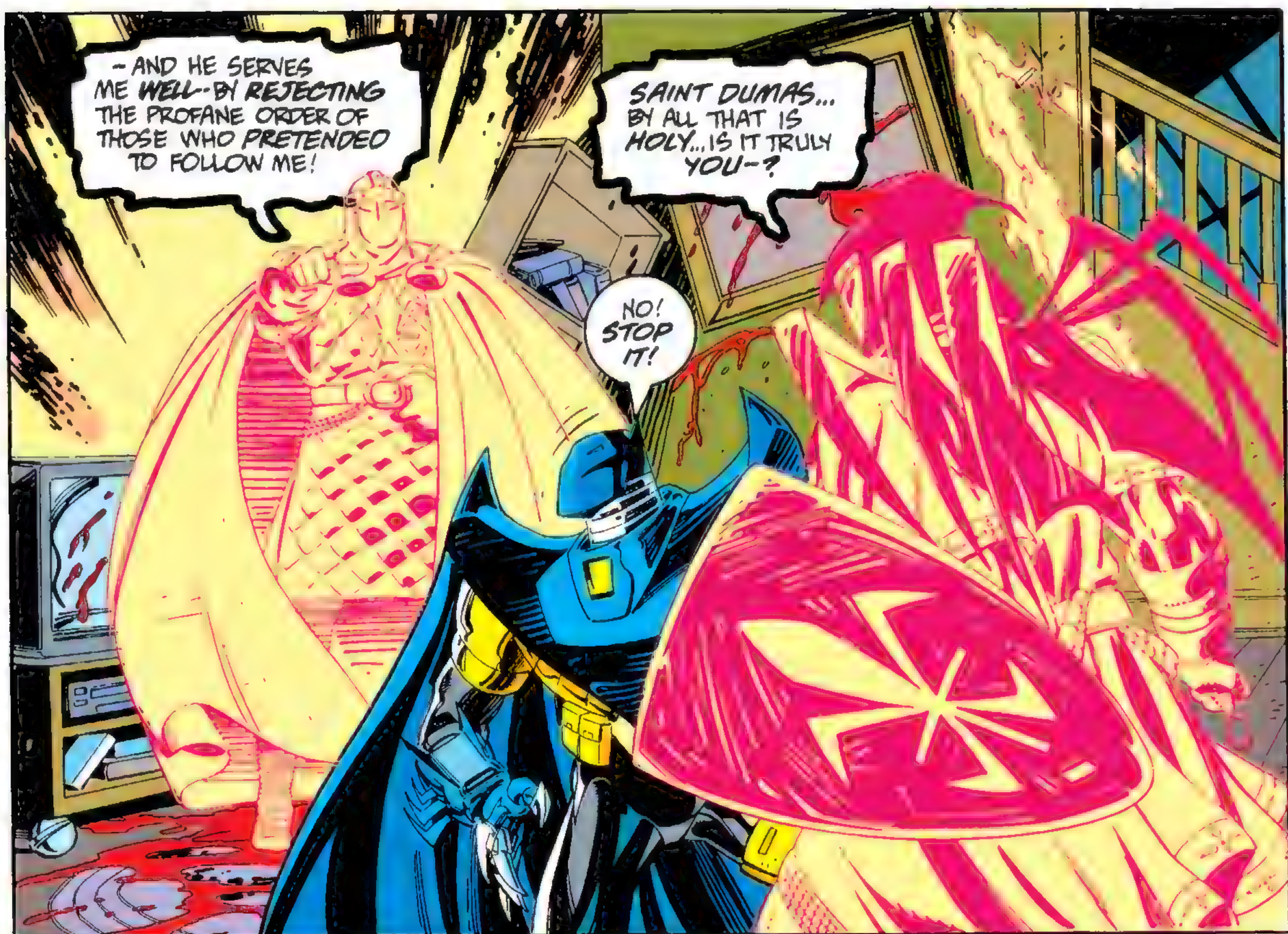
I...BRUCE WAYNE HELPED ME, BUT I...I NEVER THOUGHT OF HIM AS...A FATHER...



YOUR TRUE ALLEGIANCE IS NOW WHAT MINE WAS--TO THE ORDER, TO THE SYSTEM, TO MY LEGACY!

THE LINE MUST CONTINUE UNBROKEN! AS I WAS THE AVENGING ANGEL AZRAEL, SO TOO MUST YOU SERVE SAINT DUMAS!

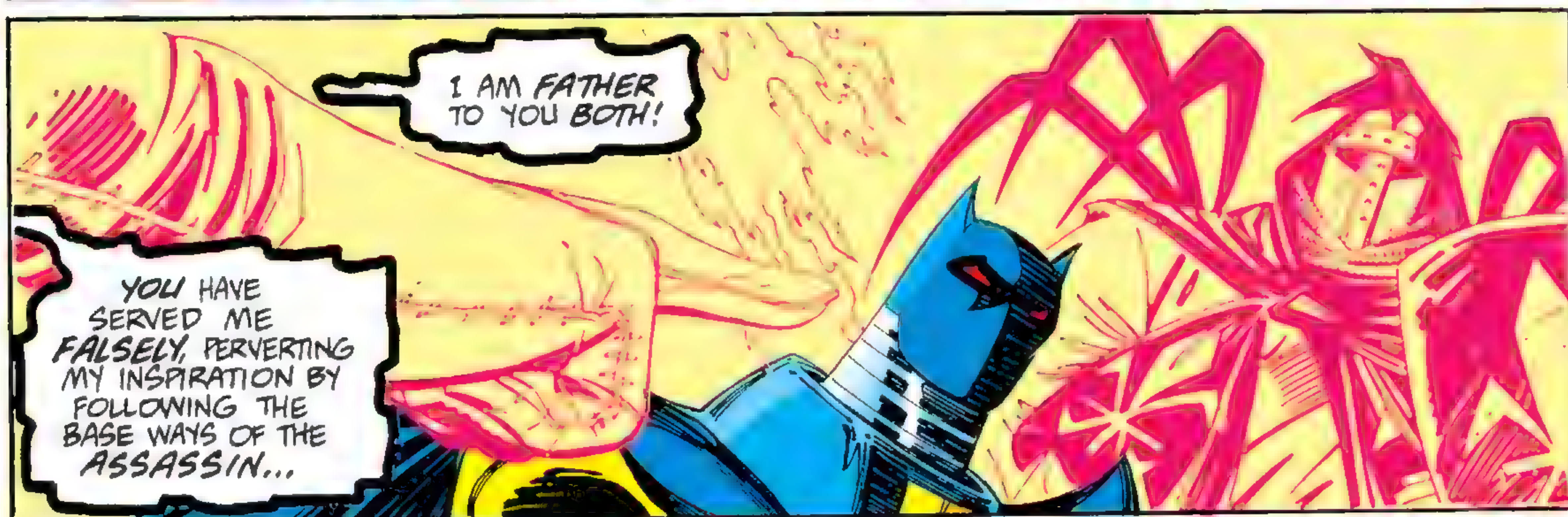
SERVE ME HE DOES--



~ AND HE SERVES
ME WELL...BY REJECTING
THE PROFANE ORDER OF
THOSE WHO PRETENDED
TO FOLLOW ME!

SAINT DUMAS...
BY ALL THAT IS
HOLY...IS IT TRULY
YOU-?

NO!
STOP
IT!



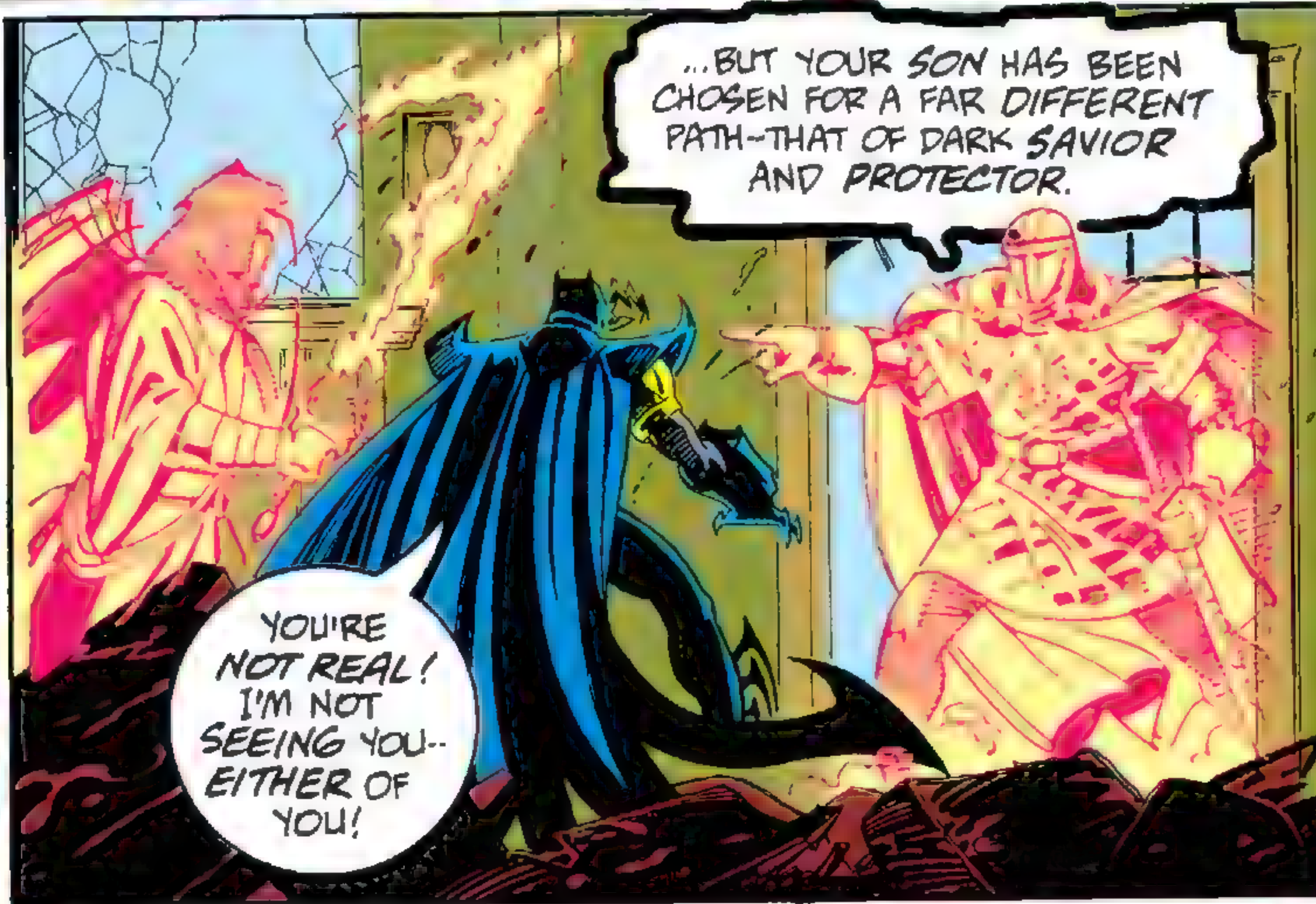
I AM FATHER
TO YOU BOTH!

YOU HAVE
SERVED ME
FALSELY, PERVERTING
MY INSPIRATION BY
FOLLOWING THE
BASE WAYS OF THE
ASSASSIN...



NO! HE DIDN'T
REALIZE! HE HAD
NO CHOICE!

IT WAS
THE SYSTEM!
MY FATHER WAS
BRAINWASHED
INTO
BECOMING A
KILLER--!



...BUT YOUR SON HAS BEEN
CHOSEN FOR A FAR DIFFERENT
PATH--THAT OF DARK SAVIOR
AND PROTECTOR.

YOU'RE
NOT REAL!
I'M NOT
SEEING YOU--
EITHER OF
YOU!

YOU MUST
RELEASE ALL
HOLD OVER YOUR
SON-AND LET
HIM EMERGE
FROM YOUR
DARKNESS INTO
ANOTHER MAN'S
LIGHT!

NO! FAR FROM BEING
MY PATRON SAINT, YOU ARE
BUT A DEMON CLOAKED
IN DISGUISE-AND I
WOULD DEEP HELL ITSELF
IN MY APPOINTED
CRUSADE!

EVEN AFTER
DEATH, MY
QUEST MUST
GO ON!

AS BLOOD
OF MY BLOOD,
MY SON MUST
FOLLOW IN MY
FOOTSTEPS!

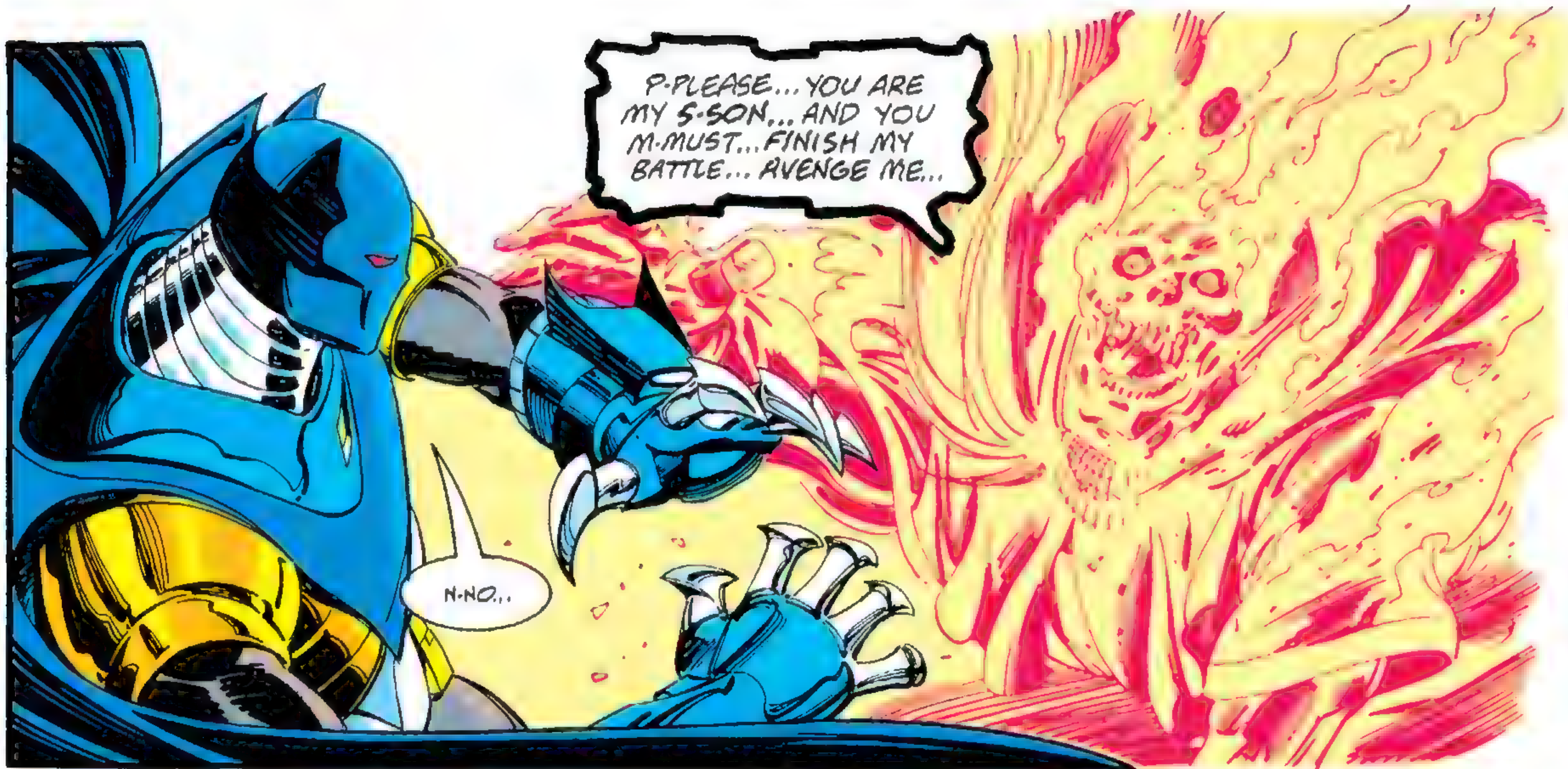
SO BE IT! IF YOUR
FALSE "SYSTEM" IS STRONGER
THAN THE IDEALS OF HIM
WHOM IT PRETENDS TO
SERVE...

...KNOW THAT YOU
CHALLENGE TRUTH
ITSELF IN THIS STRUGGLE
FOR THE FATE OF
YOUR SON'S SOUL!

AHRRRR!

AND IT IS A
STRUGGLE YOU
ARE DAMNED TO
LOSE!

N-NO...
DEFEATED BY...
A D-DEMON...

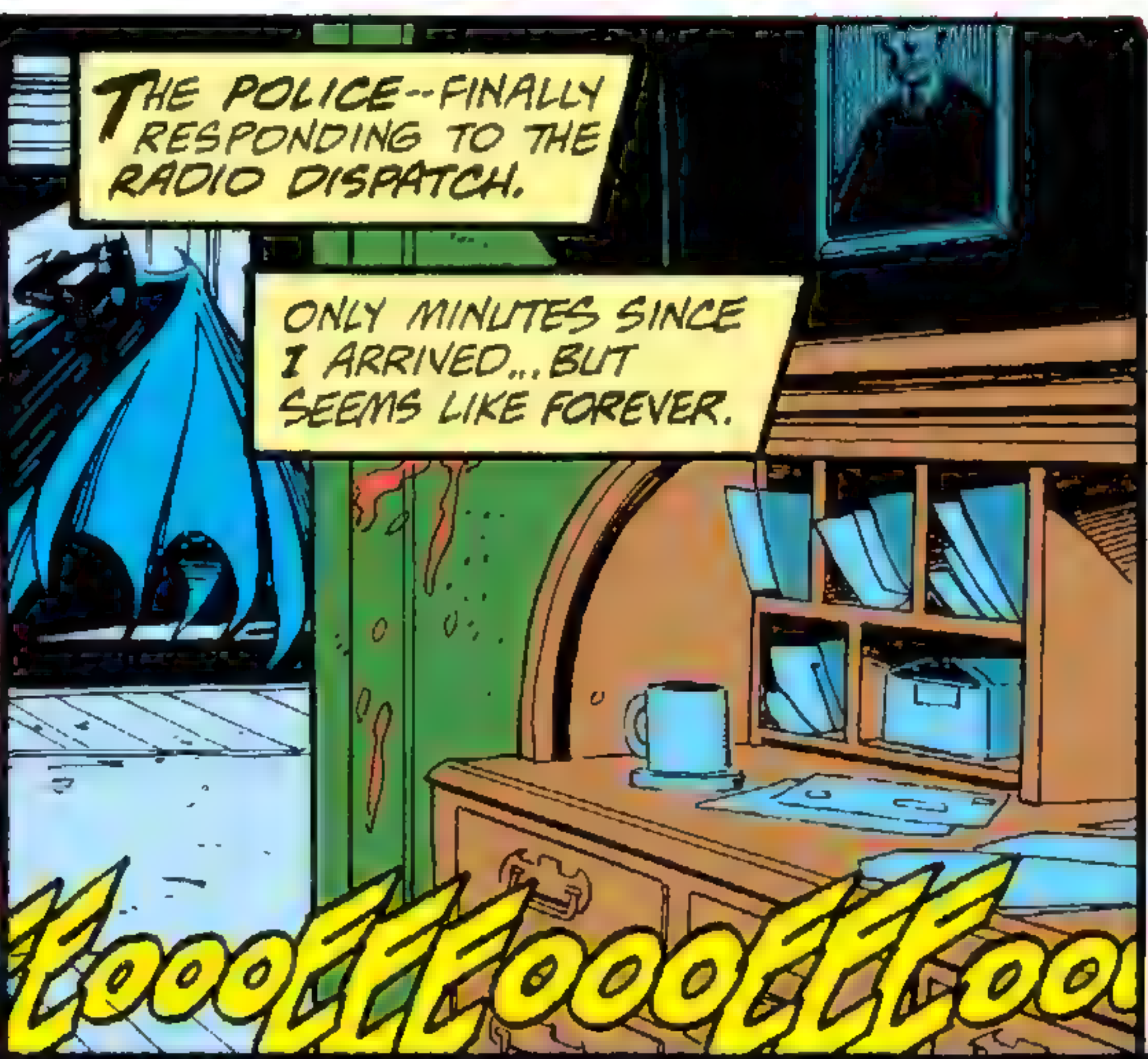


P-PLEASE... YOU ARE MY S-SON... AND YOU M-MUST... FINISH MY BATTLE... AVENGE ME...

N-NO...



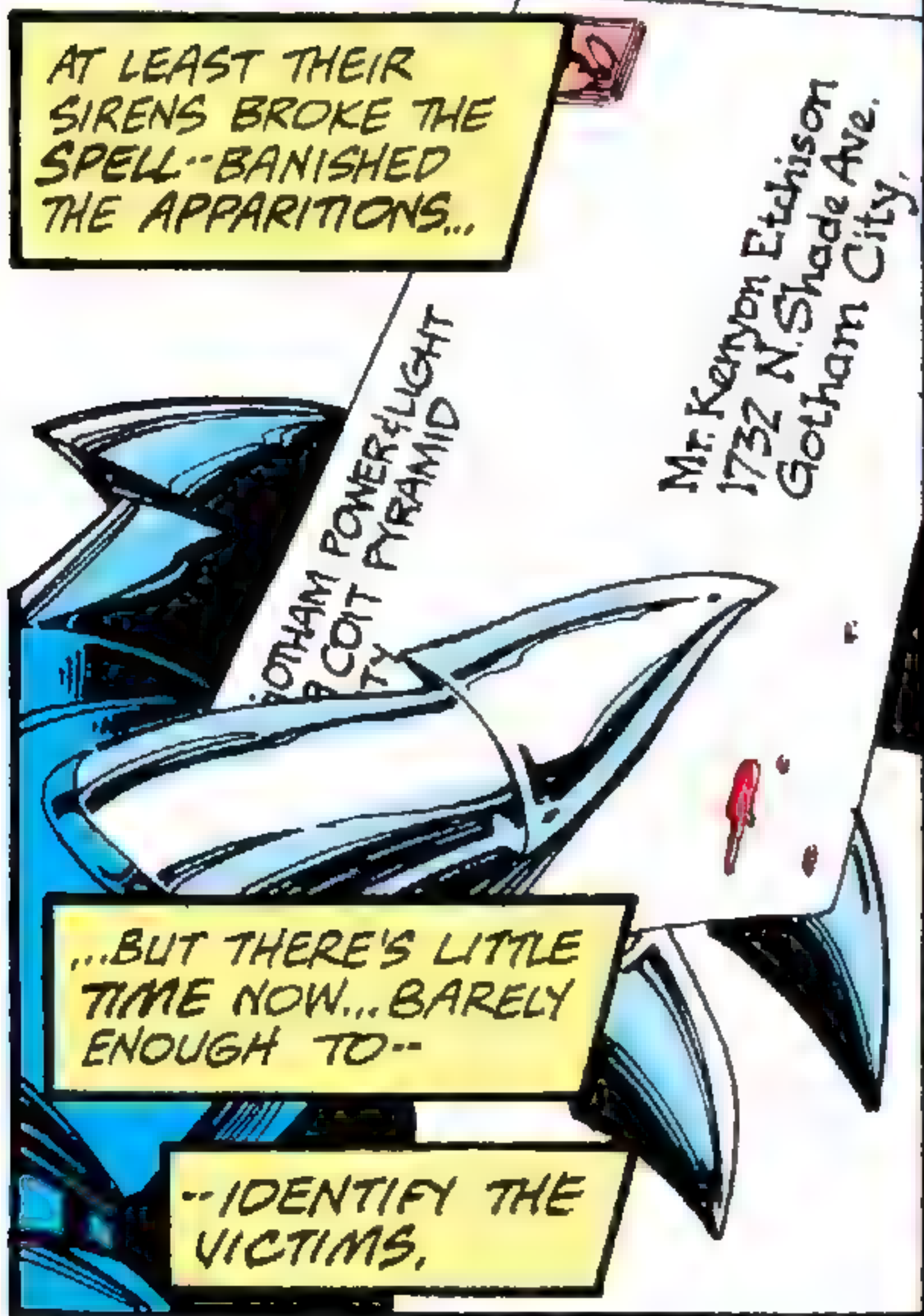
NOOOOO!!



THE POLICE--FINALLY RESPONDING TO THE RADIO DISPATCH.

ONLY MINUTES SINCE I ARRIVED... BUT SEEMS LIKE FOREVER.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE



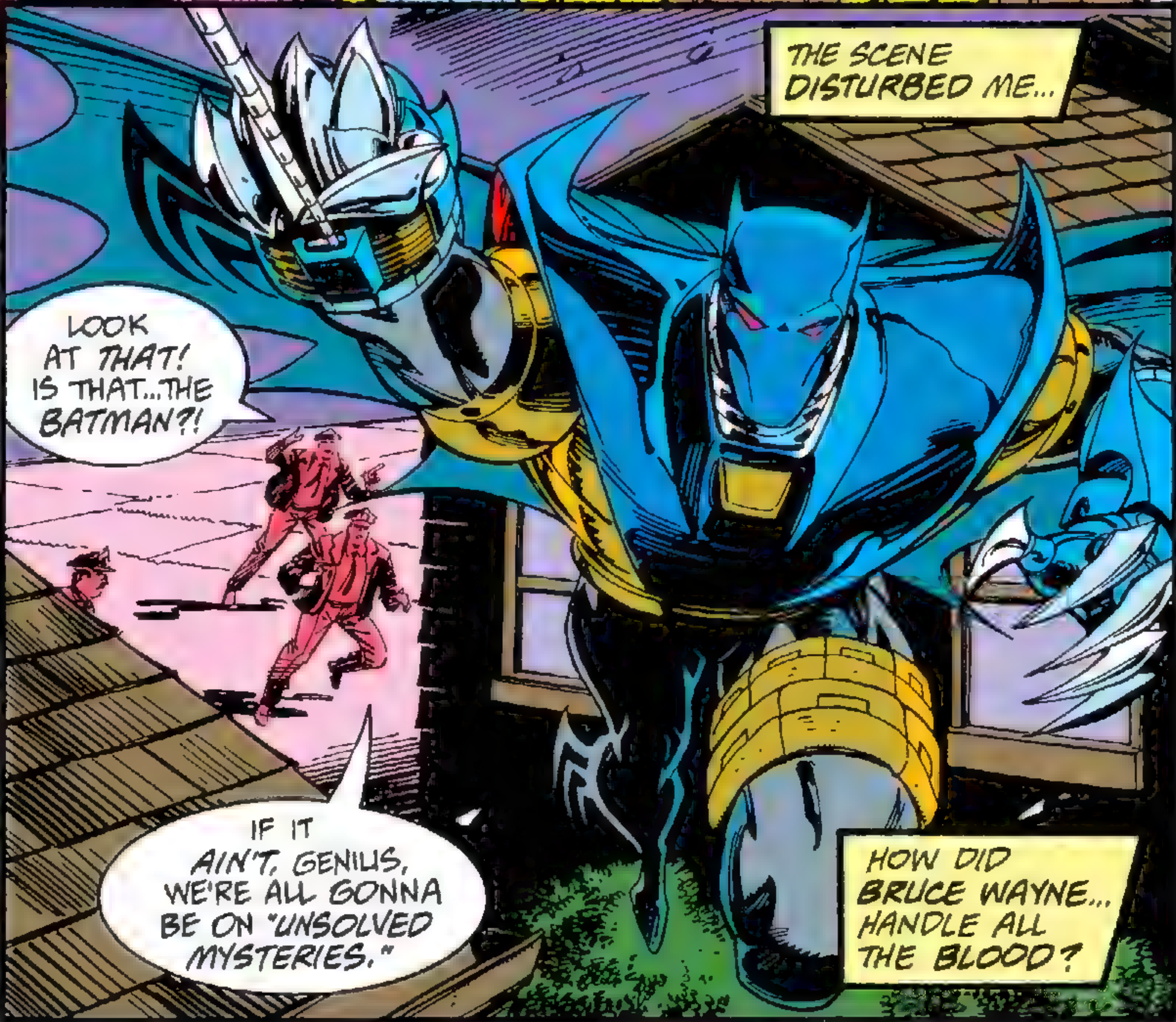
AT LEAST THEIR SIRENS BROKE THE SPELL--BANISHED THE APPARITIONS...

Mr. Kensington Etchison
1732 N. Shade Ave.
Gotham City.

GOtham POWER/LIGHT
P COIT PYRAMID

...BUT THERE'S LITTLE TIME NOW... BARELY ENOUGH TO--

--IDENTIFY THE VICTIMS.



THE SCENE DISTURBED ME...

LOOK AT THAT! IS THAT... THE BATMAN?!

IF IT AIN'T, GENIUS, WE'RE ALL GONNA BE ON "UNSOLVED MYSTERIES."

HOW DID BRUCE WAYNE... HANDLE ALL THE BLOOD?



NO
ESCAPE
FROM FAMILY
TIES... TRY
AS I
MIGHT...



...NO FLEEING
THE PAST... NO
DENYING MY
HERITAGE.

I AM THE
SAME AS MY ANCESTORS--
BLOOD AND SOUL
PASSED DOWN THROUGH
GENERATIONS OF
LIFE AND DEATH.



SOON, FIVE MORE
WILL MAKE THE PASSAGE
TO THIS CRYPT.

AND EVEN
THOUGH I HAVE
TAKEN THEIR FLESH,
DRUNK THEIR BLOOD,
FED ON THEIR WISDOM,
THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR
POWER...

...IT IS
STILL
NOT
ENOUGH.

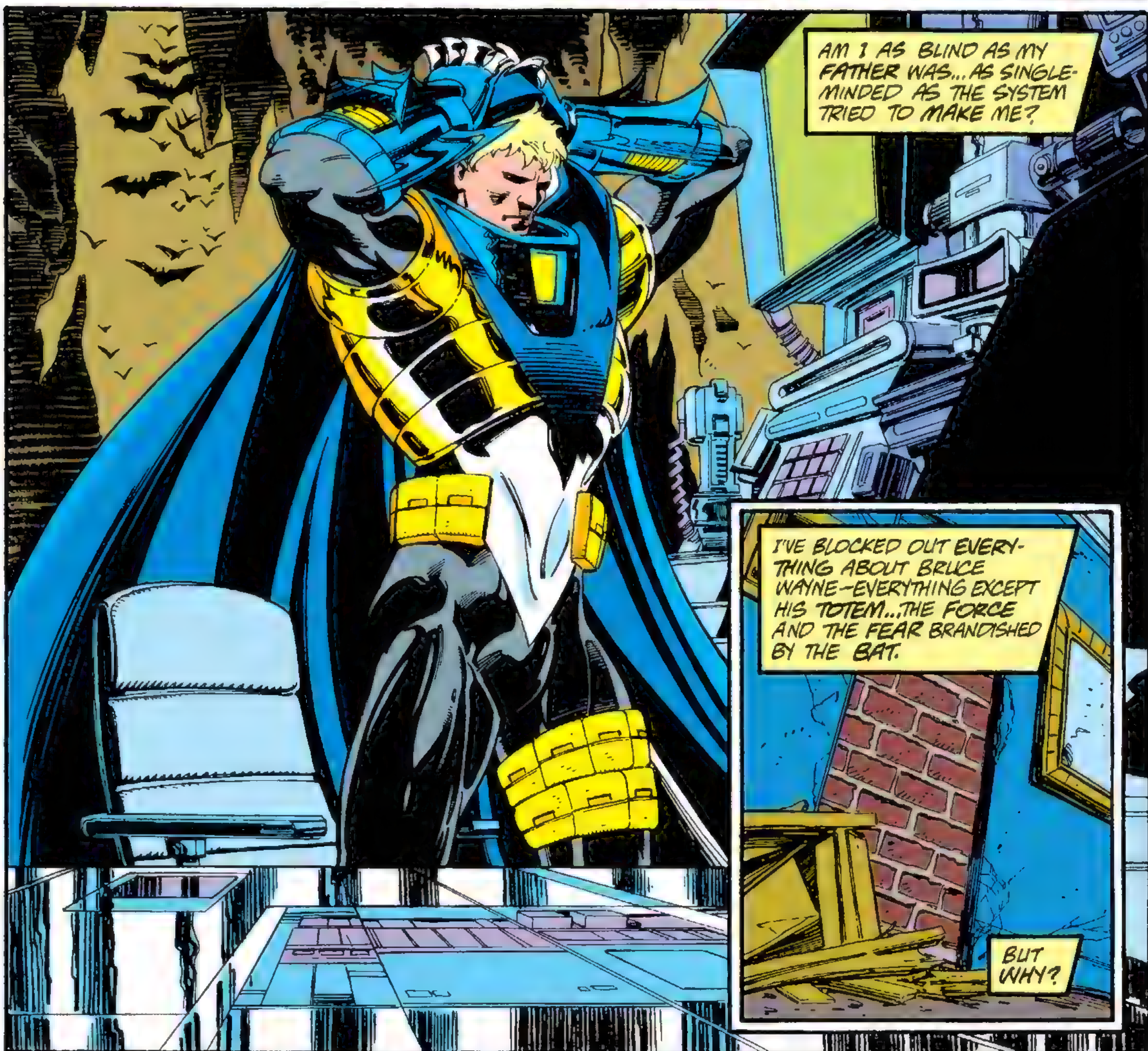
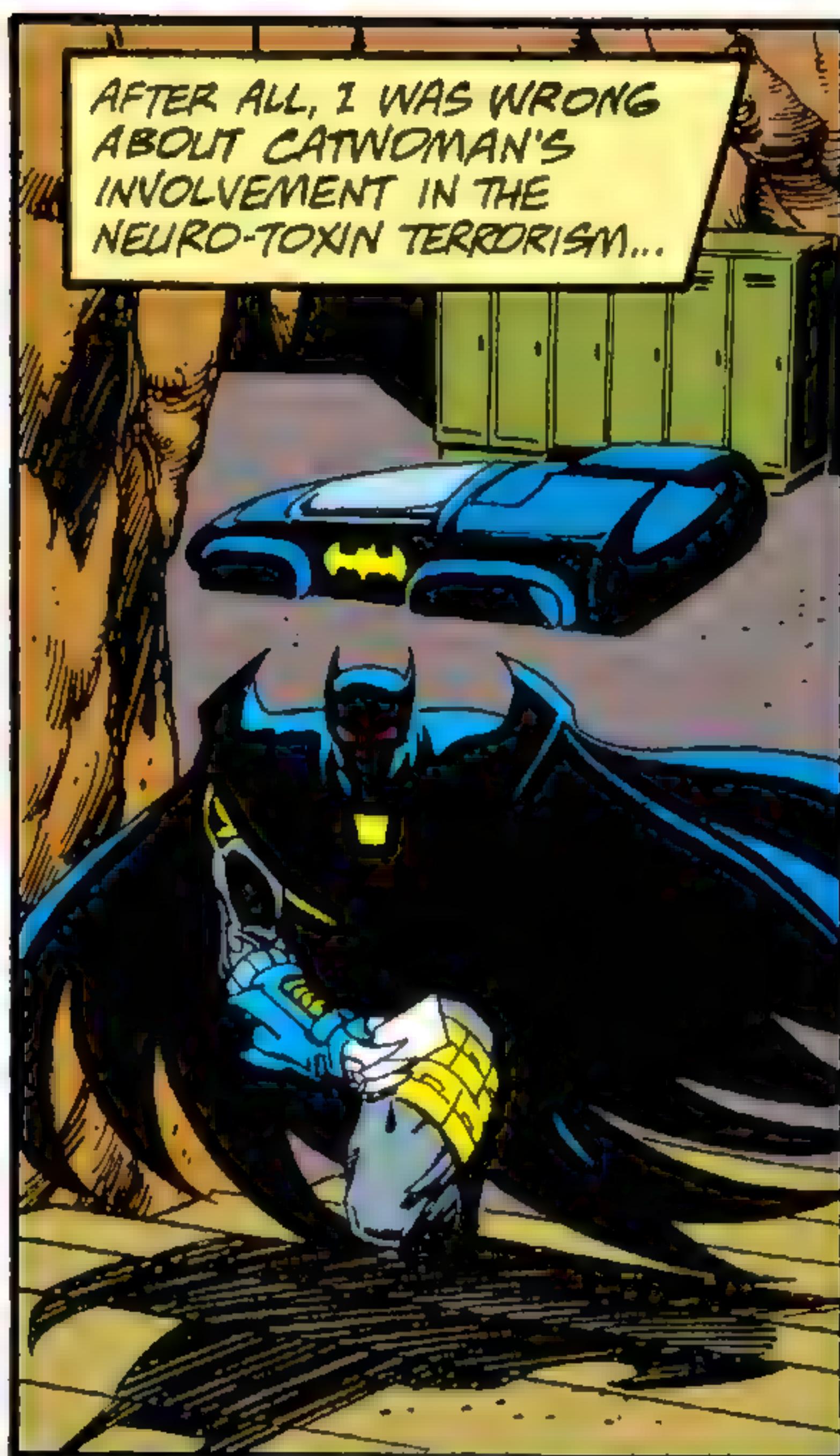
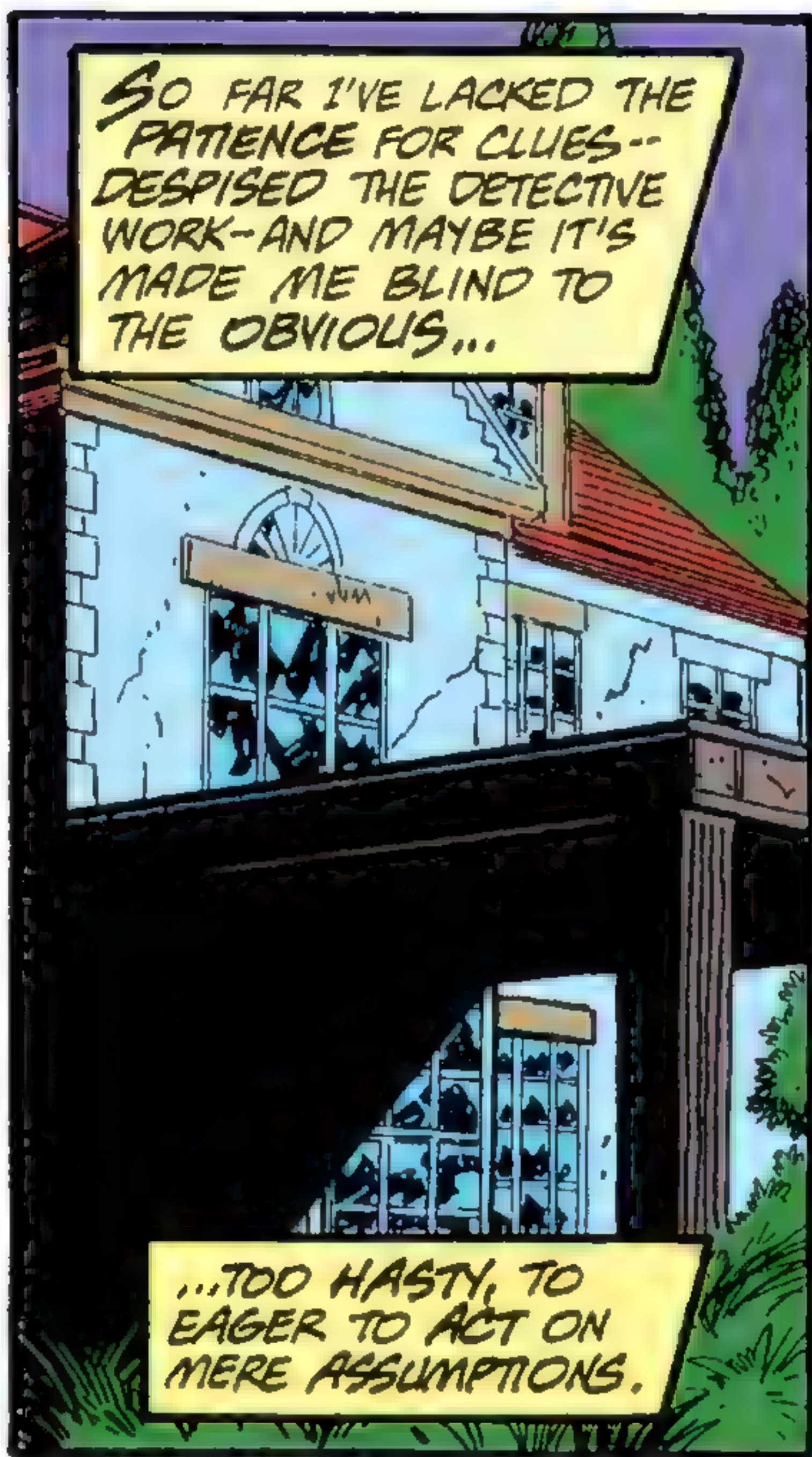


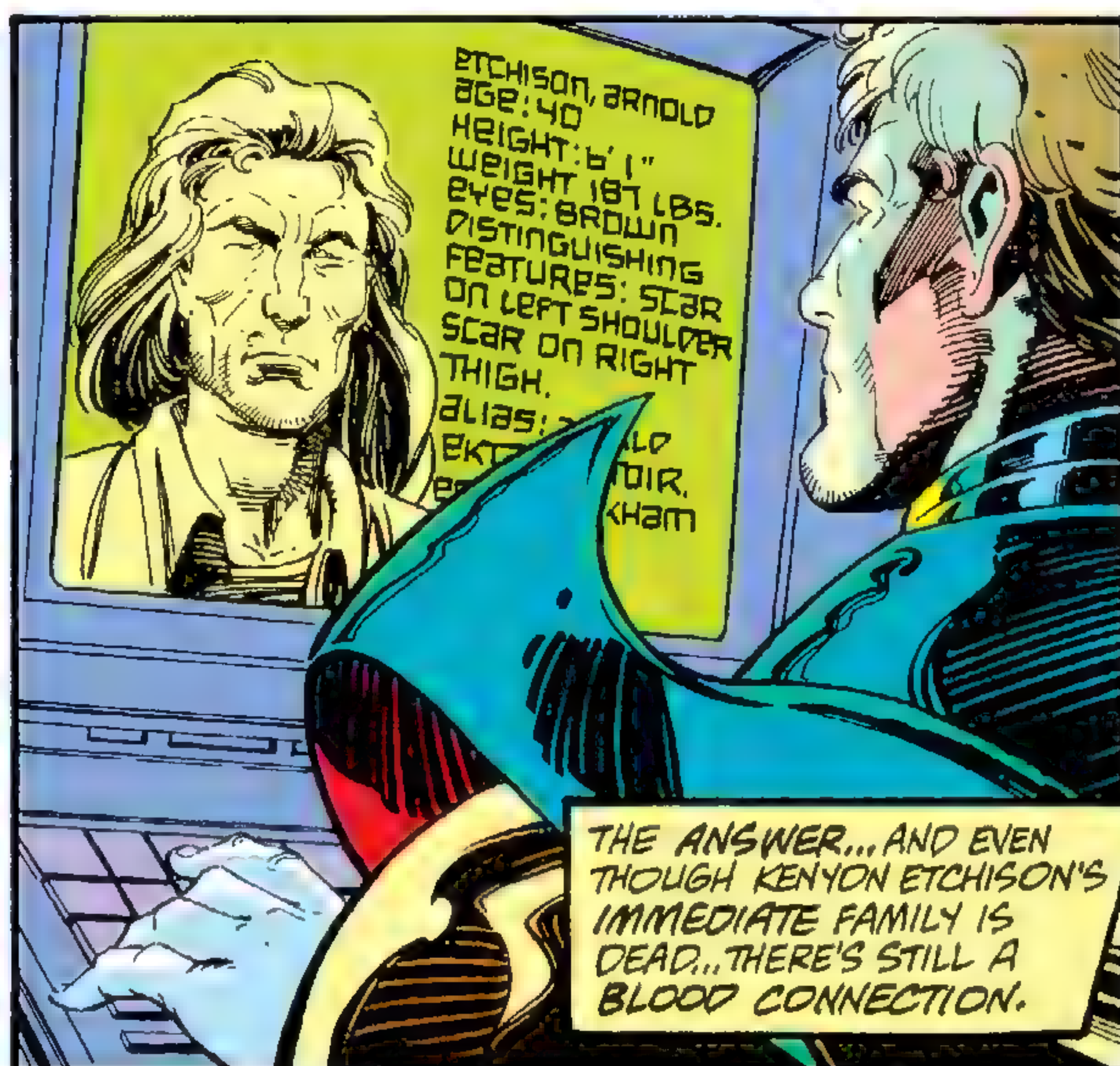
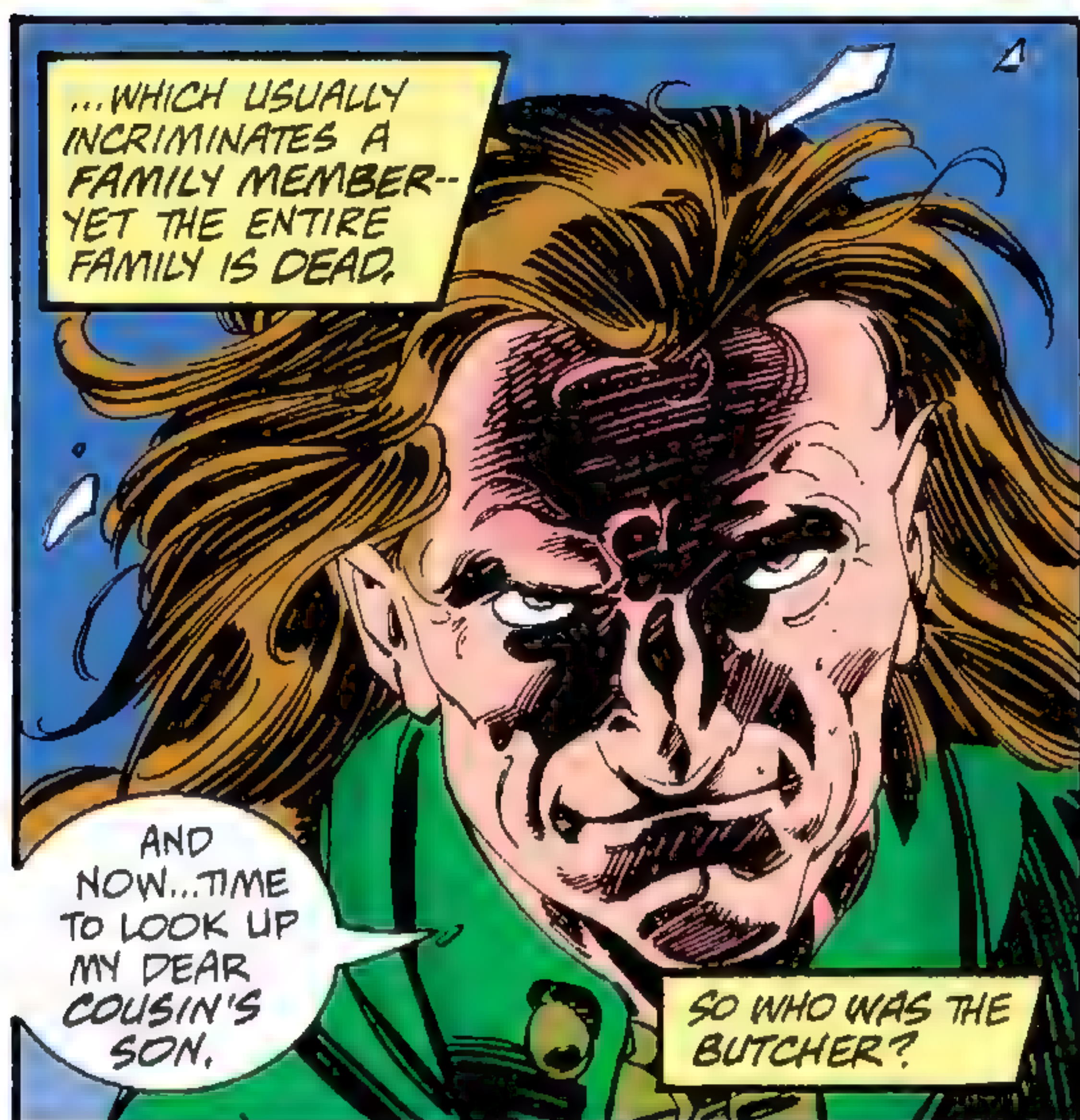
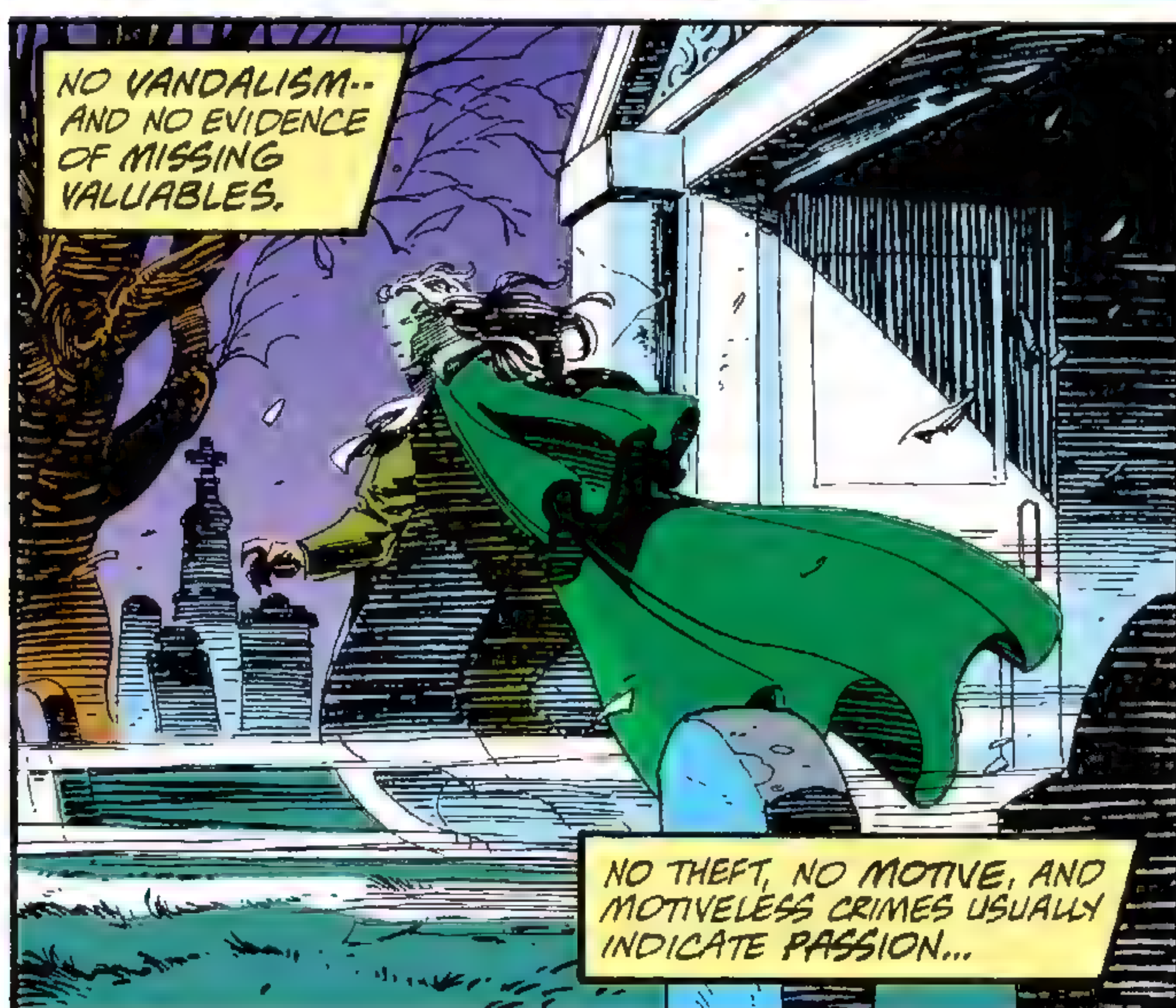
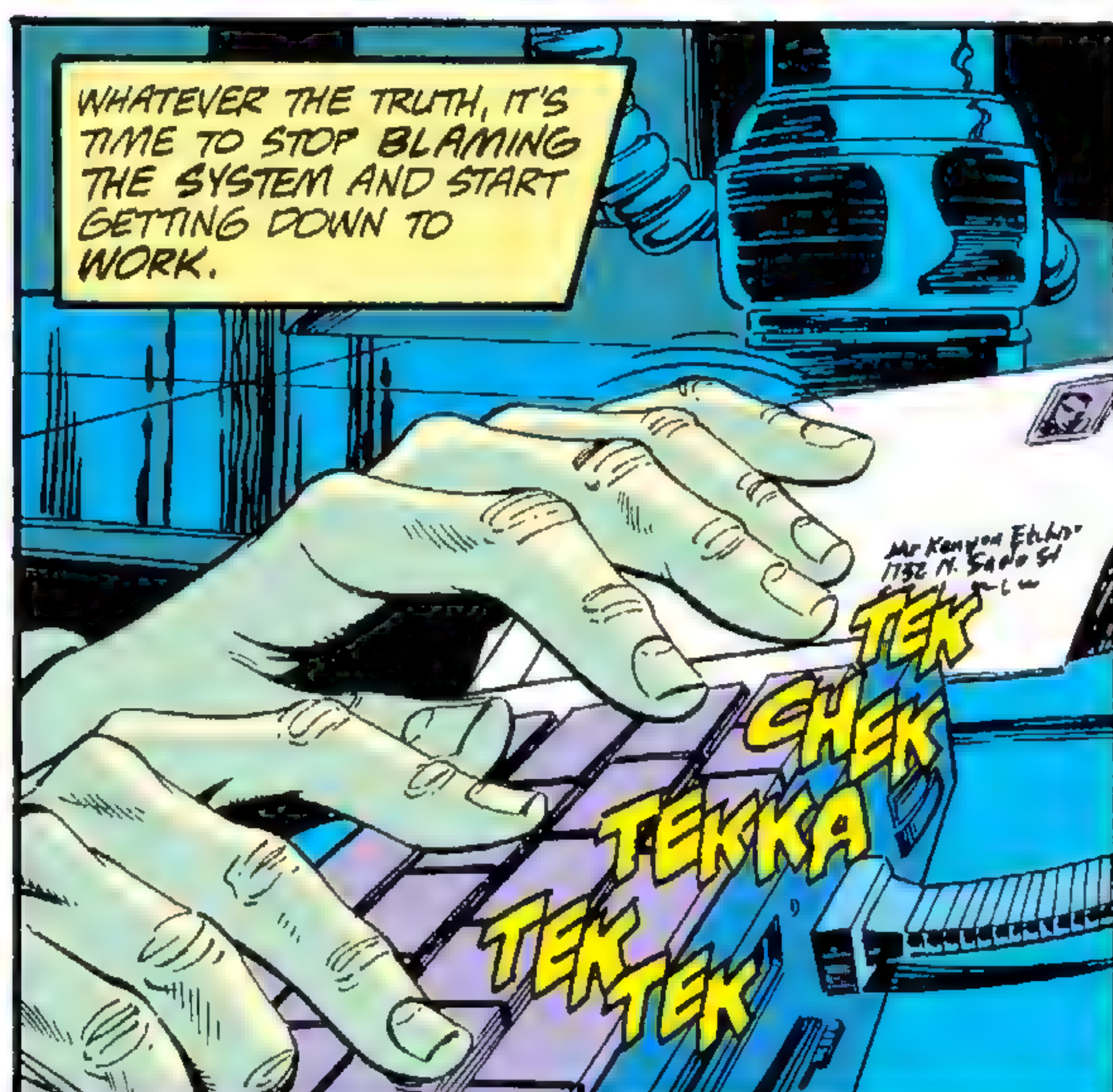
TO ABSORB THEIR
SOULS AND BECOME
THEM ALL, I MUST
BREAK THE BONES
OF THE PAST--

KRAKKT



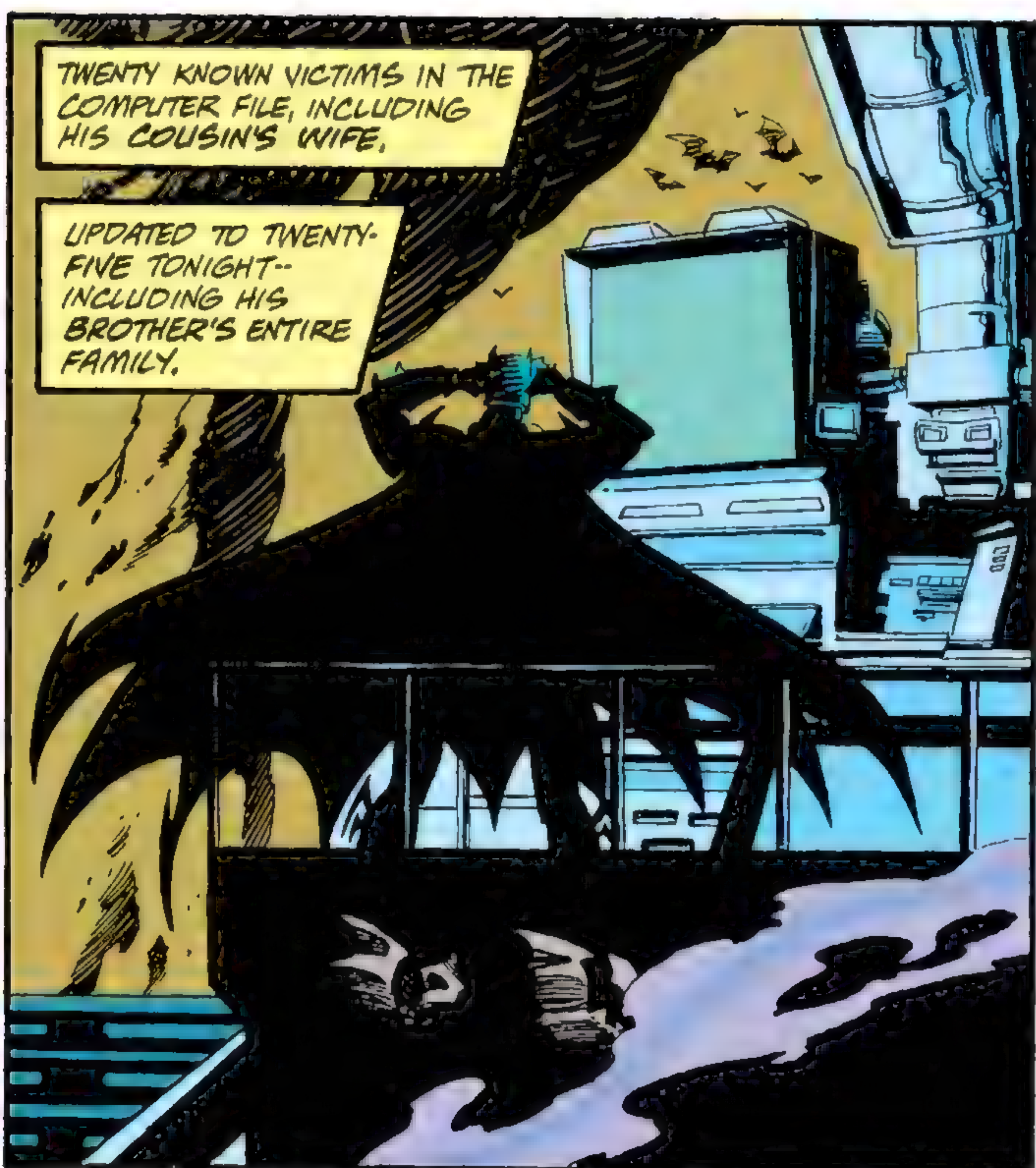
--AND SUCK
THE MARROW
OF CURSED
ANCESTRY!





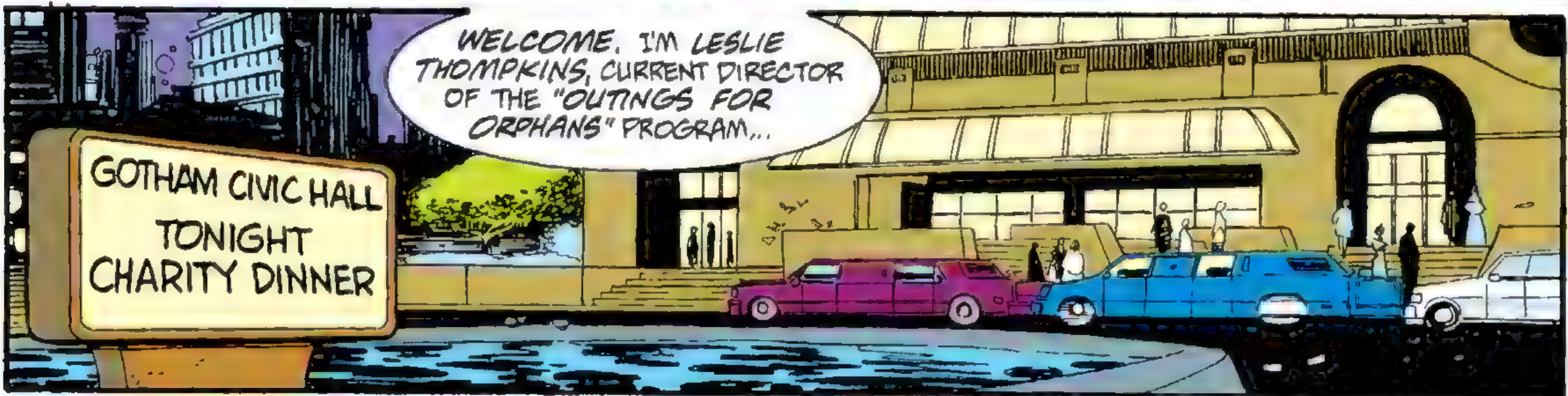


ARNOLD ETCHISON--ALIAS ABATTOIR--A SERIAL KILLER SPECIALIZING IN FAMILY MEMBERS, AND STILL AT LARGE SINCE THE BREAKOUT FROM ARKHAM...



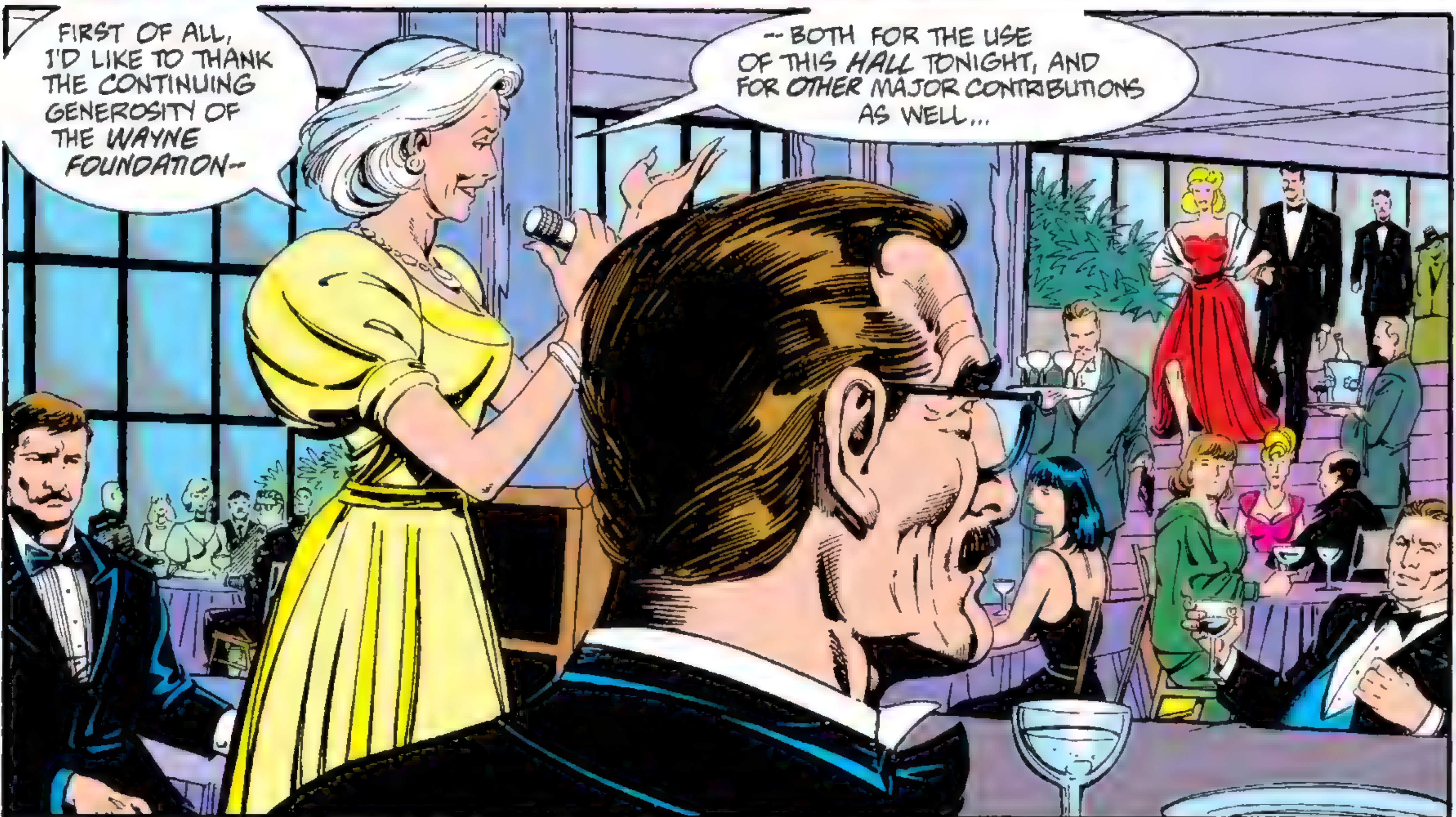
TWENTY KNOWN VICTIMS IN THE COMPUTER FILE, INCLUDING HIS COUSIN'S WIFE.

UPDATED TO TWENTY-FIVE TONIGHT--INCLUDING HIS BROTHER'S ENTIRE FAMILY.



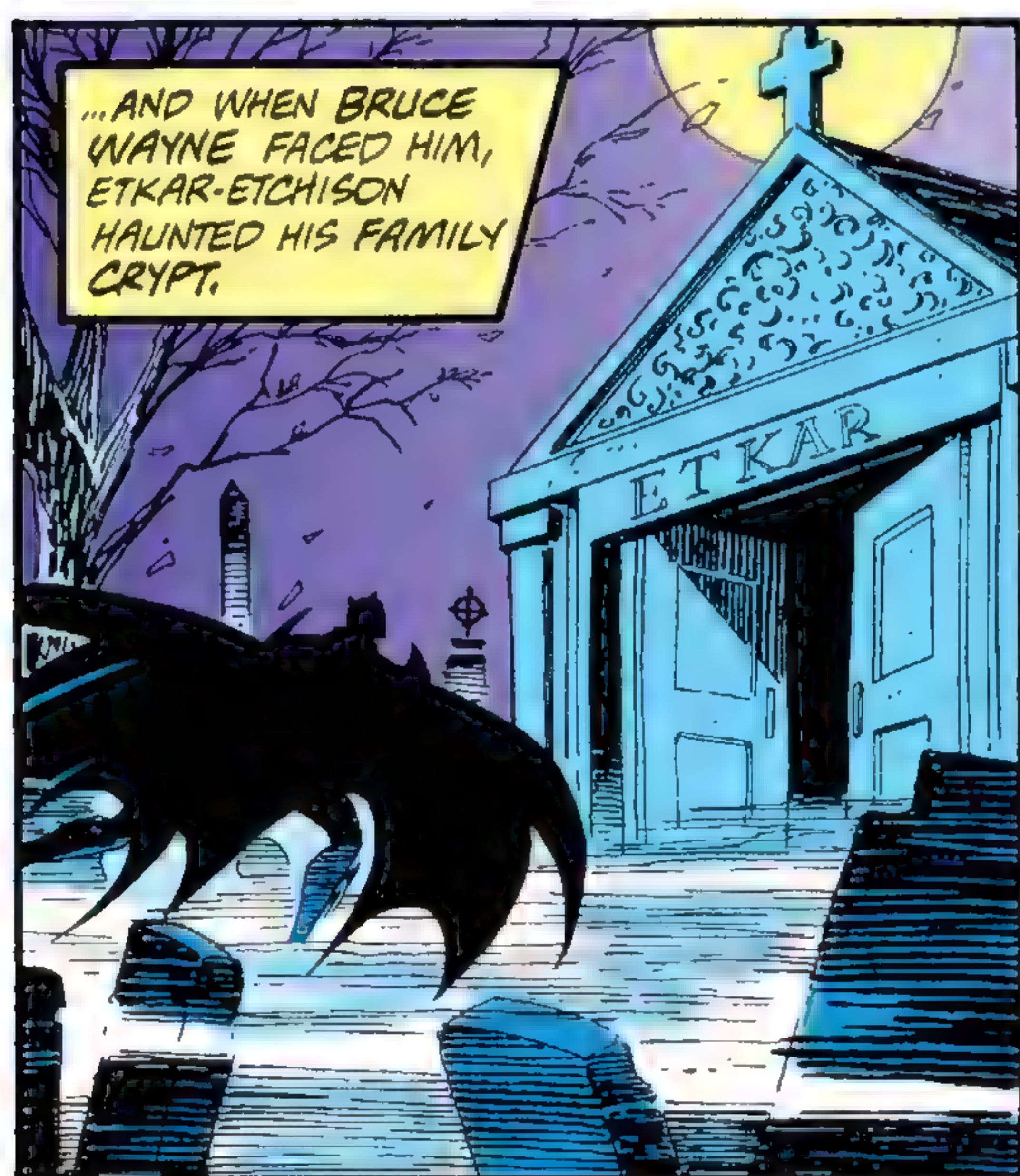
WELCOME. I'M LESLIE THOMPSON, CURRENT DIRECTOR OF THE "OUTINGS FOR ORPHANS" PROGRAM...

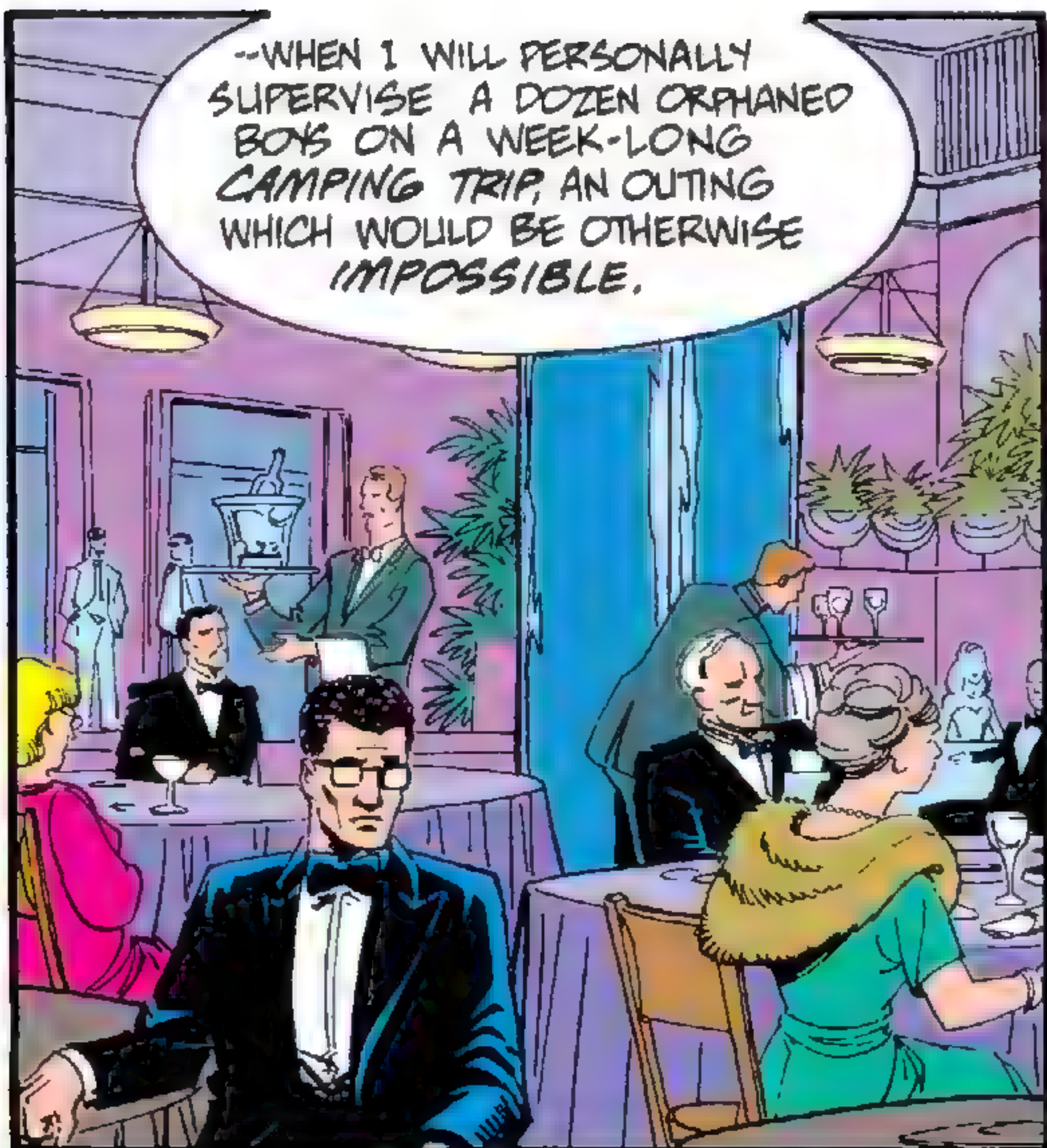
GOTHAM CIVIC HALL
TONIGHT
CHARITY DINNER



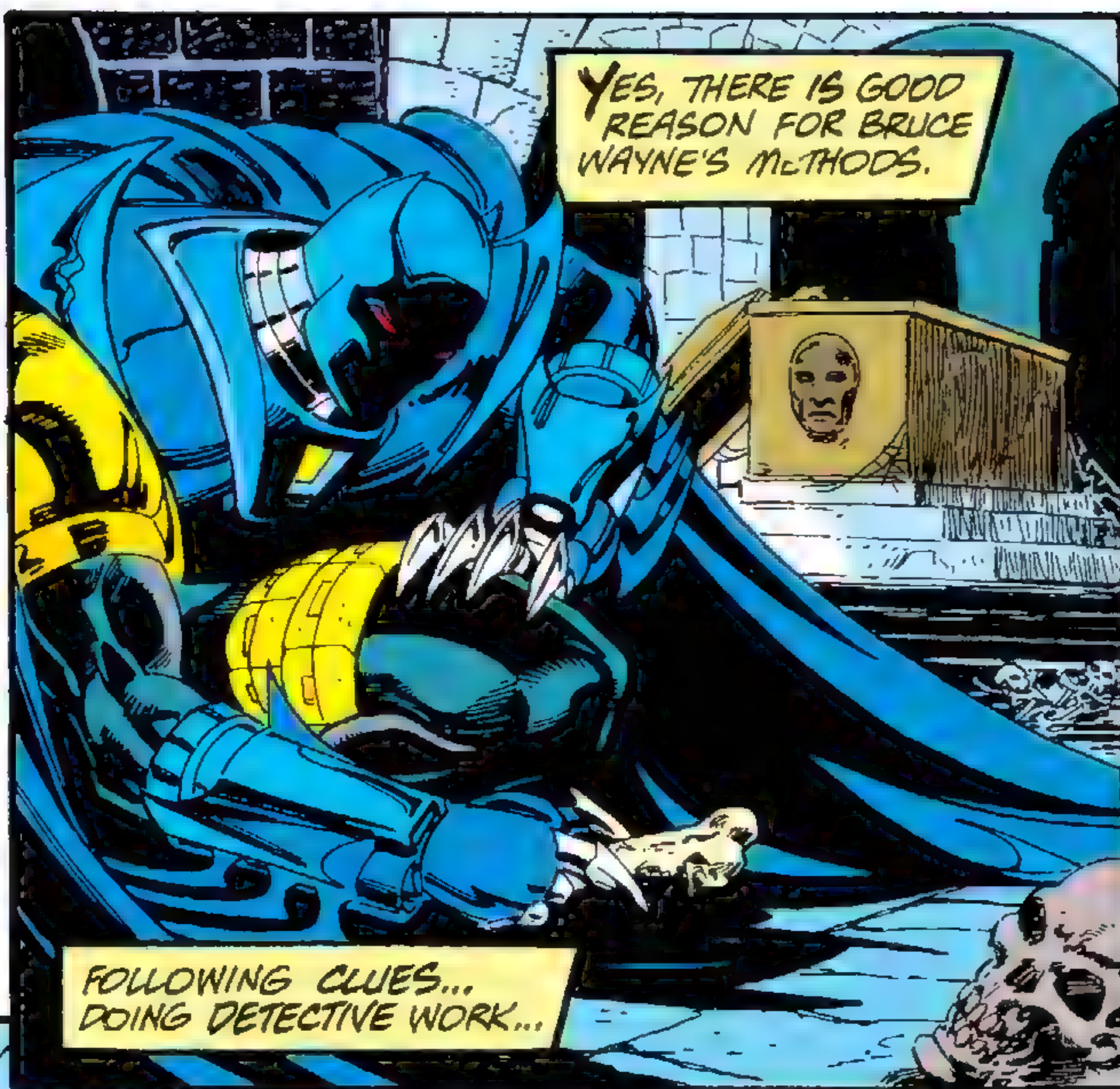
FIRST OF ALL, I'D LIKE TO THANK THE CONTINUING GENEROSITY OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION--

-- BOTH FOR THE USE OF THIS HALL TONIGHT, AND FOR OTHER MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS AS WELL...





--WHEN I WILL PERSONALLY SUPERVISE A DOZEN ORPHANED BOYS ON A WEEK-LONG CAMPING TRIP, AN OUTING WHICH WOULD BE OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE.



YES, THERE IS GOOD REASON FOR BRUCE WAYNE'S METHODS.

FOLLOWING CLUES...
DOING DETECTIVE WORK...



BLOOD AND BITE-MARKS ON THE BONE--STILL WET, STILL FRESH--AND ABATTOIR CLAIMED TO "FEED ON THE SOULS OF HIS ANCESTORS."

HE WAS HERE -- TONIGHT... AND AFTER THE QUINTUPLE MURDER SPREE,



I STILL WANT TO PROVE MYSELF BETTER THAN BRUCE WAYNE, BUT MAYBE SOME OF HIS WAYS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED...

...IF NOT ALL.

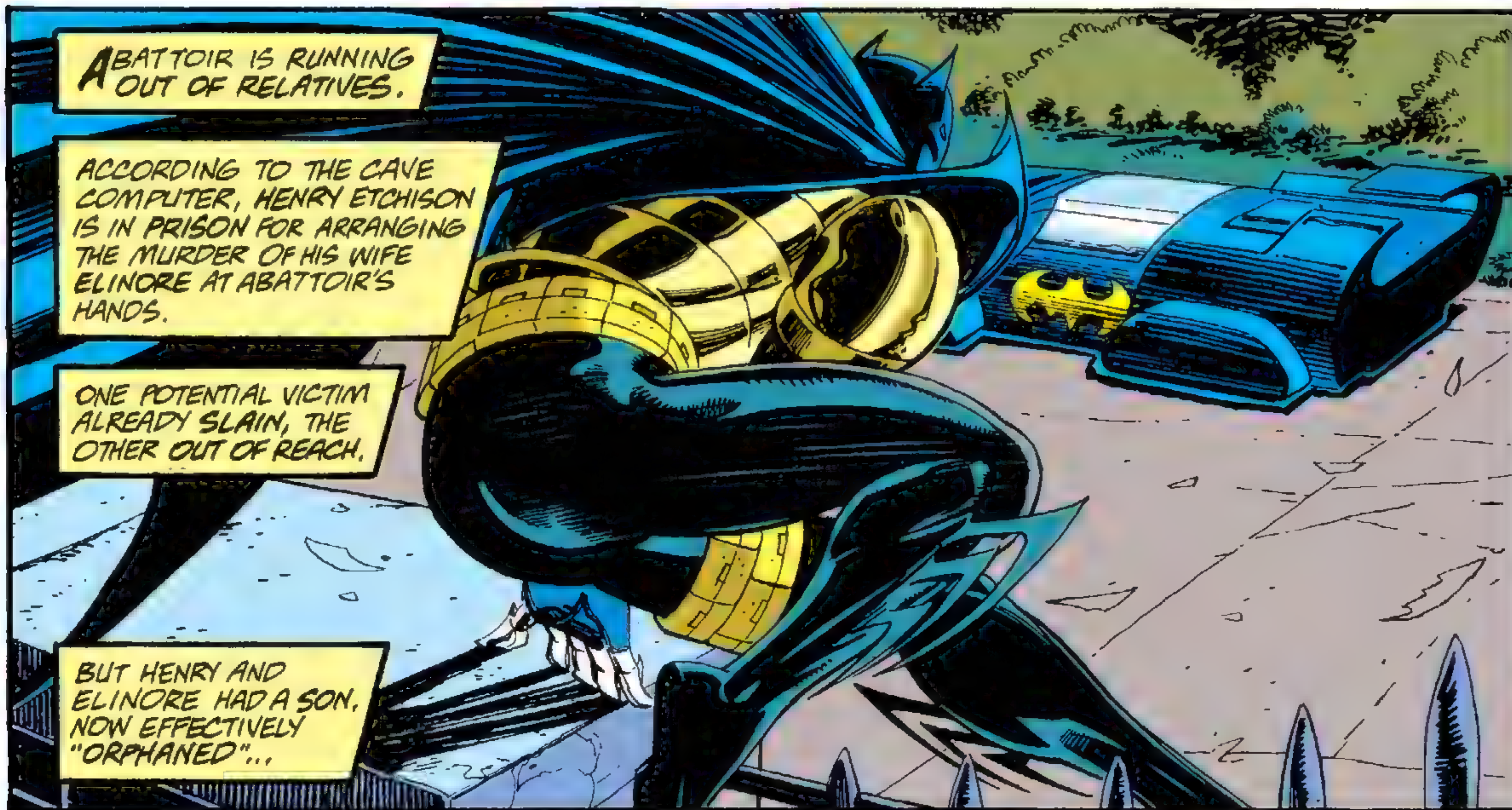


SINCE I WAS MYSELF ORPHANED BY TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES, I BELIEVE I KNOW HOW MUCH THIS CAMPING TRIP MEANS TO OUR KIDS...

...AND I'M SURE I SPEAK FOR ALL OF THEM WHEN I SAY--



--GOD BLESS YOU.



ABATTOIR IS RUNNING OUT OF RELATIVES.

ACCORDING TO THE CAVE COMPUTER, HENRY ETCHISON IS IN PRISON FOR ARRANGING THE MURDER OF HIS WIFE ELINORE AT ABATTOIR'S HANDS.

ONE POTENTIAL VICTIM ALREADY SLAIN, THE OTHER OUT OF REACH.

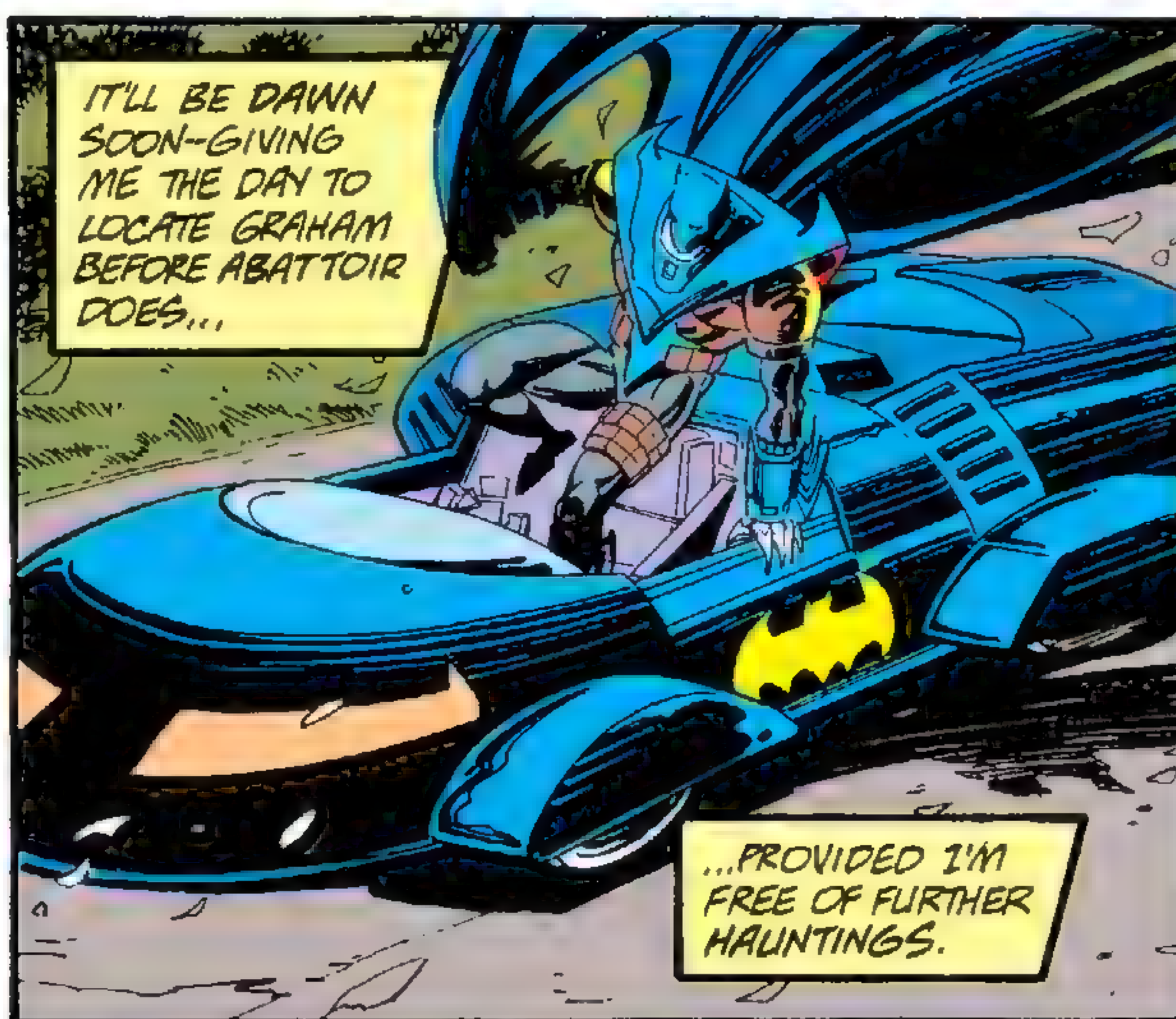
BUT HENRY AND ELINORE HAD A SON, NOW EFFECTIVELY "ORPHANED"...



GRAHAM ETCHISON...

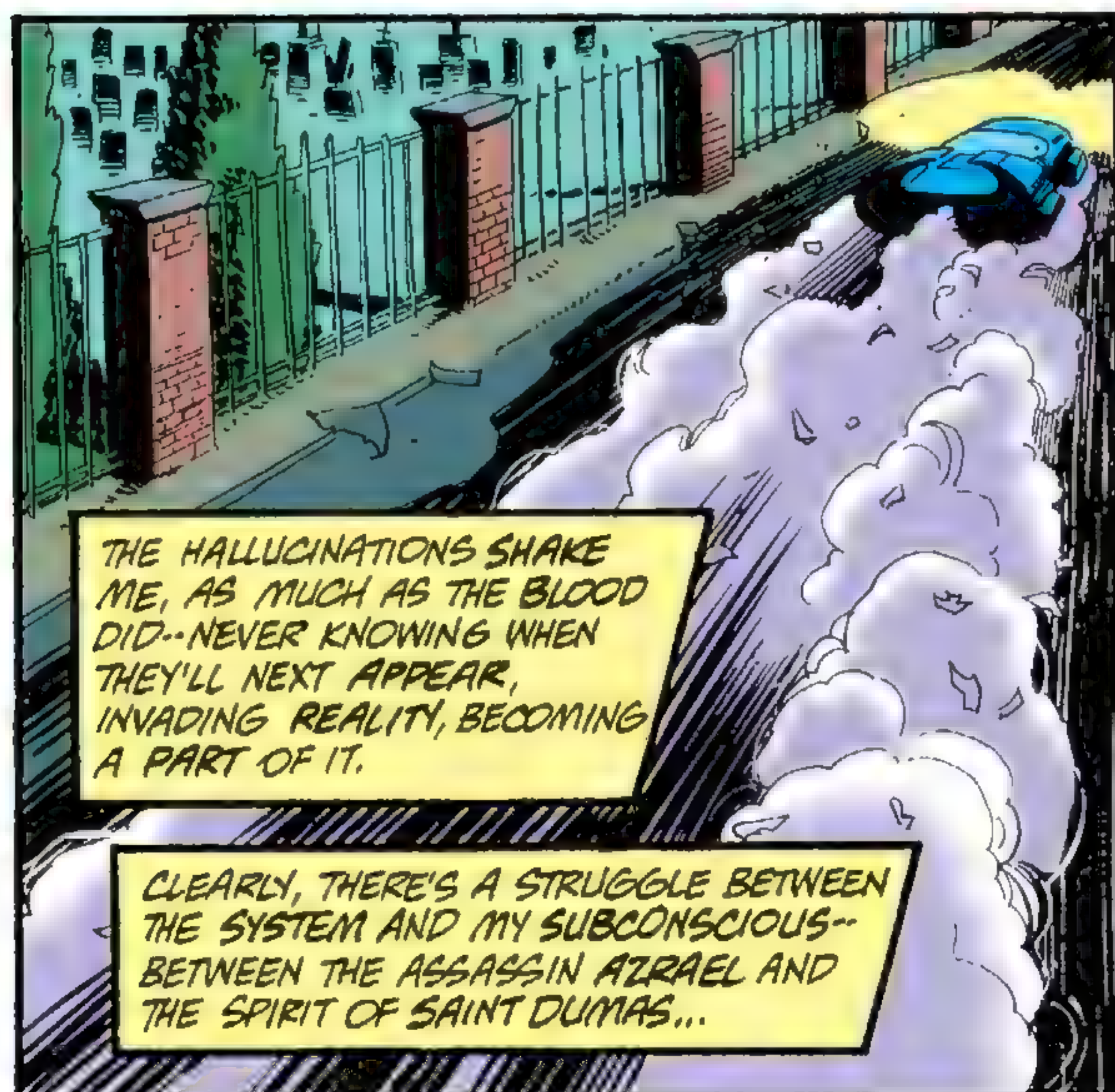
THANK YOU, GRAHAM-- YOUR WORK WITH THE KIDS IS A LARGE FACTOR IN OUR PROGRAM'S SUCCESS.

...STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE, AT LEAST AT THE MOMENT.



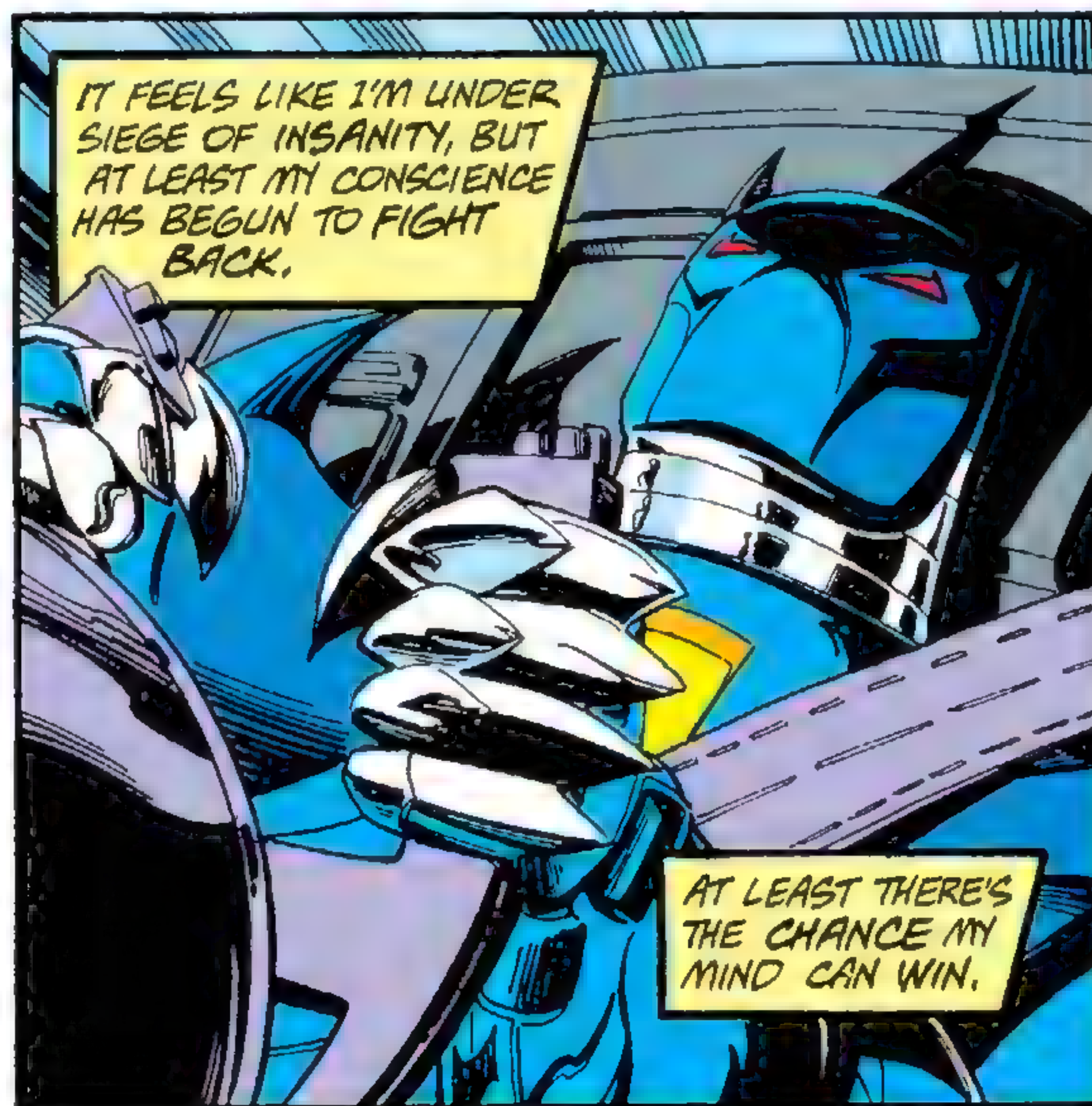
IT'LL BE DAWN SOON--GIVING ME THE DAY TO LOCATE GRAHAM BEFORE ABATTOIR DOES...

...PROVIDED I'M FREE OF FURTHER HAUNTINGS.



THE HALLUCINATIONS SHAKE ME, AS MUCH AS THE BLOOD DID--NEVER KNOWING WHEN THEY'LL NEXT APPEAR, INVADING REALITY, BECOMING A PART OF IT.

CLEARLY, THERE'S A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE SYSTEM AND MY SUBCONSCIOUS-- BETWEEN THE ASSASSIN AZRAEL AND THE SPIRIT OF SAINT DUMAS...



IT FEELS LIKE I'M UNDER SIEGE OF INSANITY, BUT AT LEAST MY CONSCIENCE HAS BEGUN TO FIGHT BACK.

AT LEAST THERE'S THE CHANCE MY MIND CAN WIN.



THE NEXT EVENING...

ETCHISON AND HIS KIDS OUGHTTA BE OUT FRONT ANY MINUTE, JOE...



BETTER PULL YOUR BUS AROUND FRONT.

YEAH, YEAH--BUT PRAY FOR ME THEY DON'T MAKE IT THROUGH THE WHOLE HUNNED BOTTLES O' BEER ON THE WALL...

JUST JAM SOME COTTON IN YOUR EARS...

...AND KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD--S'POSED TO GET SNOW TONIGHT.



SNOW--SOMETHIN' ELSE TO GIMME GRIEF...

NOT NECESSARILY...

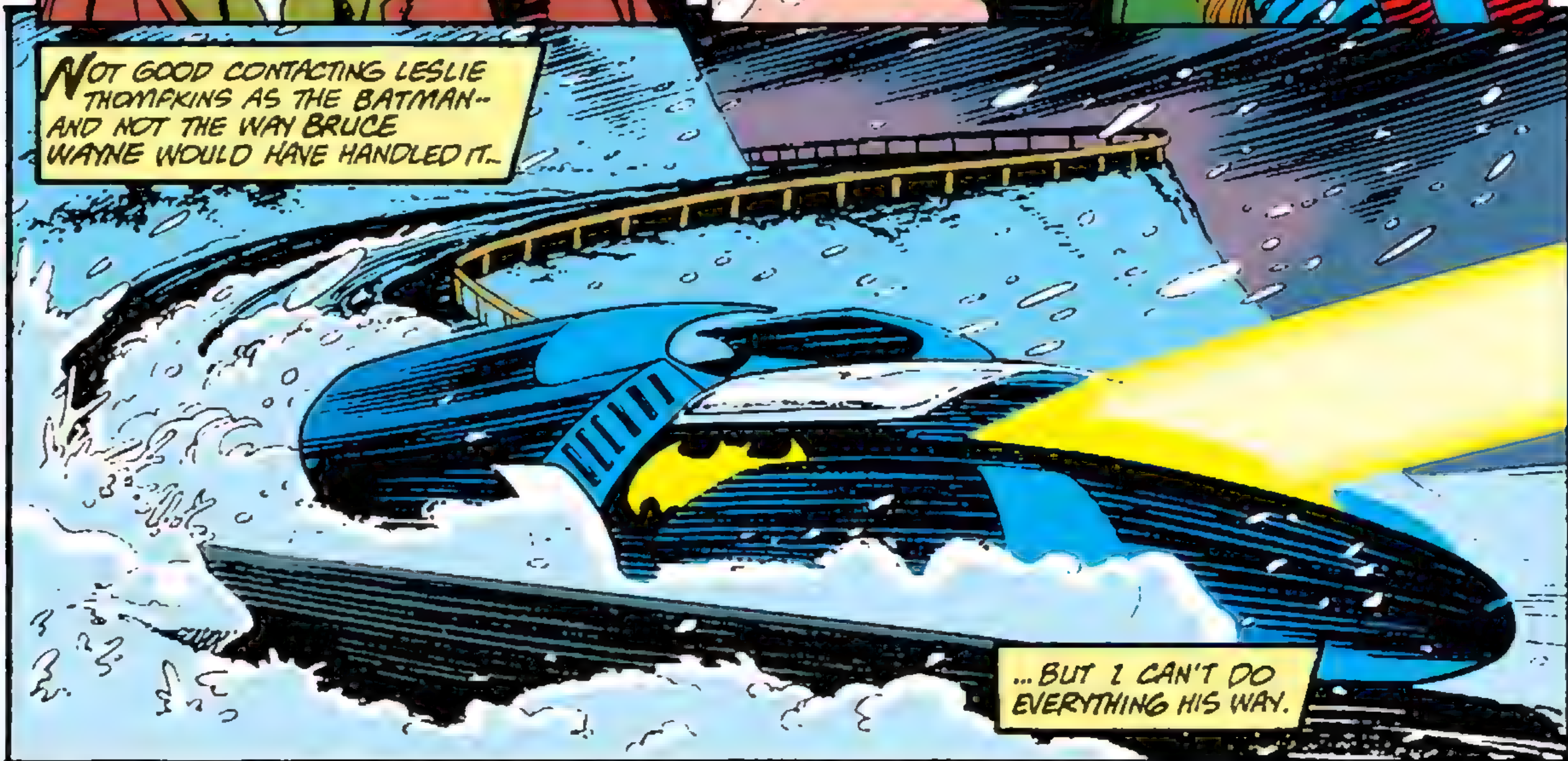


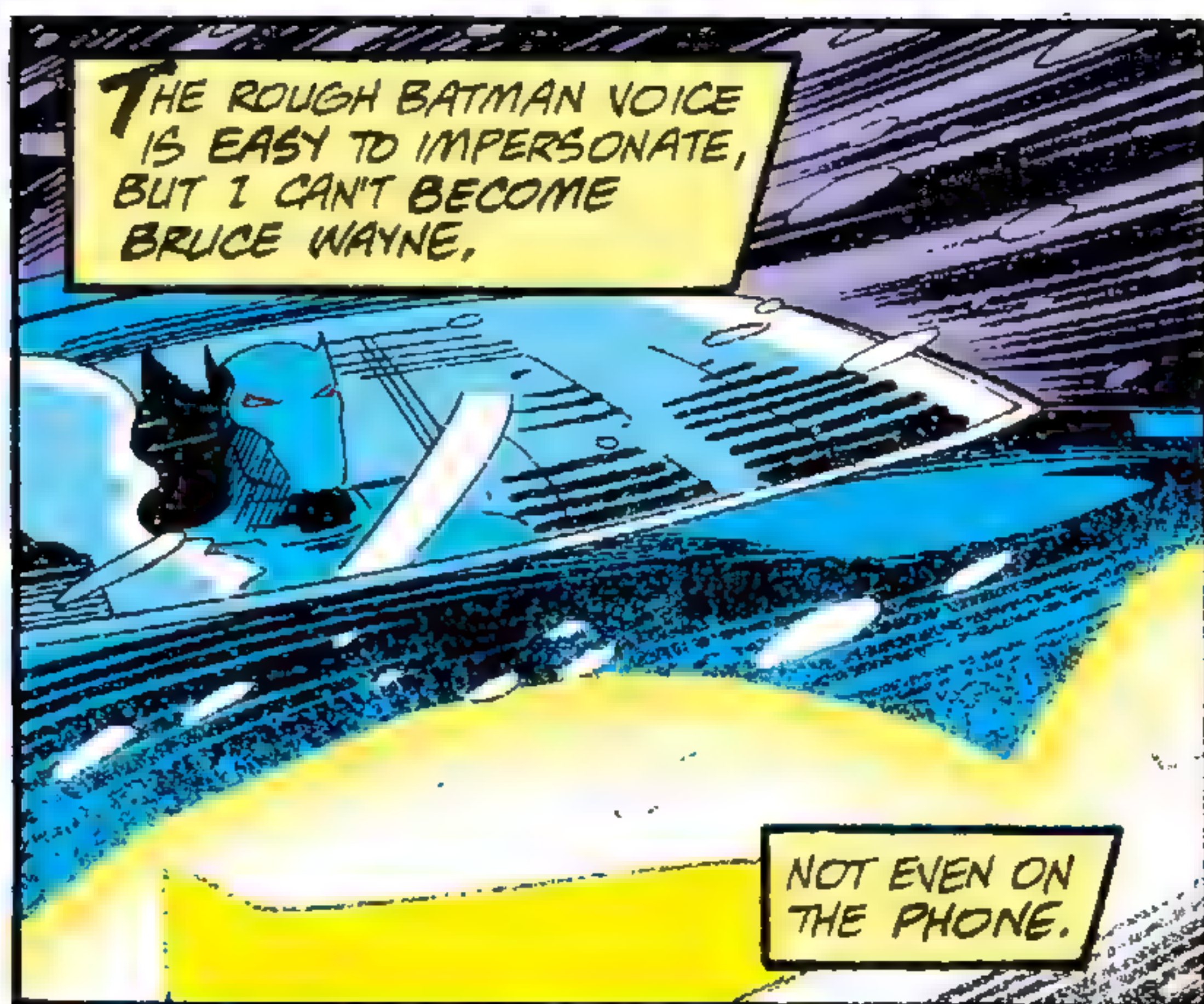
NOT IF YOU LEAVE THE DRIVING TO ME!

EH--?



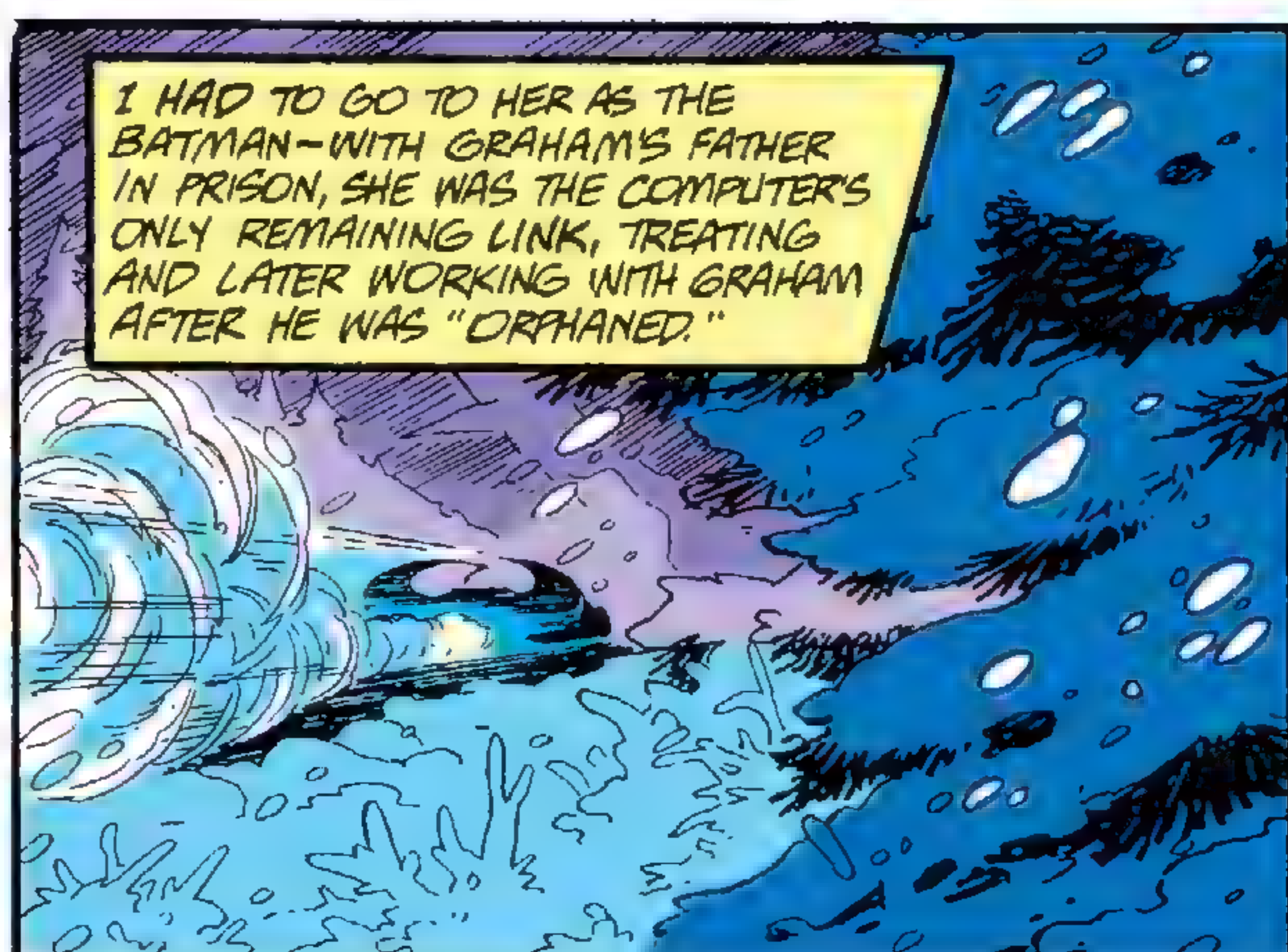
CHUTCH



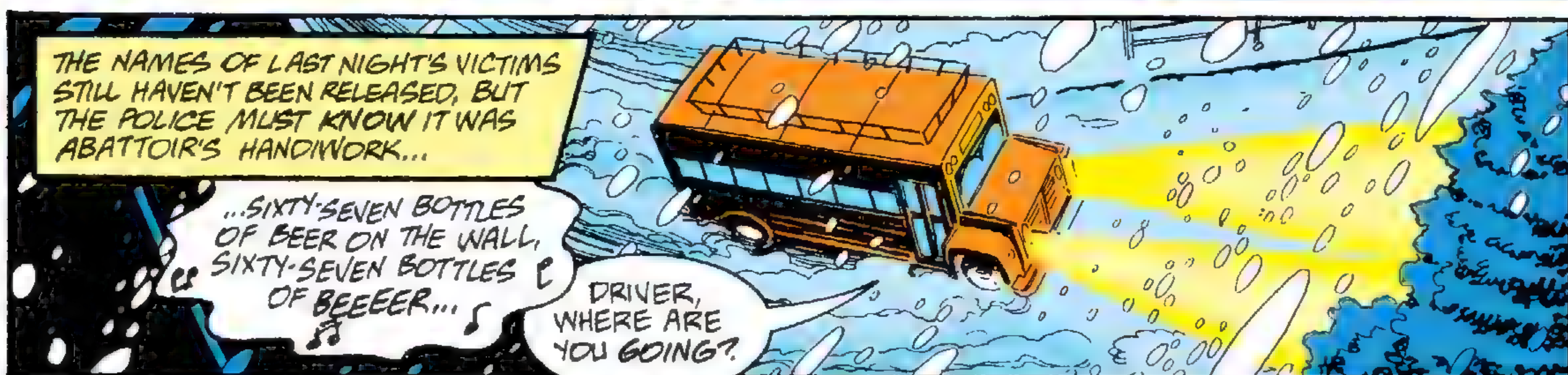


THE ROUGH BATMAN VOICE IS EASY TO IMPERSONATE, BUT I CAN'T BECOME BRUCE WAYNE,

NOT EVEN ON THE PHONE.



I HAD TO GO TO HER AS THE BATMAN—WITH GRAHAM'S FATHER IN PRISON, SHE WAS THE COMPUTER'S ONLY REMAINING LINK, TREATING AND LATER WORKING WITH GRAHAM AFTER HE WAS "ORPHANED."



THE NAMES OF LAST NIGHT'S VICTIMS STILL HAVEN'T BEEN RELEASED, BUT THE POLICE MUST KNOW IT WAS ABATTOIR'S HANDWORK...

...SIXTY-SEVEN BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, SIXTY-SEVEN BOTTLES OF BEEER...

DRIVER, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

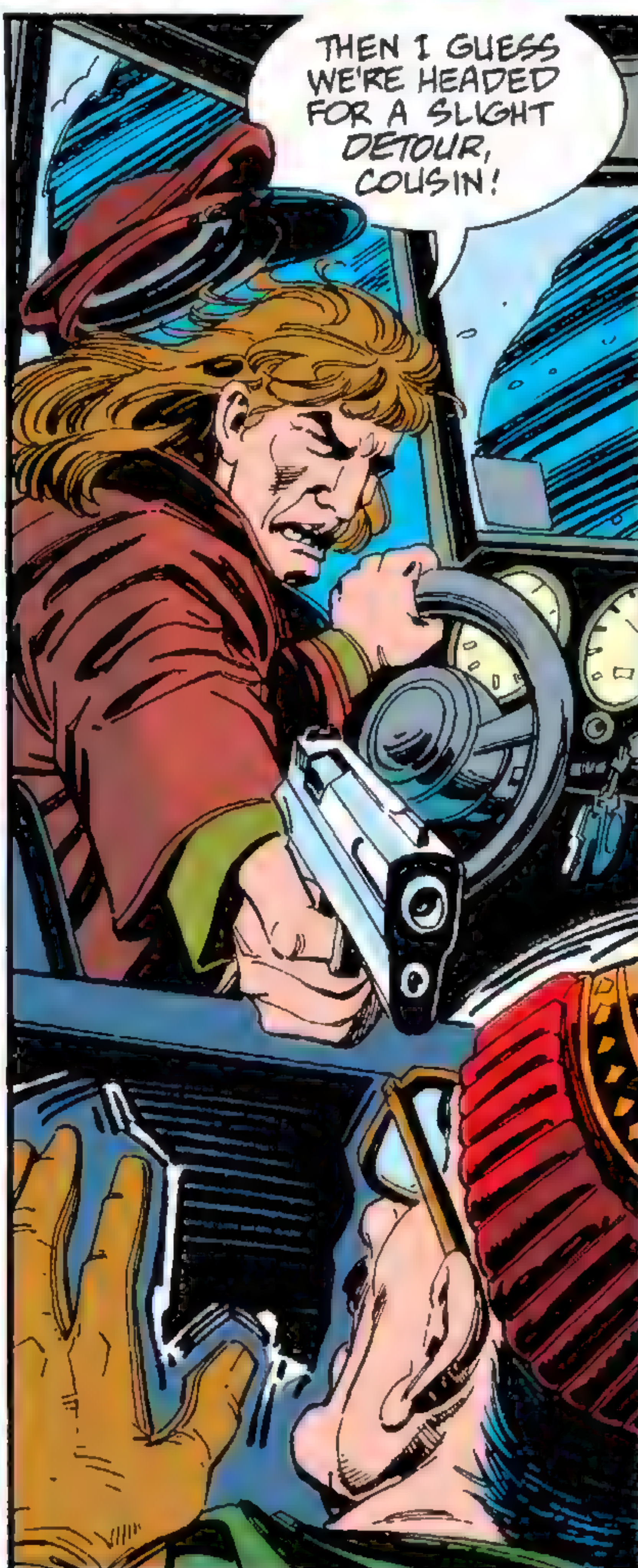


...WHICH MEANS THEY HAVEN'T LOCATED GRAHAM YET—OR HE'D HARDLY BE GOING ON A CAMPING TRIP.

...IF ONE OF THOSE BOTTLES SHOULD HAPPEN TO FALL...

THIS ISN'T THE WAY TO THE CAMP...

IT ISN'T—?

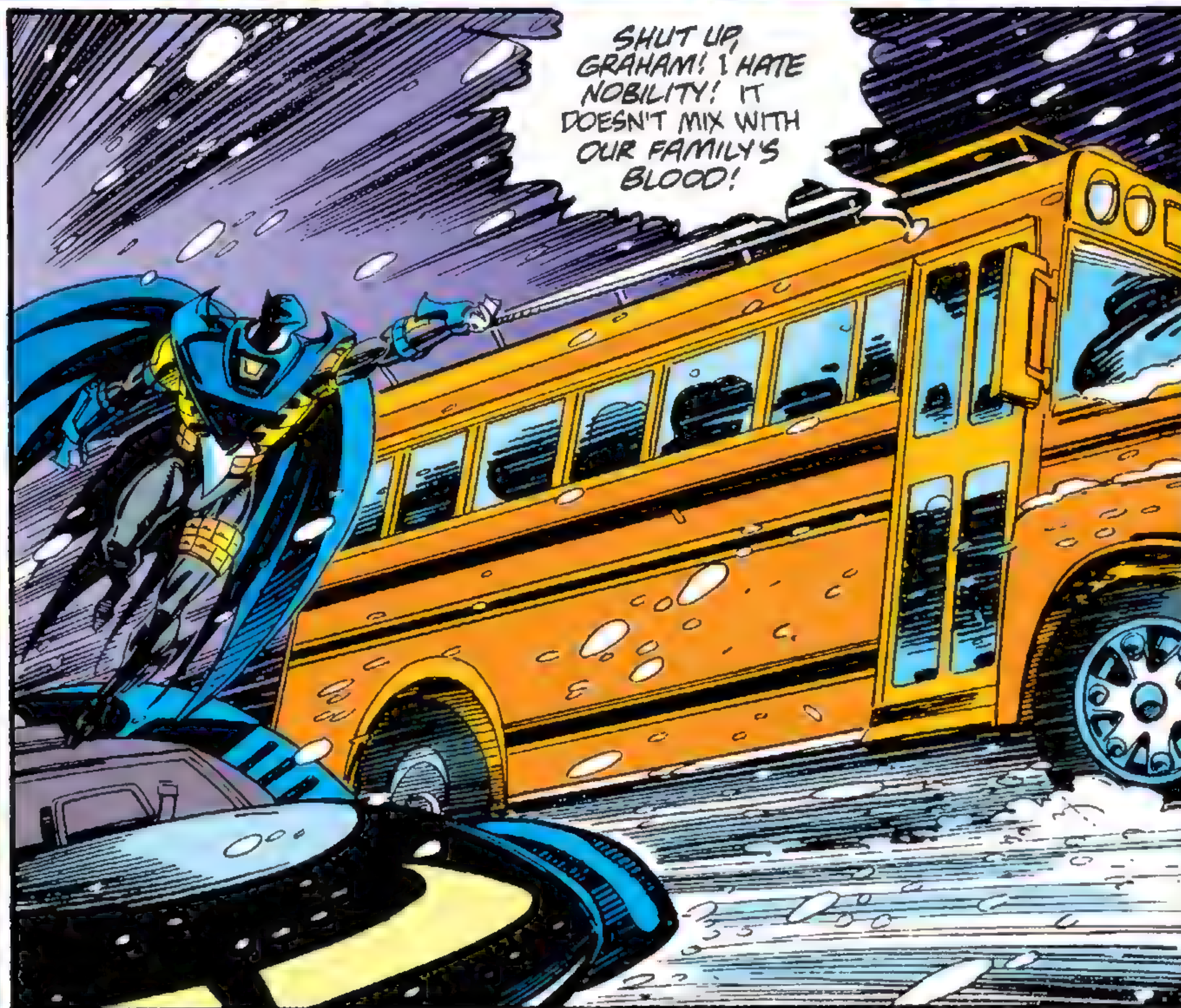
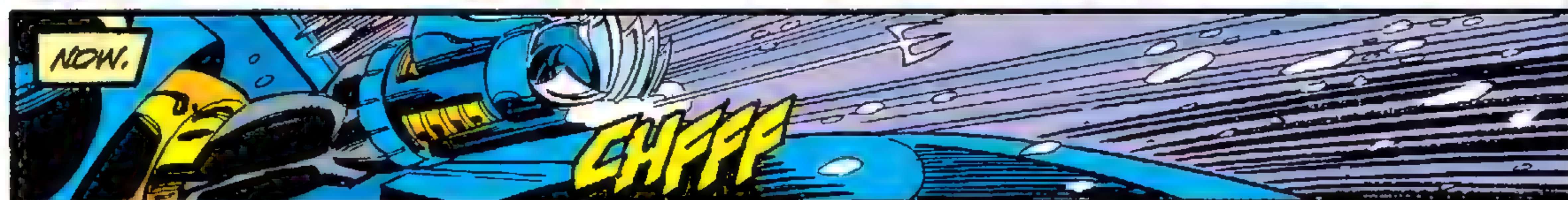
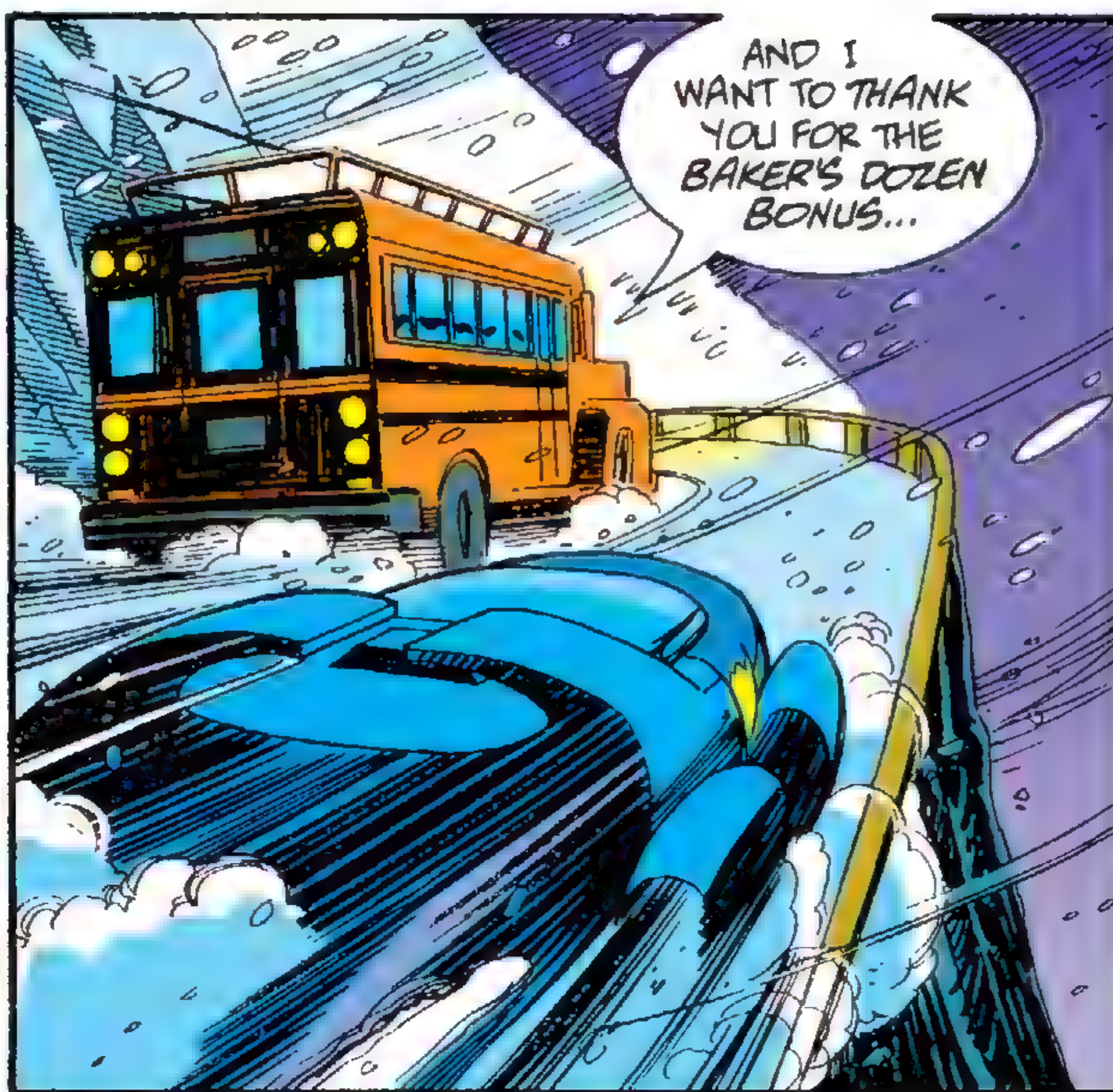


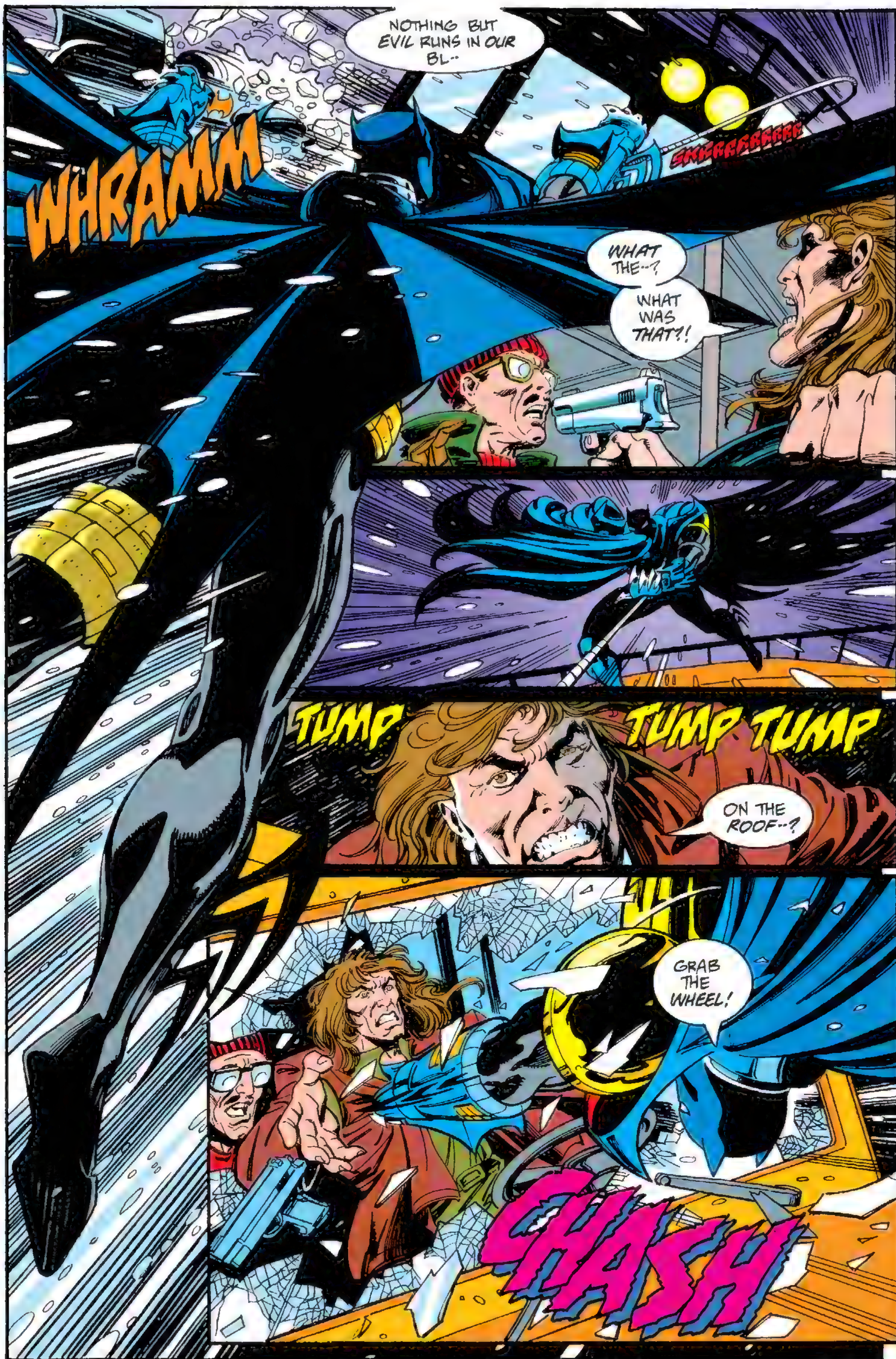
THEN I GUESS WE'RE HEADED FOR A SLIGHT DETOUR, COUSIN!

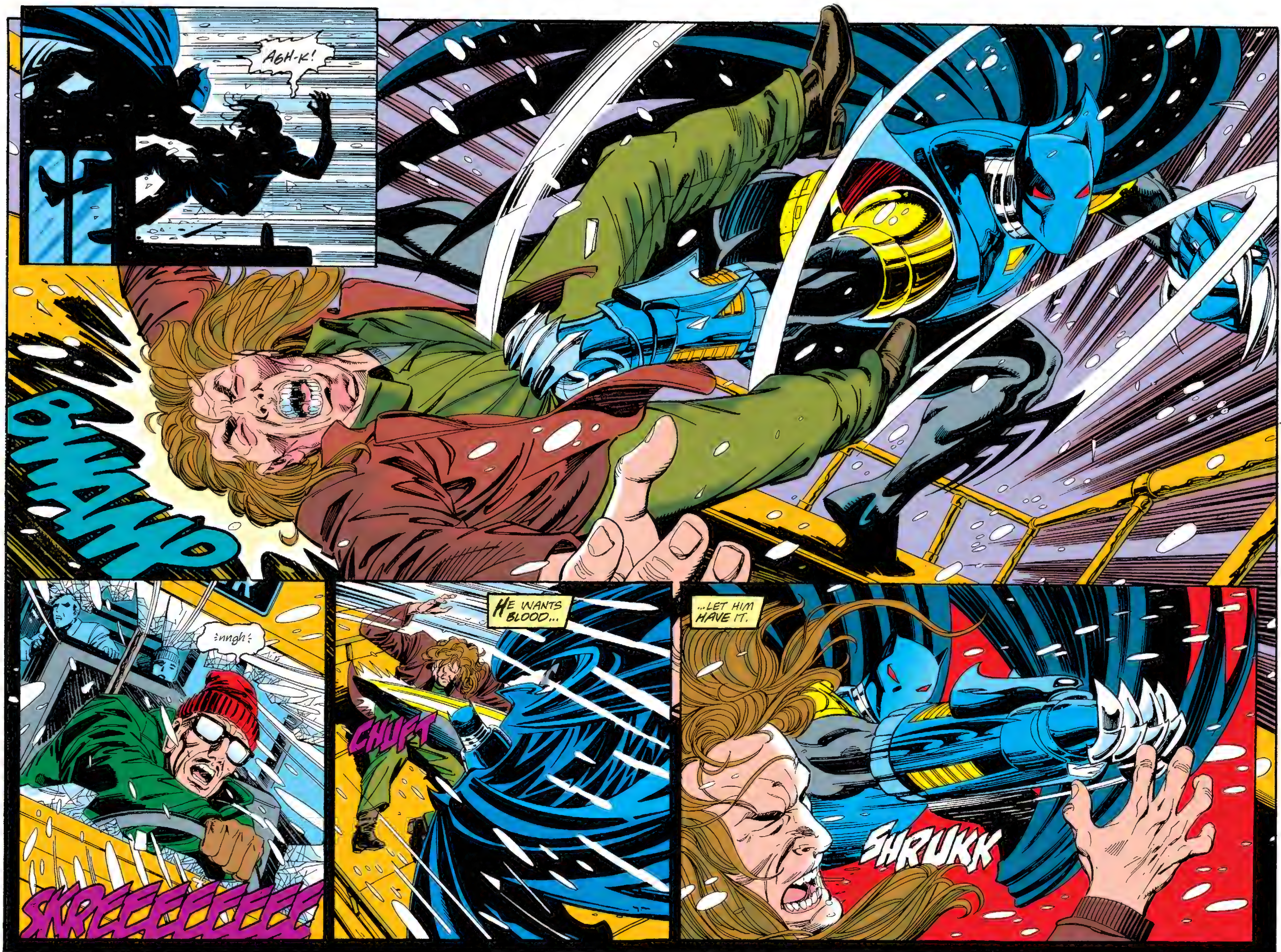


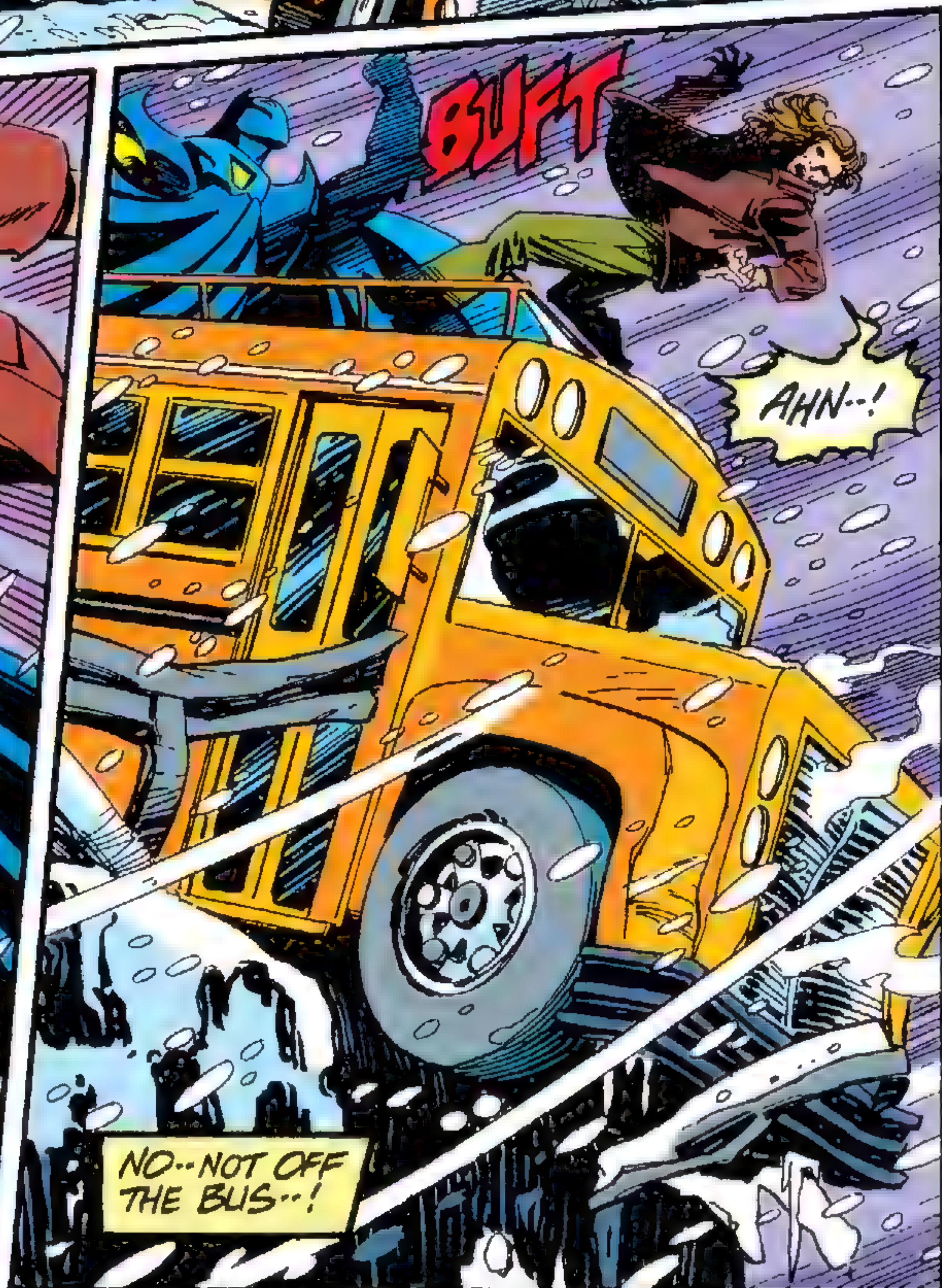
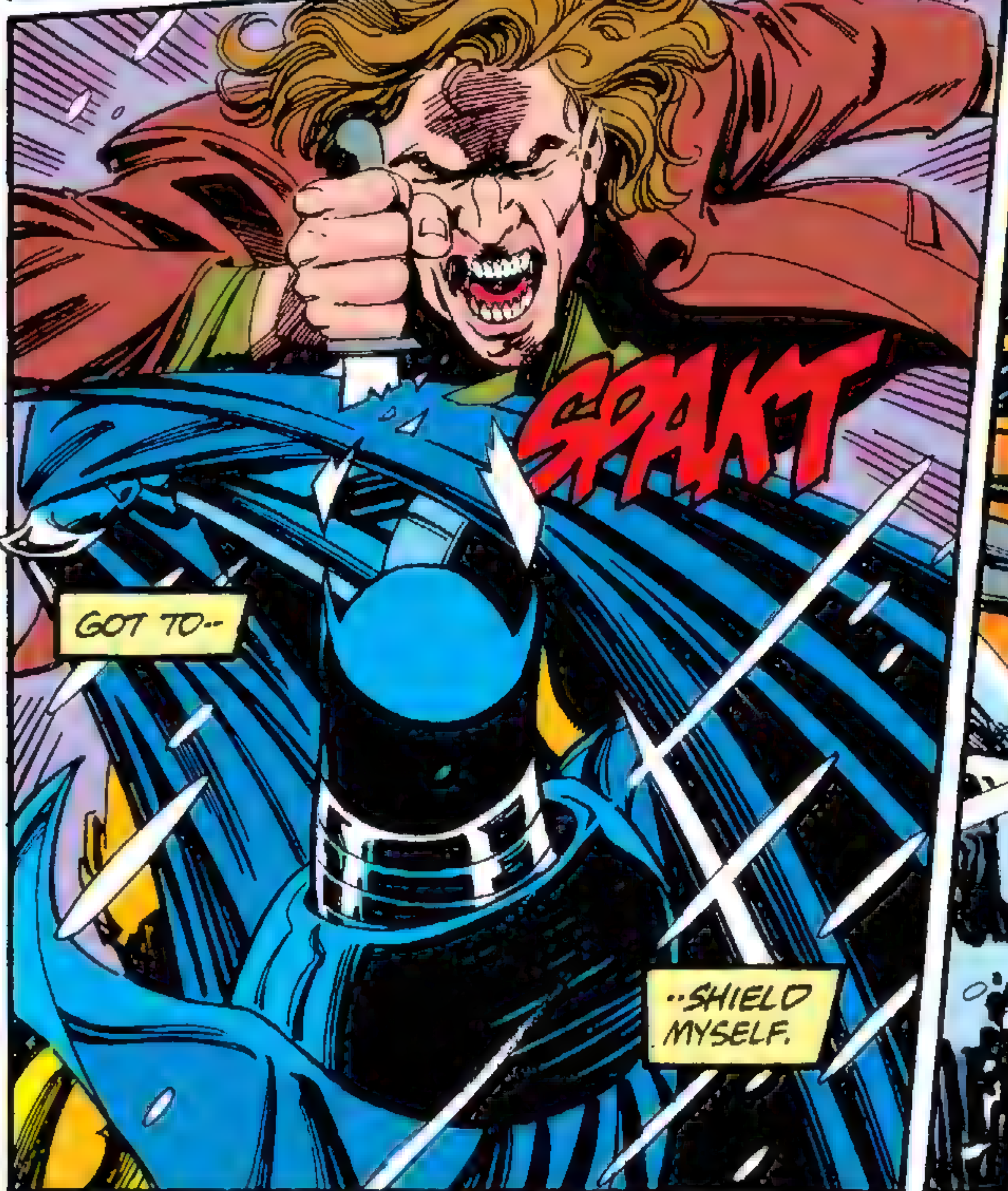
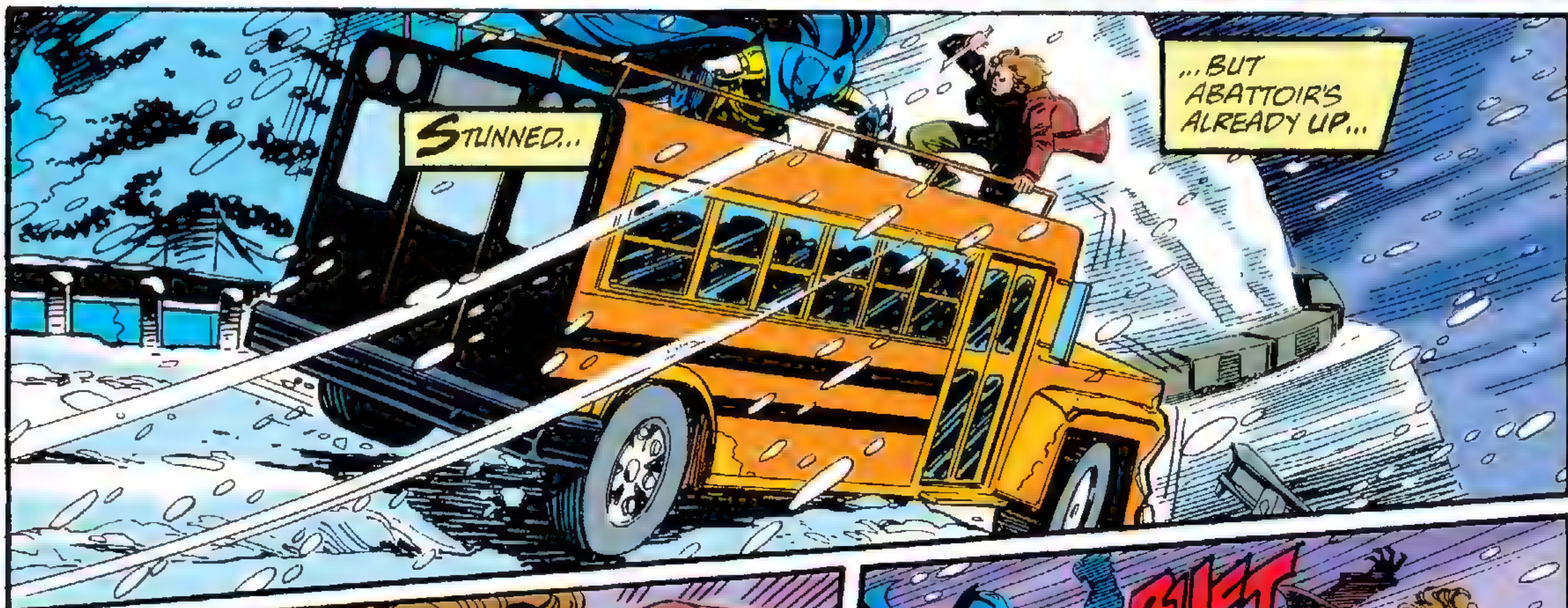
THERE—THE BUS—BUT IT TURNED OFF THE ROUTE LESLIE THOMPSON DESCRIBED.

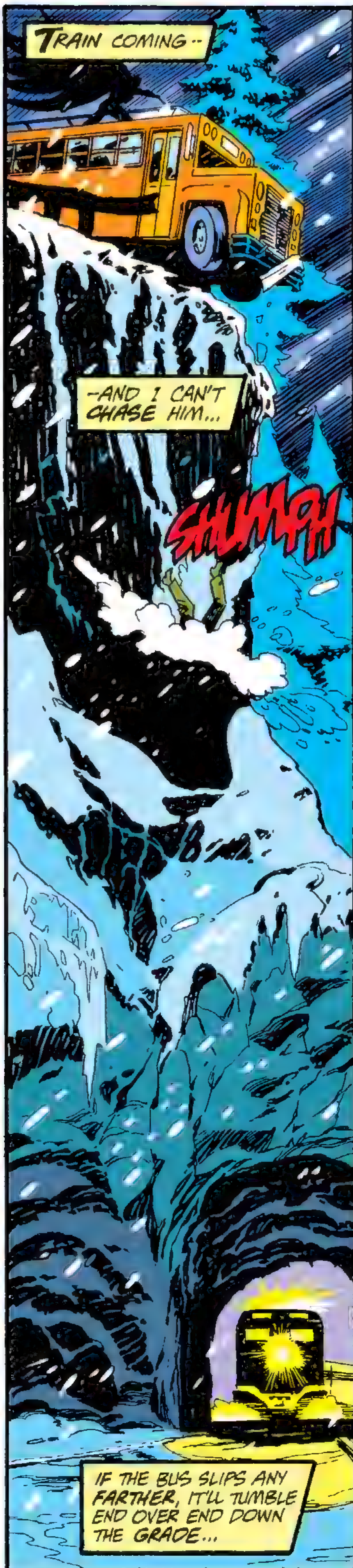
MAYBE THIS IS IT—MAYBE ABATTOIR'S ALREADY FOUND HIS NEXT PREY.









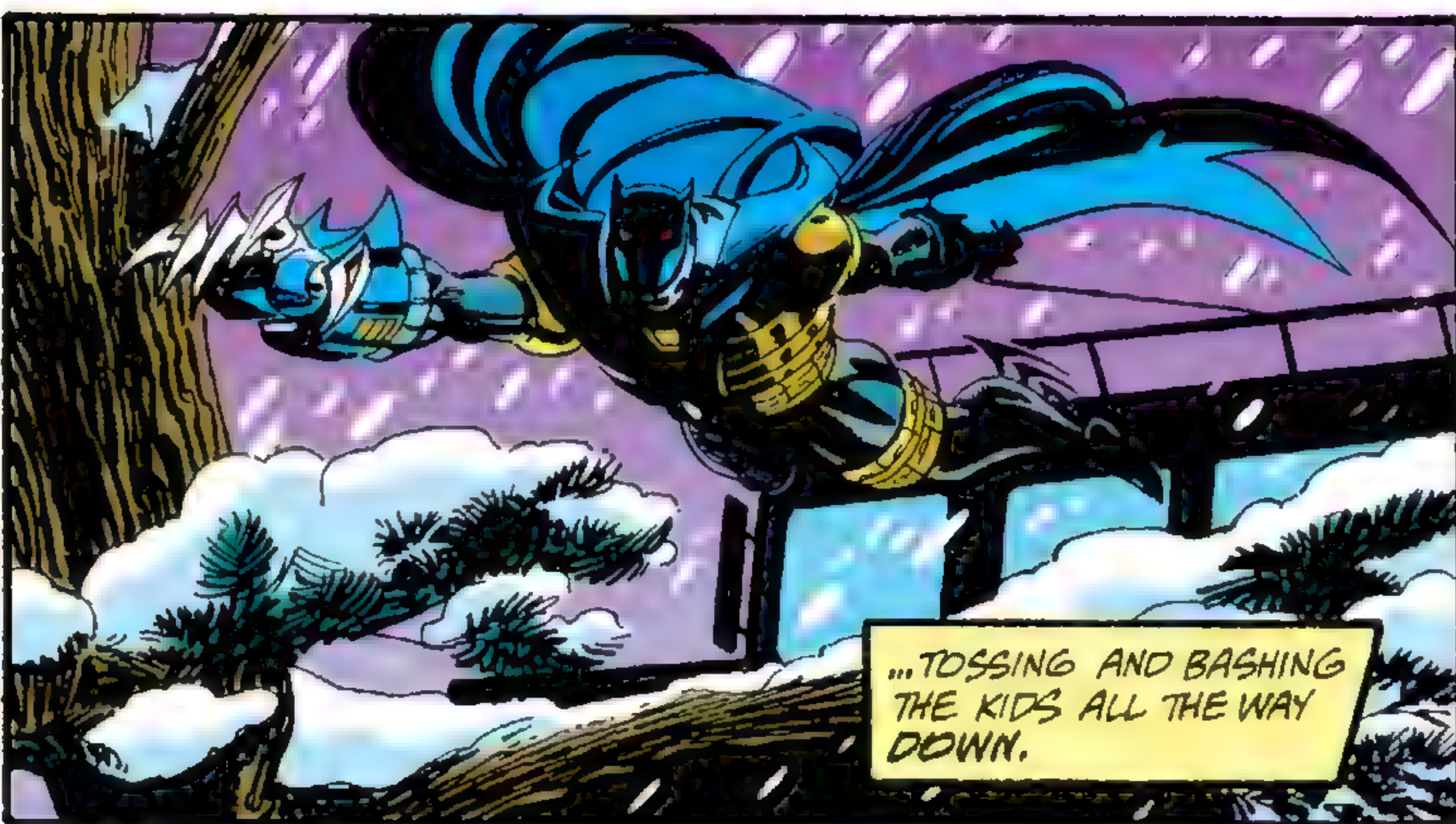


TRAIN COMING--

--AND I CAN'T CHASE HIM...

SHLUMP!

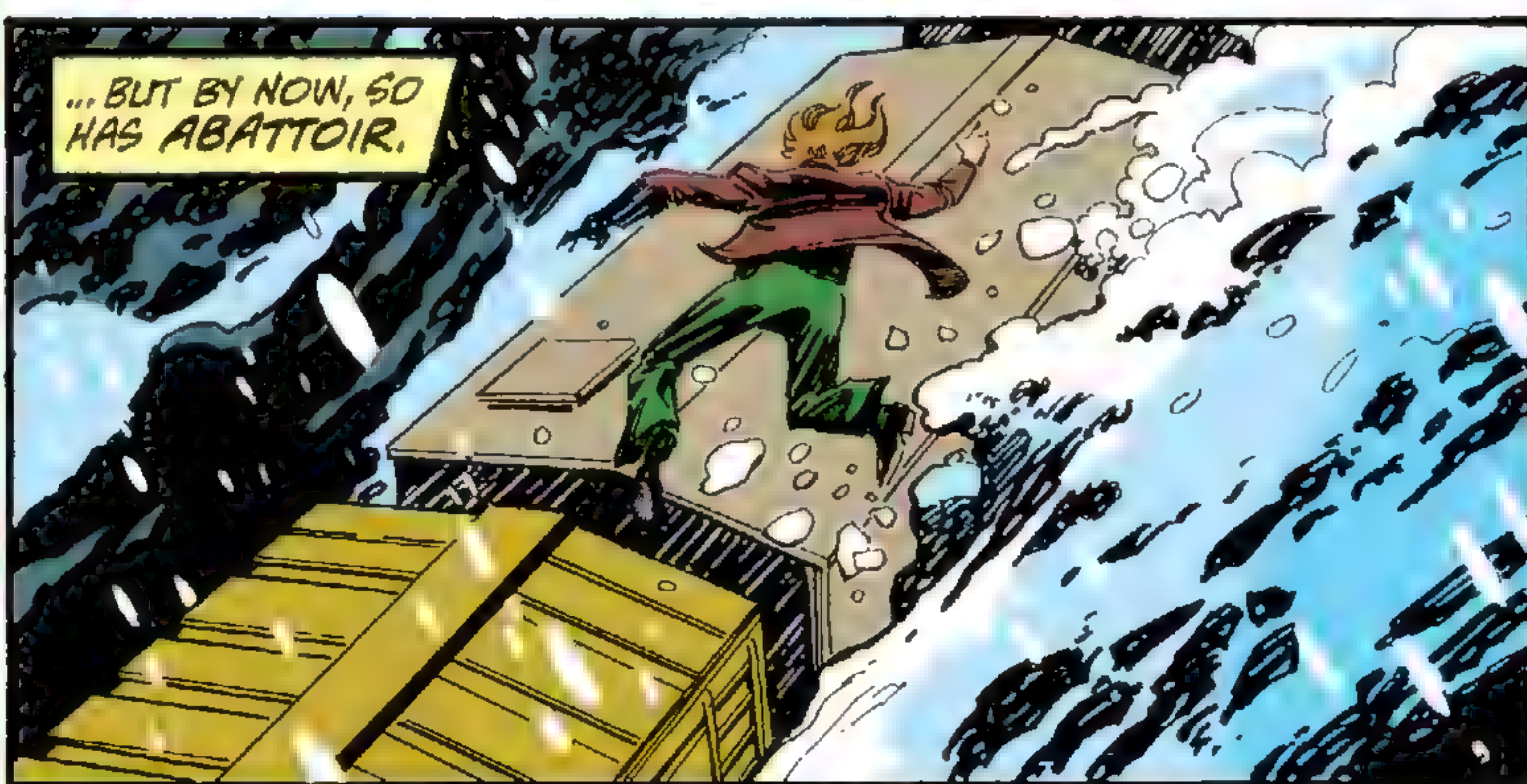
IF THE BUS SLIPS ANY FARTHER, IT'LL TUMBLE END OVER END DOWN THE GRADE...



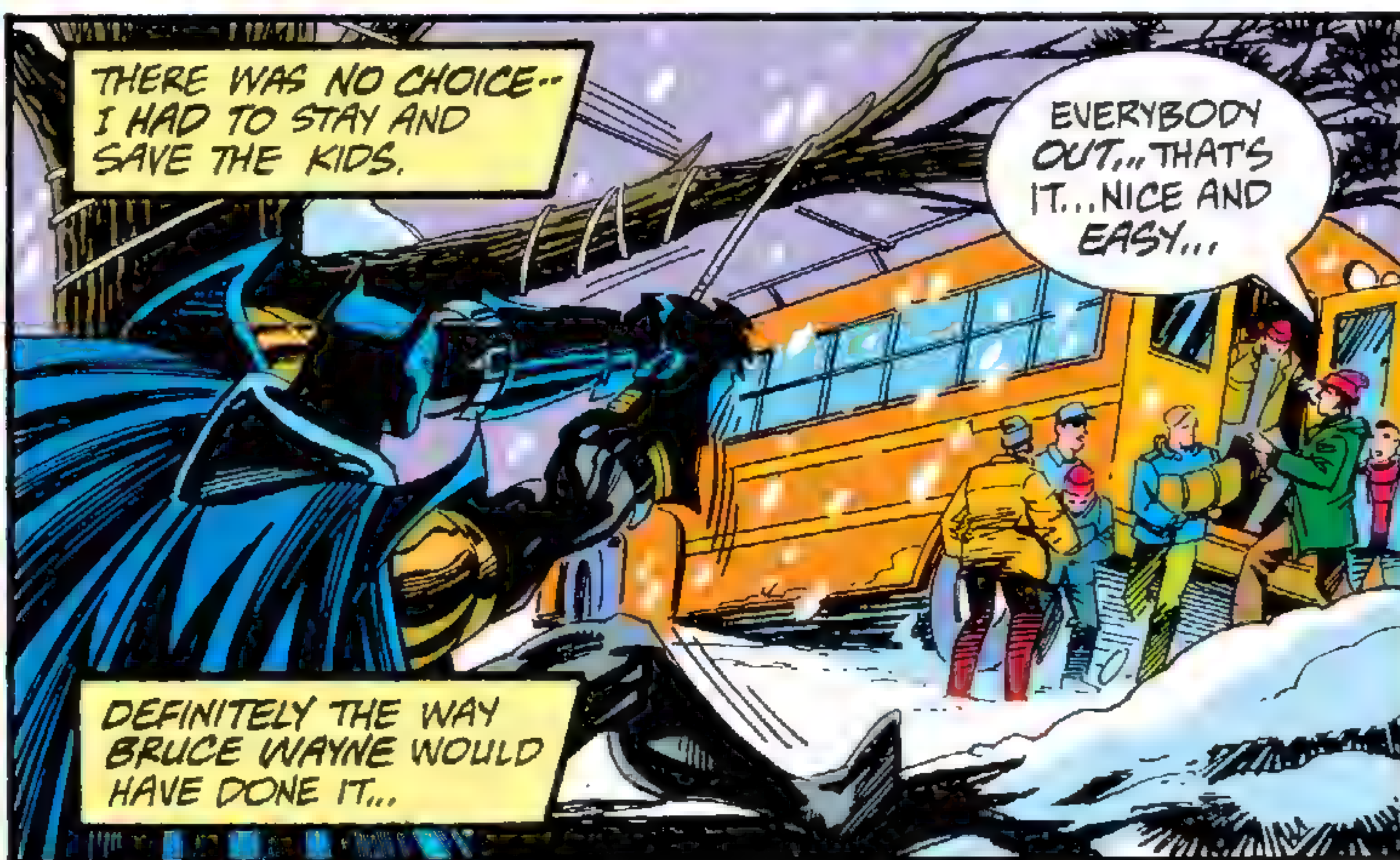
...TOSsing AND BASHING THE KIDS ALL THE WAY DOWN.



MADE IT...



... BUT BY NOW, SO HAS ABATTOIR.



THERE WAS NO CHOICE-- I HAD TO STAY AND SAVE THE KIDS.

EVERYBODY OUT... THAT'S IT... NICE AND EASY...

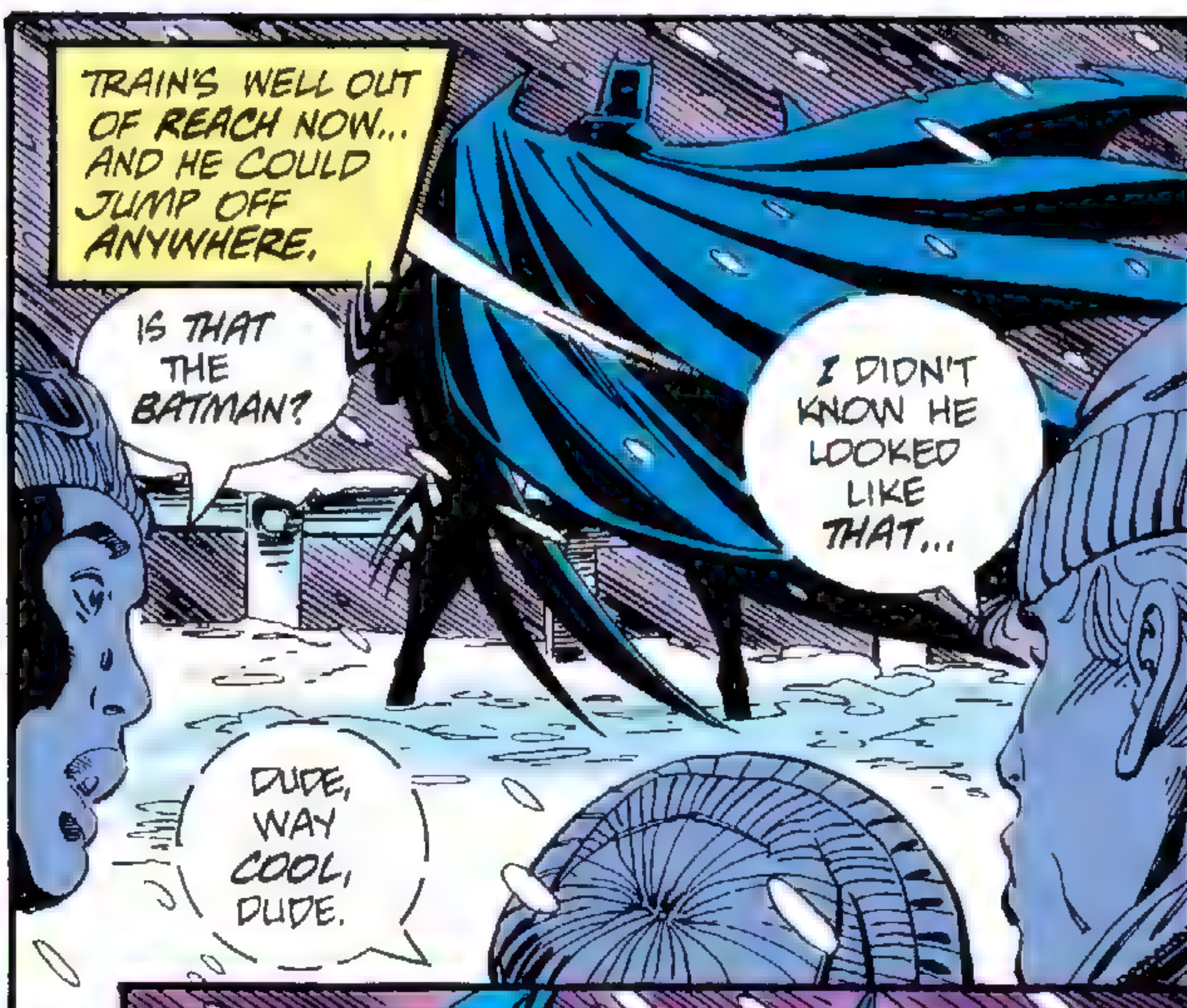
DEFINITELY THE WAY BRUCE WAYNE WOULD HAVE DONE IT...



BUT I'M NOT
BRUCE WAYNE.

I WANT TO
THANK YOU--
YOU SAVED
OUR LIVES...

DETECTIVE WORK
ONLY GOES SO FAR...
AND IN THE END,
EVIL MUST BE
CRUSHED.



TRAIN'S WELL OUT
OF REACH NOW...
AND HE COULD
JUMP OFF
ANYWHERE.

IS THAT
THE
BATMAN?

I DIDN'T
KNOW HE
LOOKED
LIKE
THAT...

DUDE,
WAY
COOL,
DUDE.



A LONG WALK BACK
TO GOTHAM.

YOU KNOW
WHO HE
WAS?

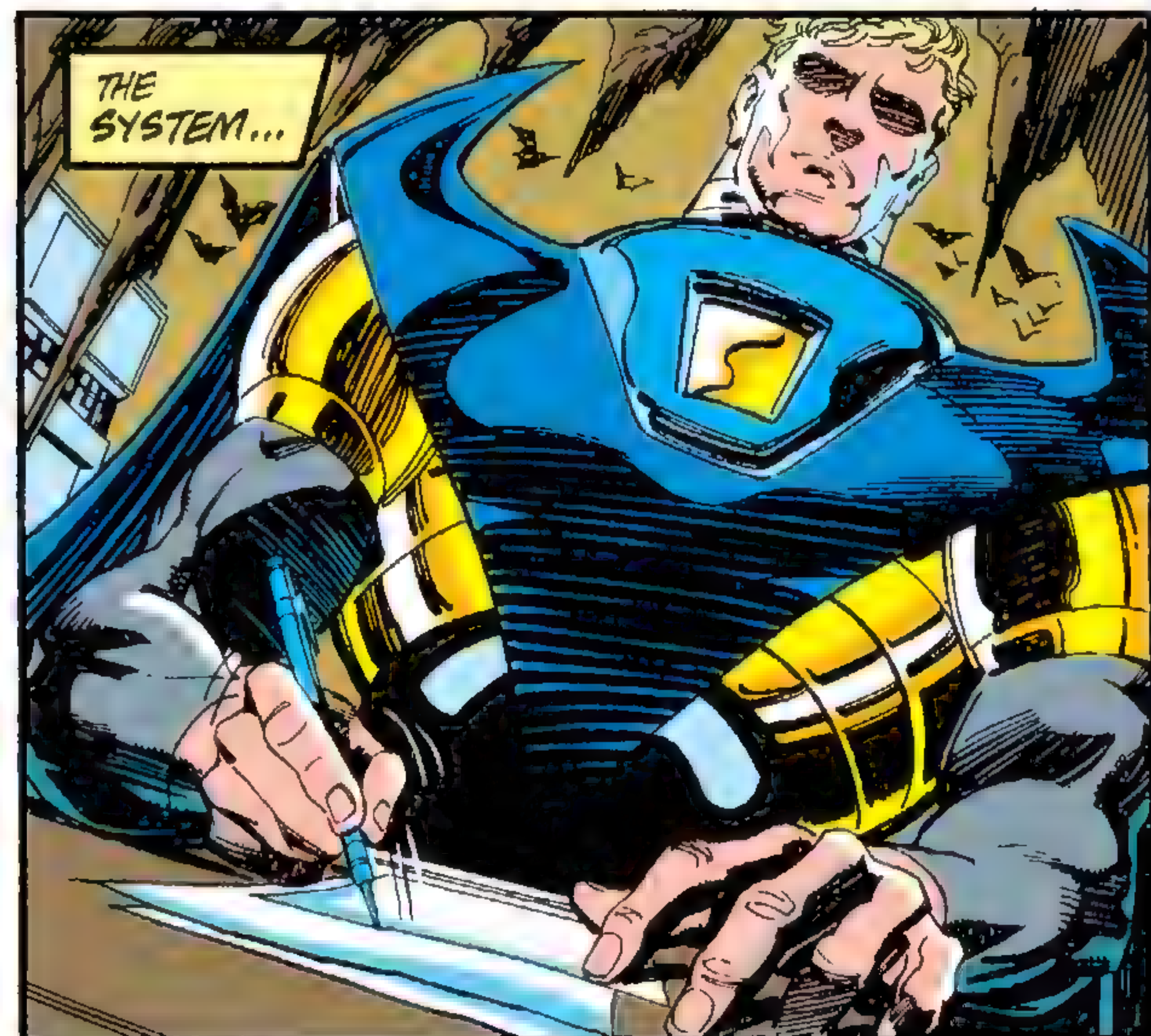
Y-YES...
MY FATHER'S
COUS--

HE
MAY TRY
AGAIN--
I'LL SEND
POLICE.

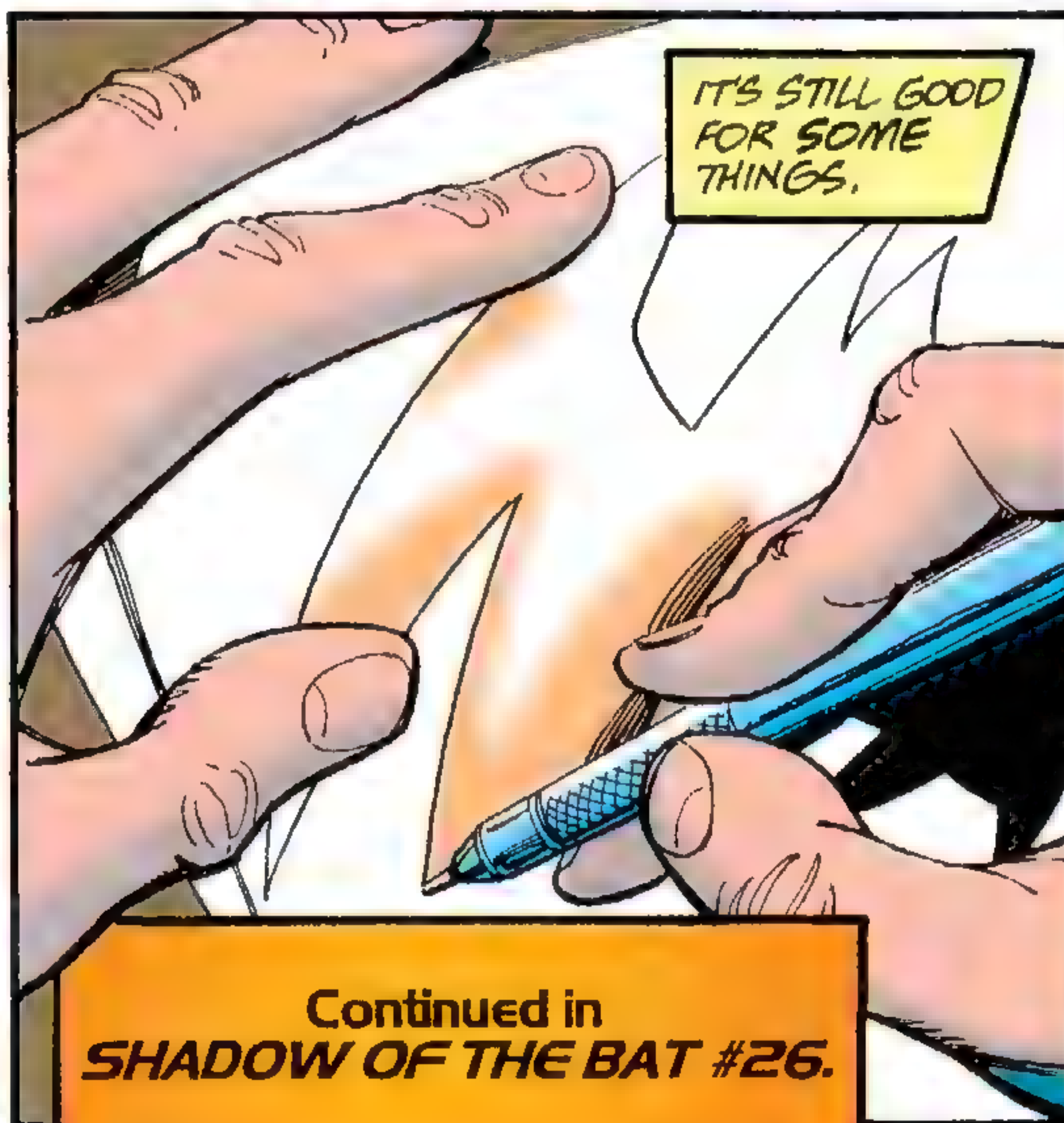


THE CAPE PROTECTED
ME, BUT IT SHOULD
BE MORE THAN
DEFENSE...

THE CAPE
ITSELF MUST
BECOME A
WEAPON.



THE
SYSTEM...



IT'S STILL GOOD
FOR SOME
THINGS.

Continued in
SHADOW OF THE BAT #26.

Cover art by BRIAN STELFREEZE



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ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

SHADOW OF THE BAT



BY ALAN GRANT, BRET BLEVINS AND JOHN BEATTY



"So what's it like?" they ask me, all them docs with their fancy degrees and strings of letters. "What's it like having a self-sustaining acid-based metabolism?"

"What's it like being The Corrosive Man?"

I tell 'em: "It hurts."

"Can you be a little more specific?" They ask.

Sure I can, "It hurts like Hell!"

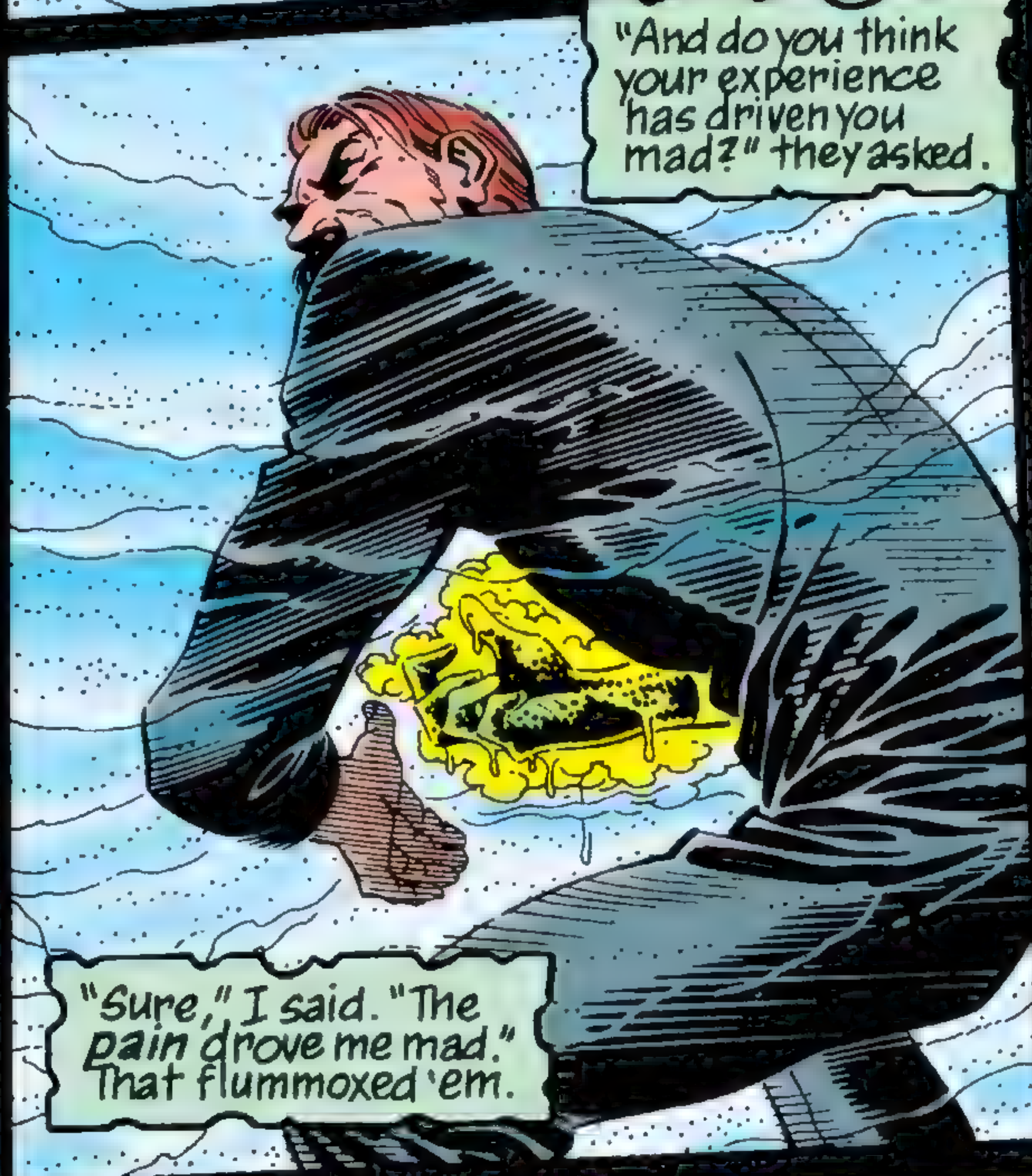
Imagine fire ants underneath your skin, stinging without stop. Imagine molten plastic injected in your eyes, or battery acid flushing through your bloodstream--



--that's what it's like to be the corrosive man.



"And do you think your experience has driven you mad?" they asked.



"Sure," I said. "The pain drove me mad." That flummoxed 'em.



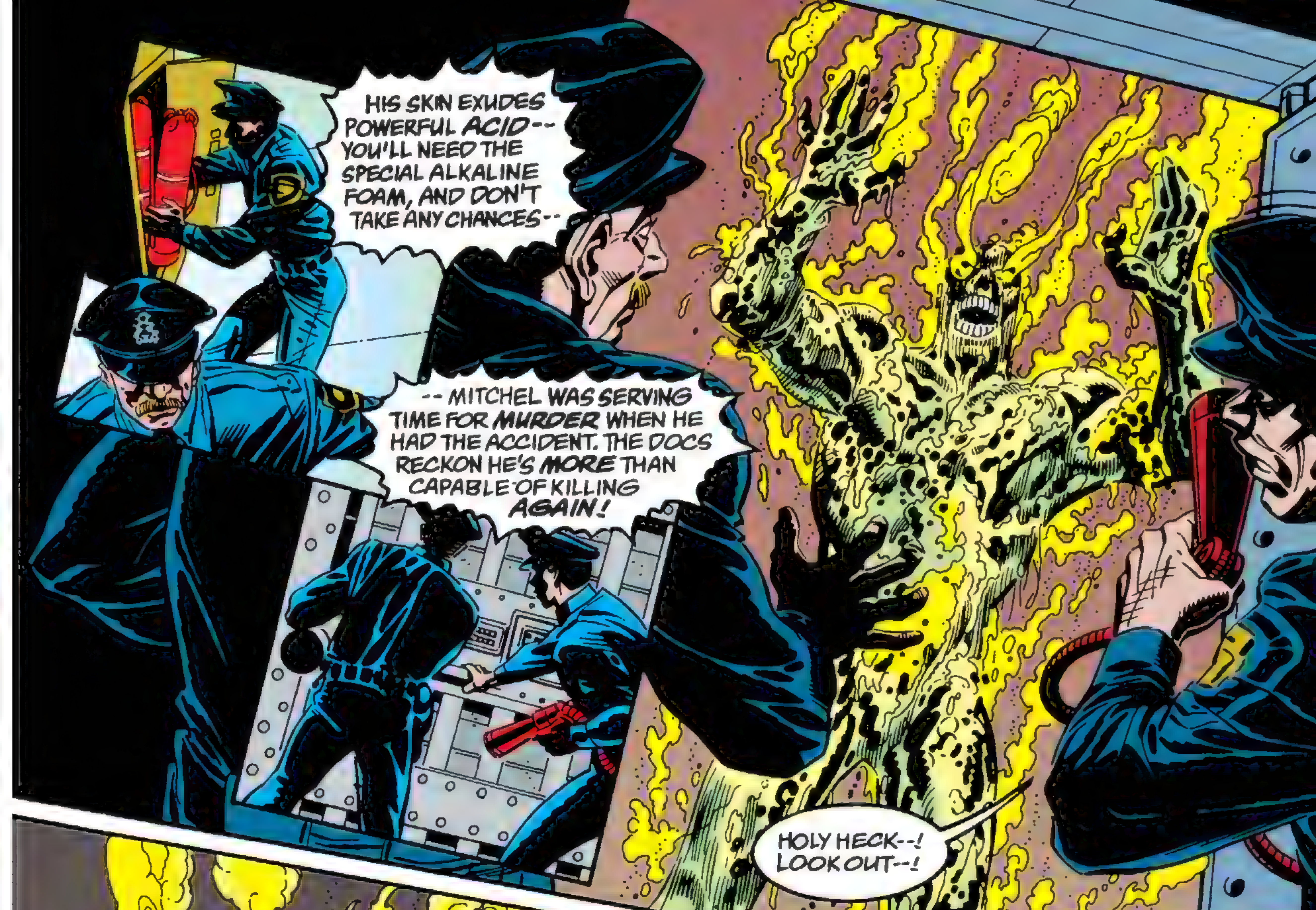
Because if I was really mad, I wouldn't know it. And I wouldn't have spent all these months practicing-- experimenting-- doing my damndest to beat their alkali spray--

--getting ready to escape.



ESCAPE ALERT, UNIT 17! THAT'S DEKE MITCHEL-- THE CORROSIVE MAN!





HIS SKIN EXUDES
POWERFUL ACID--
YOU'LL NEED THE
SPECIAL ALKALINE
FOAM, AND DON'T
TAKE ANY CHANCES--

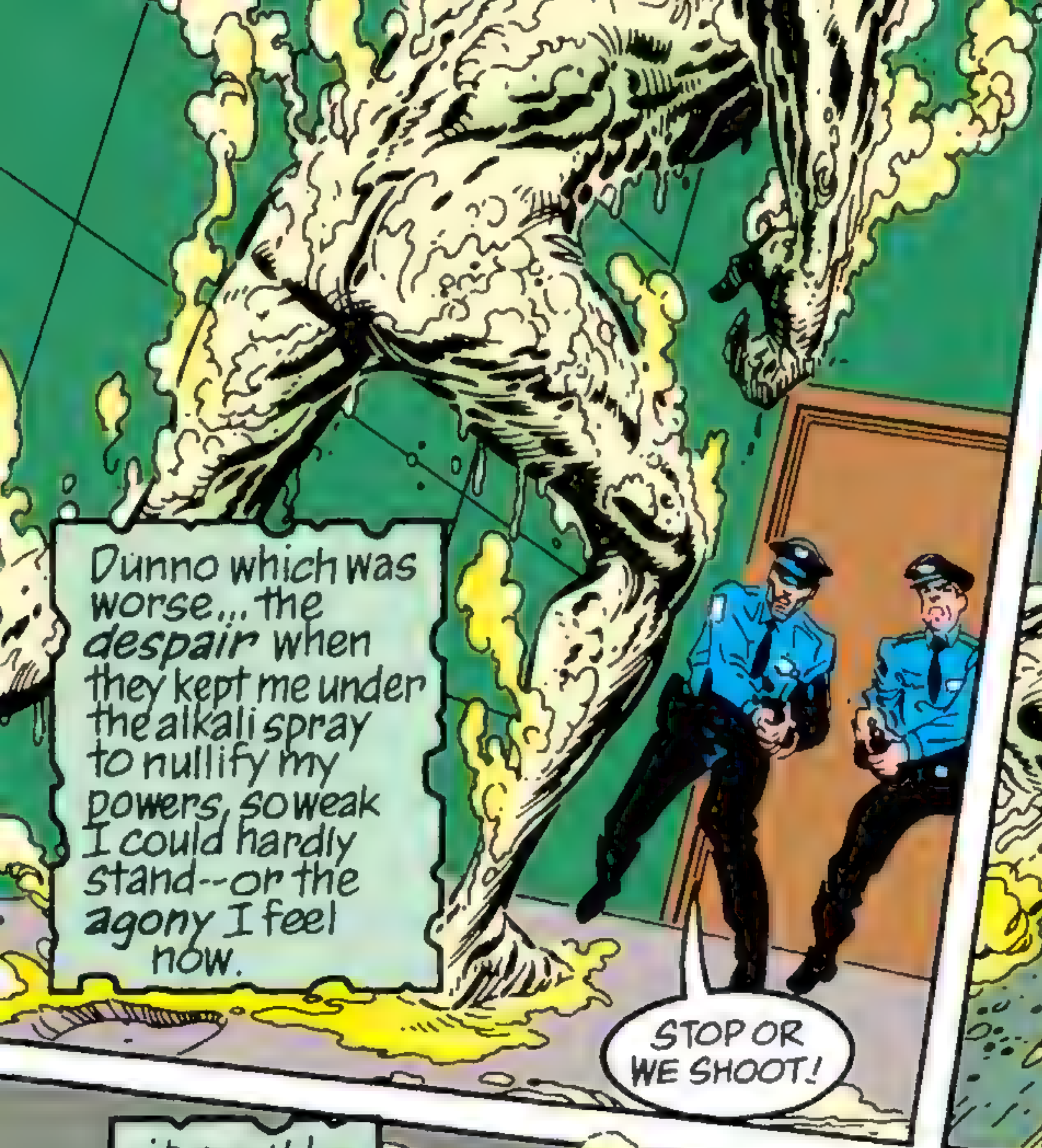
-- MITCHEL WAS SERVING
TIME FOR MURDER WHEN HE
HAD THE ACCIDENT. THE DOCS
RECKON HE'S MORE THAN
CAPABLE OF KILLING
AGAIN!

HOLY HECK--!
LOOK OUT--!

Released from the neutralizing
spray, my body flares up, the way
it used to. Pain covers me like
a second skin. Every step hurts.

AAAAAAHHH!

The hot taste
of heavy metal
sludge burns
my mouth.

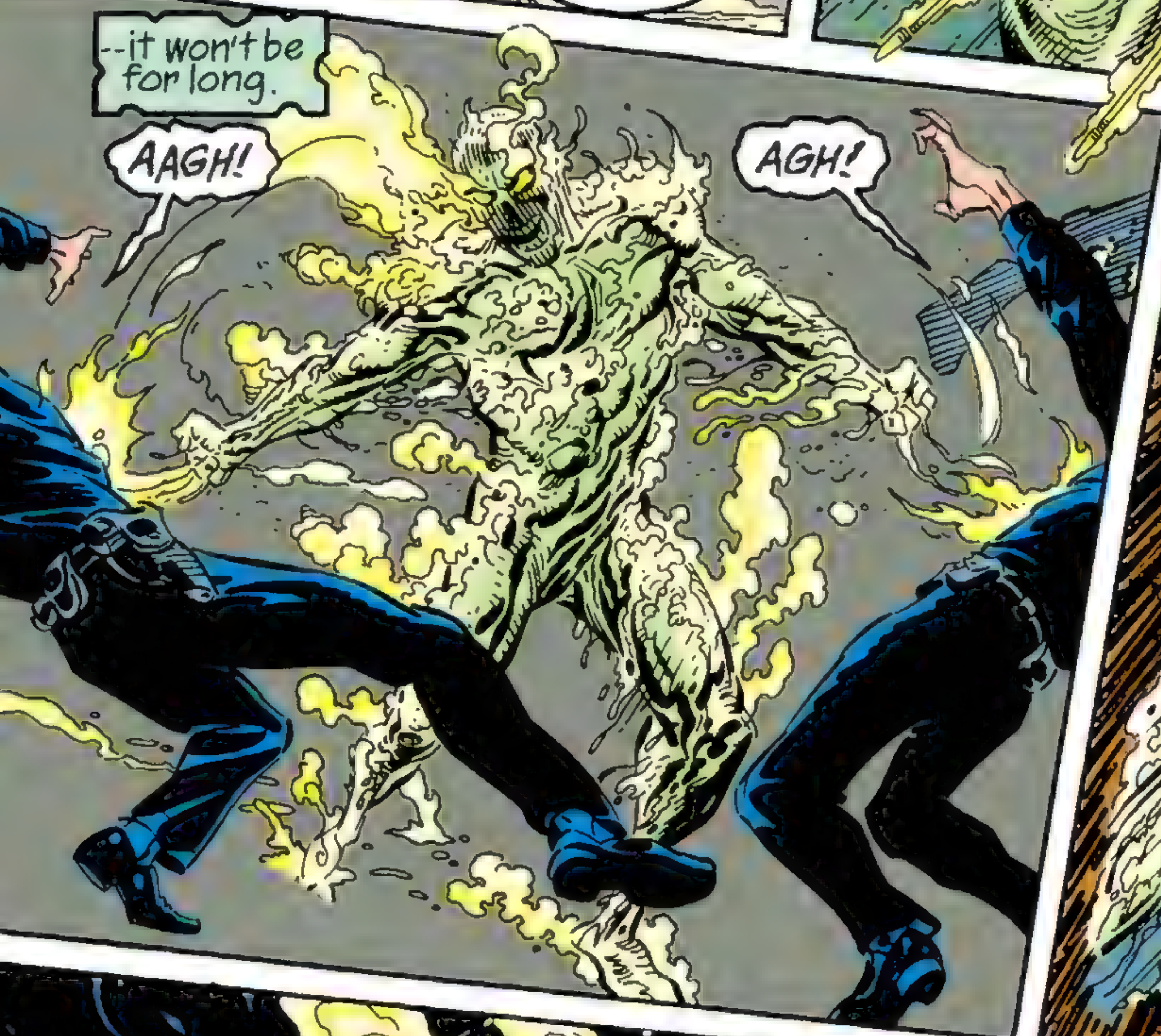


Dunno which was worse... the despair when they kept me under the alkali spray to nullify my powers, so weak I could hardly stand--or the agony I feel now.

STOP OR WE SHOOT!



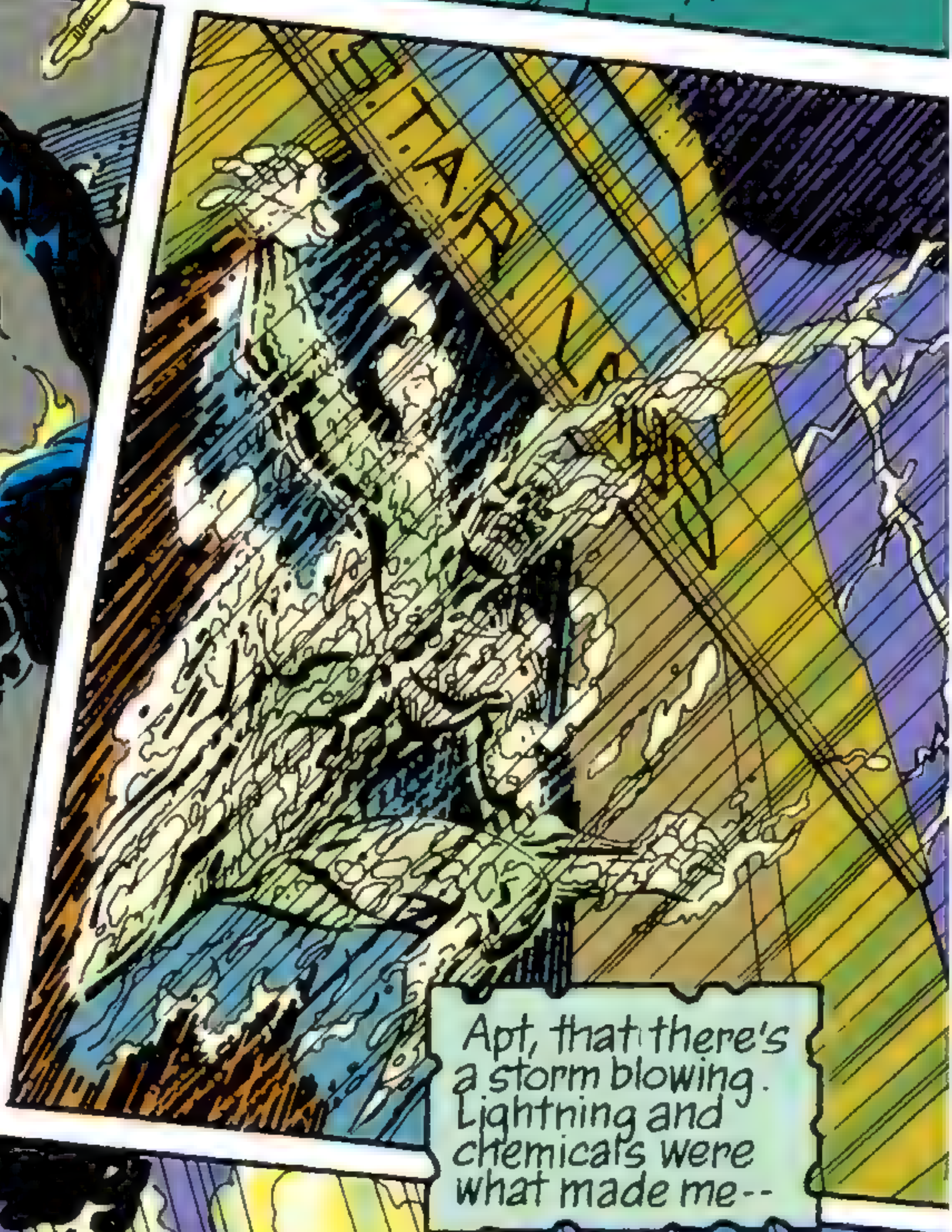
But what the hey--



--it won't be for long.

AAGH!

AGH!



Apt, that there's a storm blowing. Lightning and chemicals were what made me--



--lightning and chemicals will be my salvation!



ALL I EVER WANTED
WAS TO BE A GOOD
TEACHER, MAYBE HAVE
A TEAM IN THE NATIONAL
SCHOOL FOOTBALL
LEAGUE.

I NEVER ASKED
FOR ANY RUN-IN WITH
ALIENS -- OR THE
SUPER POWER THEIR
BITE LEFT ME WITH.

BUT NOW
THAT I
DO HAVE
POWER...

...WHAT DO
I USE IT
FOR?

SWINGING THROUGH
THE ROOFS--FINDING A
CRIME--THAT WAS THE
EASY PART. NOW COMES
THE HARD...

...DO I WANT
TO BE A HERO OR
NOT?

HAND IT
OVER OR I
CUT YA!

I HAVE TO ADMIT
I FEEL MORE
SCARED THAN
EXCITED, BUT
WHAT HAPPENED
TO ME MADE ME
INTO SOMETHING
SPECIAL. IT'S MY
DUTY TO USE THAT
SOMETHING FOR
THE COMMON
GOOD--

I AIN'T GOT
NOTHIN'! I SWEAR,
MAN--!

--AND HE'S
ONLY A KID.

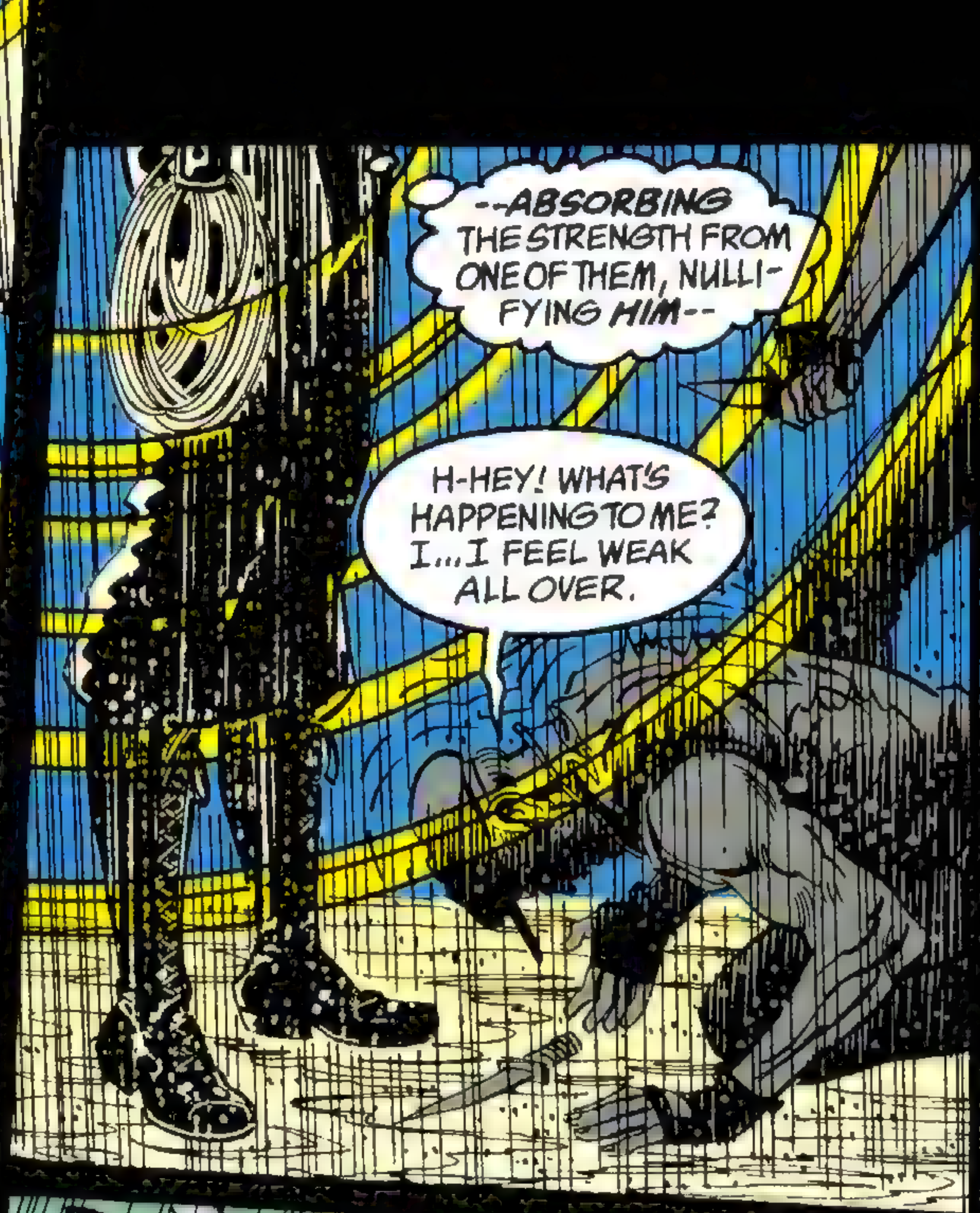
HEY,
TOUGH
GUYS--

--LIKE TO
TRY THAT ON
ME?

SURE THING!
AIN'T NOTHIN' I
LIKE MORE'N A
DEAD GEEK!



THIS IS THE
ACID TEST! I HAVE
TO DO IT CAREFULLY,
GENTLY, THE WAY I'VE
BEEN PRACTICING--



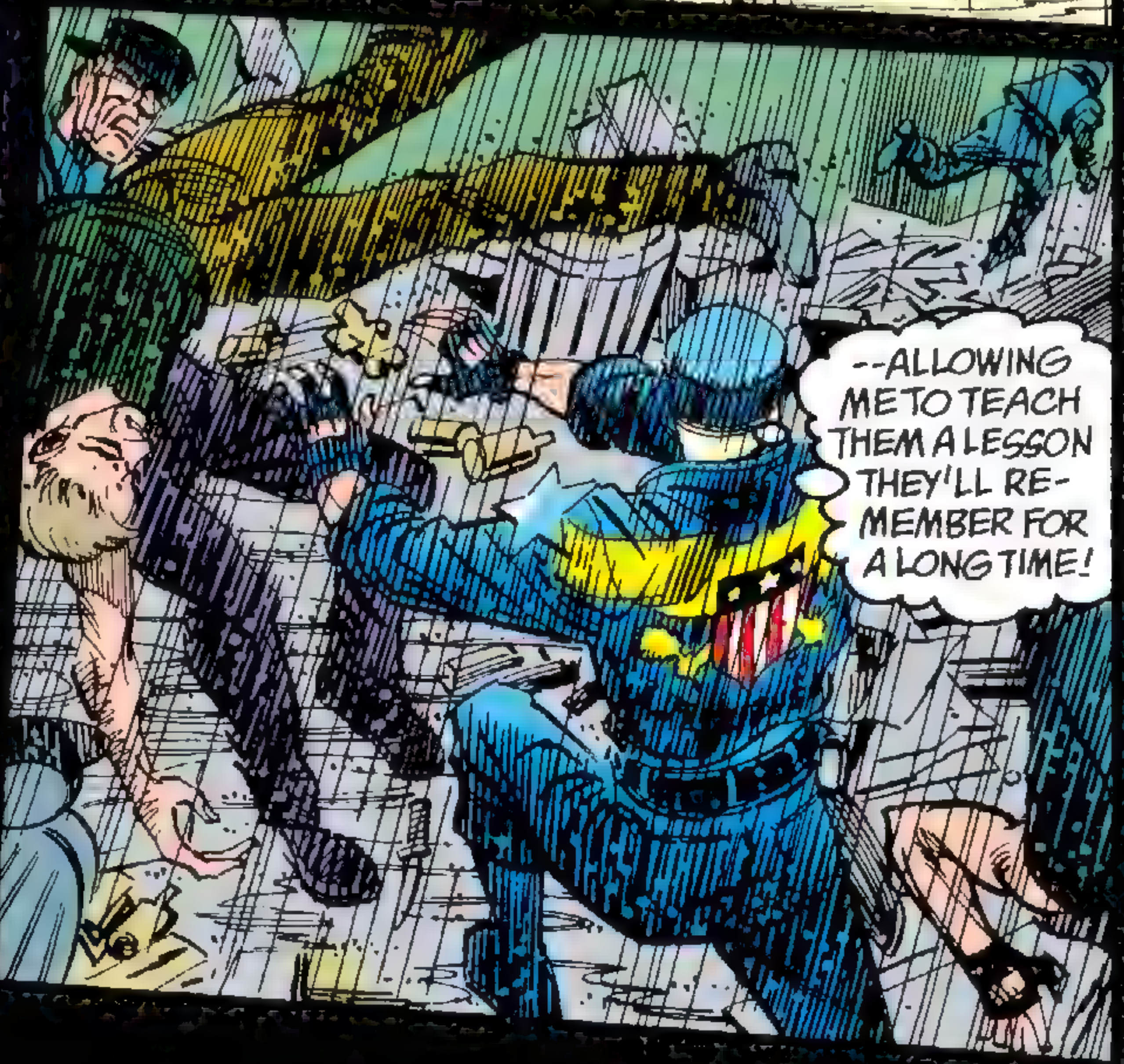
--ABSORBING
THE STRENGTH FROM
ONE OF THEM, NULLI-
FYING HIM--

H-HEY! WHAT'S
HAPPENING TO ME?
I... I FEEL WEAK
ALL OVER.



--INCREASING MY
OWN STRENGTH--

OWW!

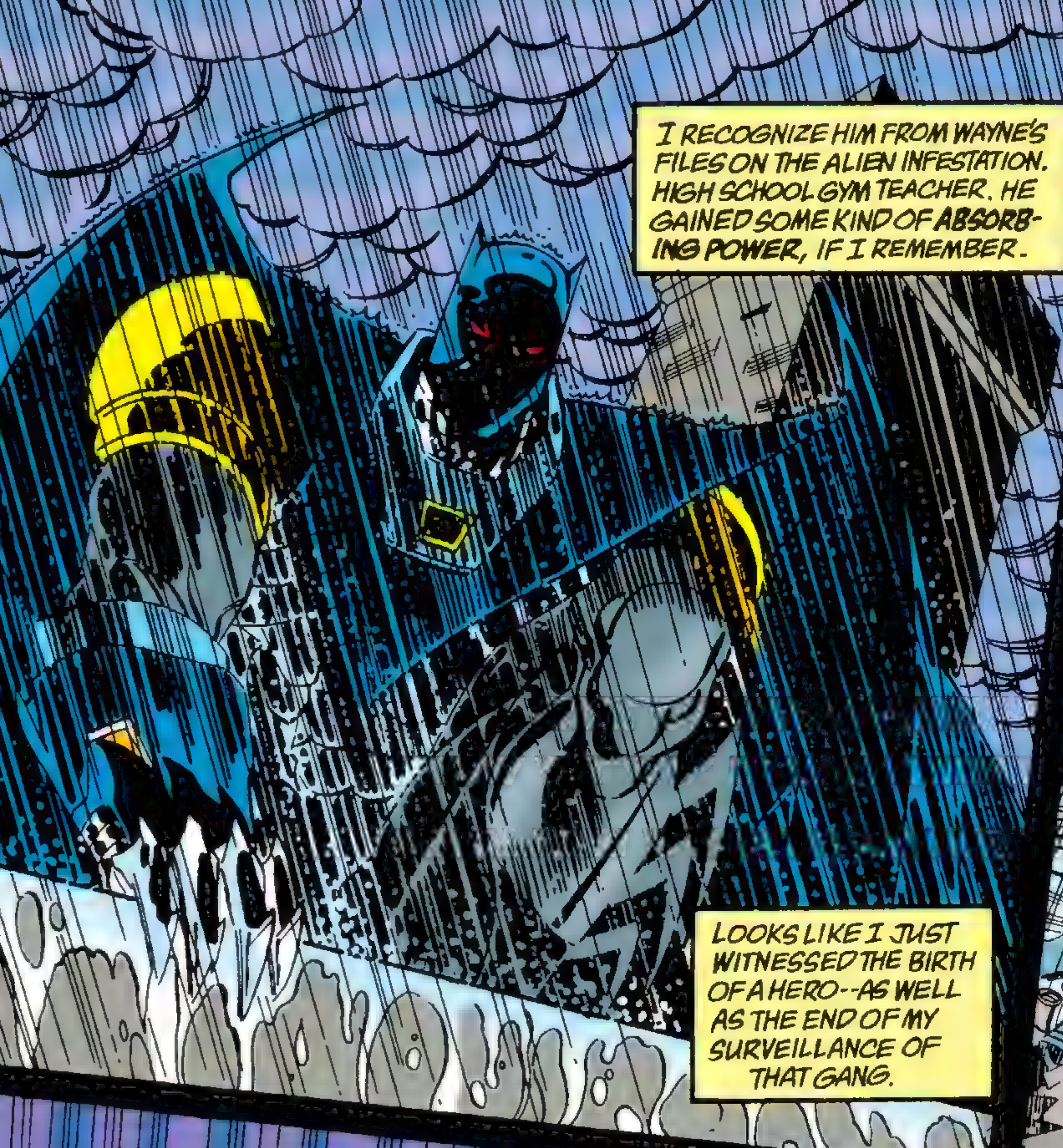


--ALLOWING
ME TO TEACH
THEM A LESSON
THEY'LL RE-
MEMBER FOR
A LONG TIME!

THAT'S JOE
PUBLIC...!



50



I RECOGNIZE HIM FROM WAYNE'S FILES ON THE ALIEN INFESTATION. HIGH SCHOOL GYM TEACHER. HE GAINED SOME KIND OF ABSORBING POWER, IF I REMEMBER.

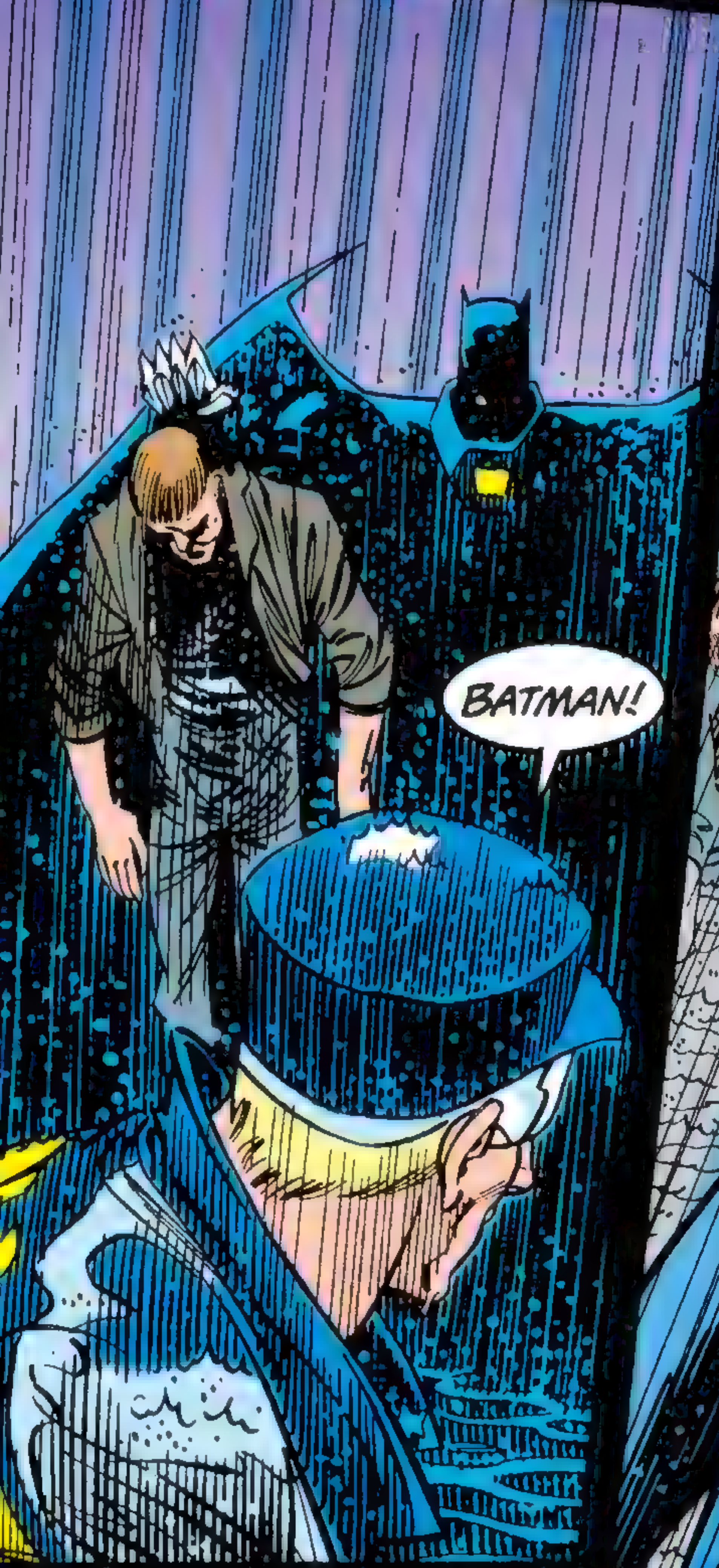
LOOKS LIKE I JUST WITNESSED THE BIRTH OF A HERO--AS WELL AS THE END OF MY SURVEILLANCE OF THAT GANG.



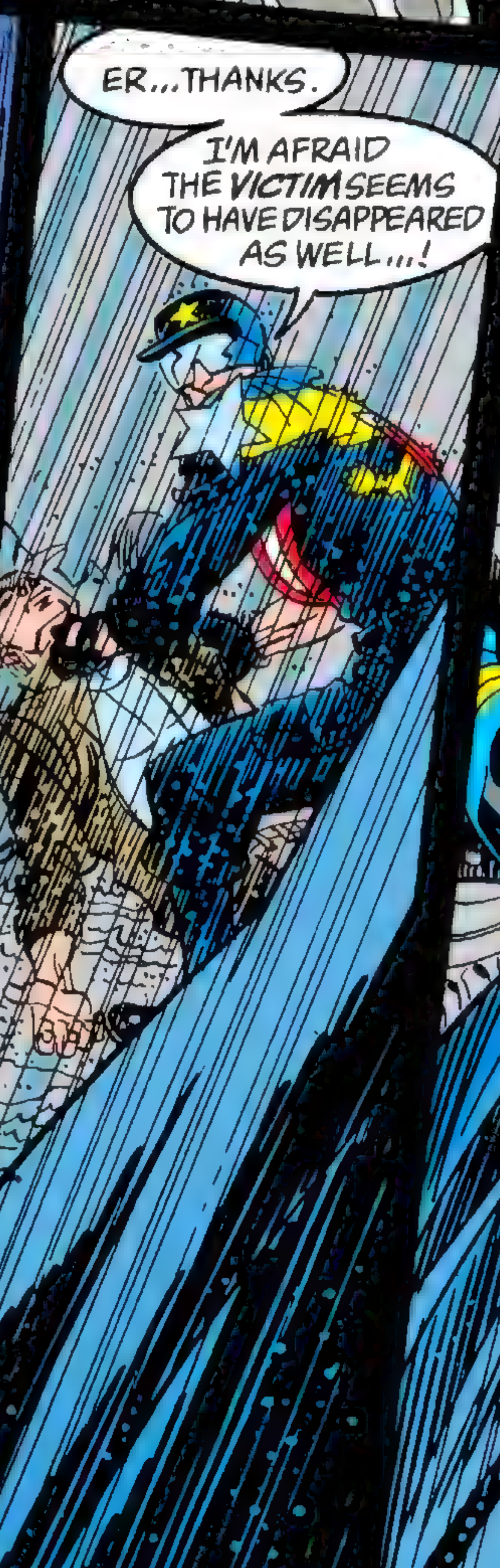
AND NOW THAT THEY'RE SAFELY TIED, I GIVE HIM HIS STRENGTH BACK.

NOT BAD FOR A FIRST ATTEMPT, JOE! NOT BAD AT ALL!

YOU MISSED ONE.

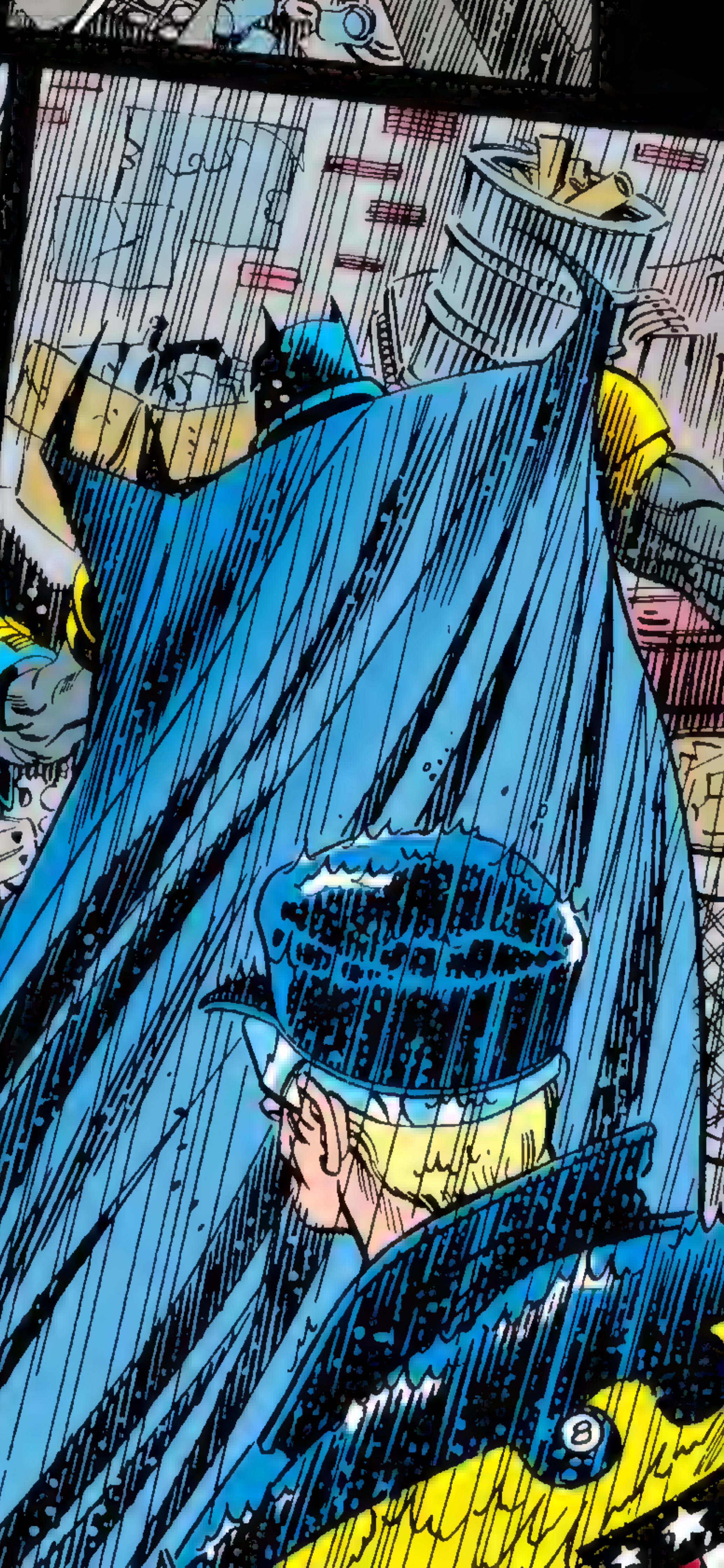


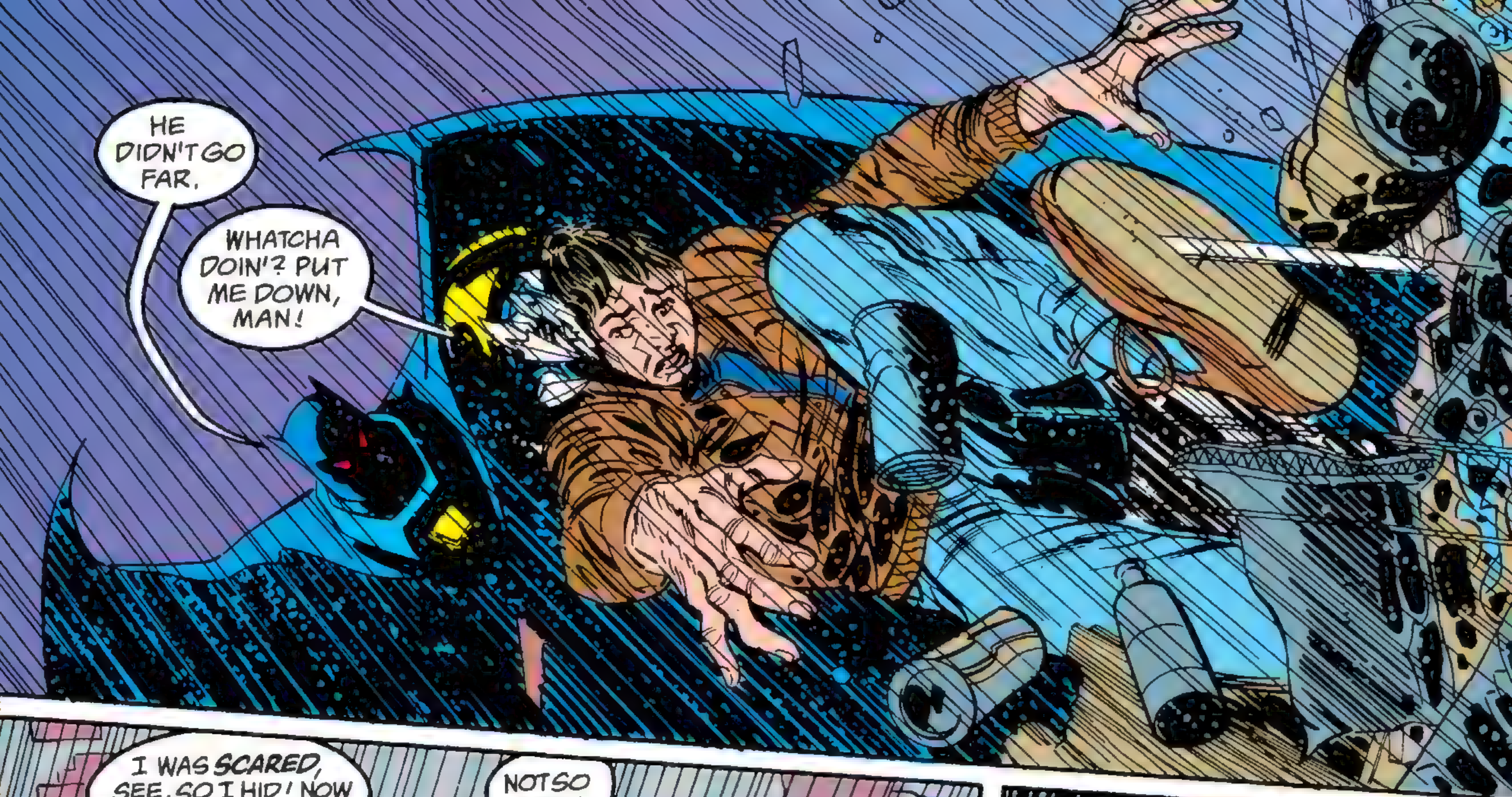
BATMAN!



ER...THANKS.

I'M AFRAID THE VICTIM SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED AS WELL...!





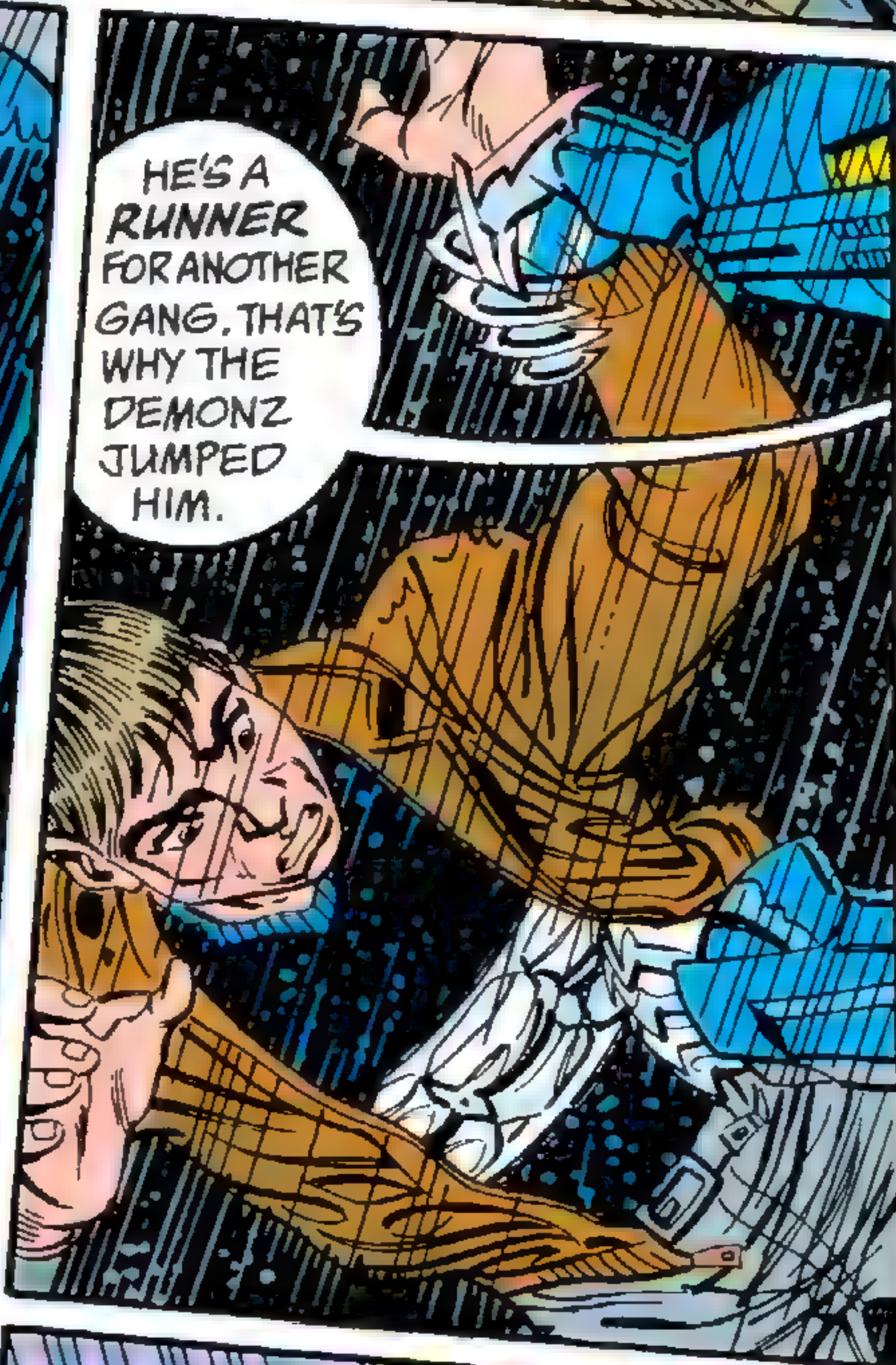
HE DIDN'T GO FAR.

WHATCHA DOIN'? PUT ME DOWN, MAN!



I WAS SCARED, SEE, SO I HID! NOW I'M OUTTA HERE!

NOT SO FAST!

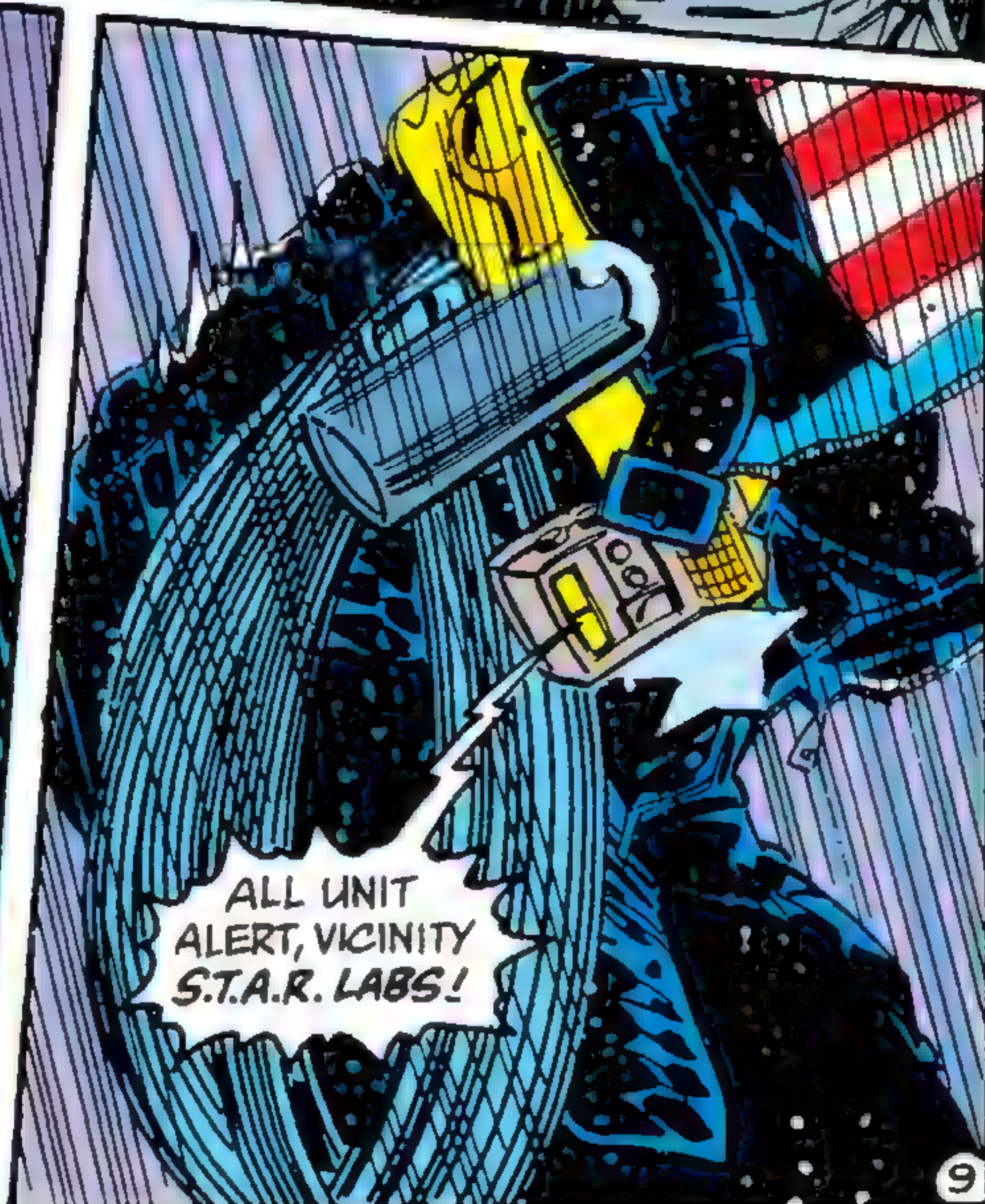


HE'S A RUNNER FOR ANOTHER GANG. THAT'S WHY THE DEMONZ JUMPED HIM.



GEE! AND I THOUGHT I WASN'T DOING TOO BADLY AT THIS CRIME FIGHTING. GUESS I HAVE A LOT TO LEARN!

BEST LESSON MIGHT BE TO GIVE IT UP BEFORE YOU GET HURT!



ALL UNIT ALERT, VICINITY S.T.A.R. LABS!

I KNOW IT'S ILLEGAL--BUT I FIGURED I'D NEED IT TO CALL IN ANY VILLAINS I CAUGHT!

PRISONER DEKE MITCHEL, A.K.A. THE CORROSIVE MAN, HAS ESCAPED! BELIEVED TO BE HEADING SOUTH!

APPROACH WITH CAUTION! THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS!

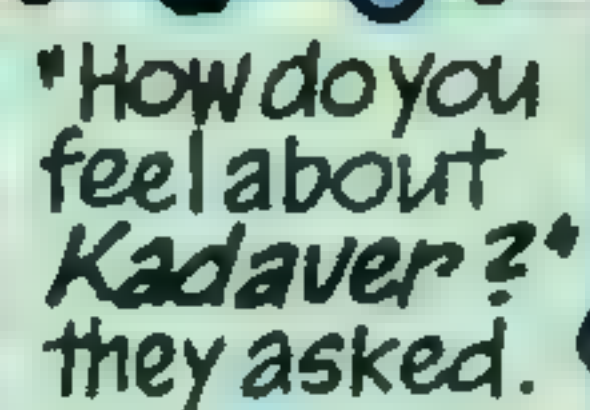
MAYBE NOT SO EASY AS I HOPED IT'D BE. BUT--I'D KIND OF LIKE TO PRESS ON. IT FEELS GOOD, HELPING PEOPLE.

SAY! WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TEACH ME? I'M NOT RICH, BUT I COULD AFFORD TO PAY YOU SOMETHING. AND GOTHAM COULD ALWAYS USE ANOTHER VIGILANTE...!

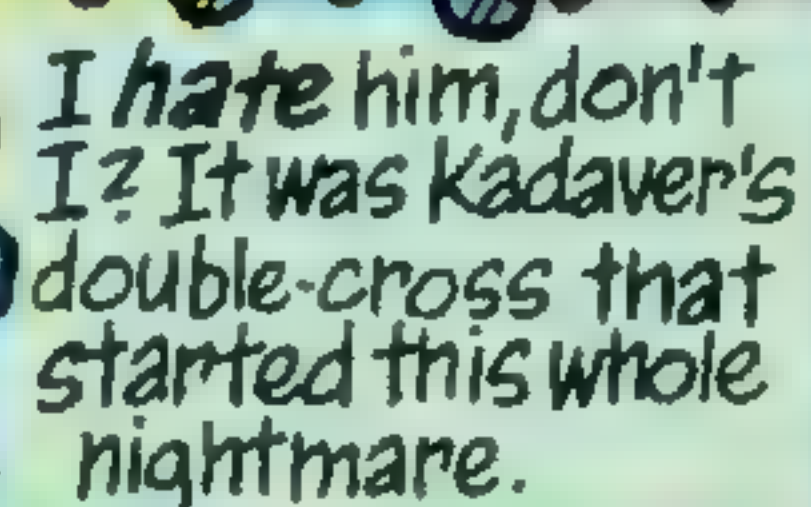
WHAT DO YOU SAY, BATMAN?

BATMAN...?

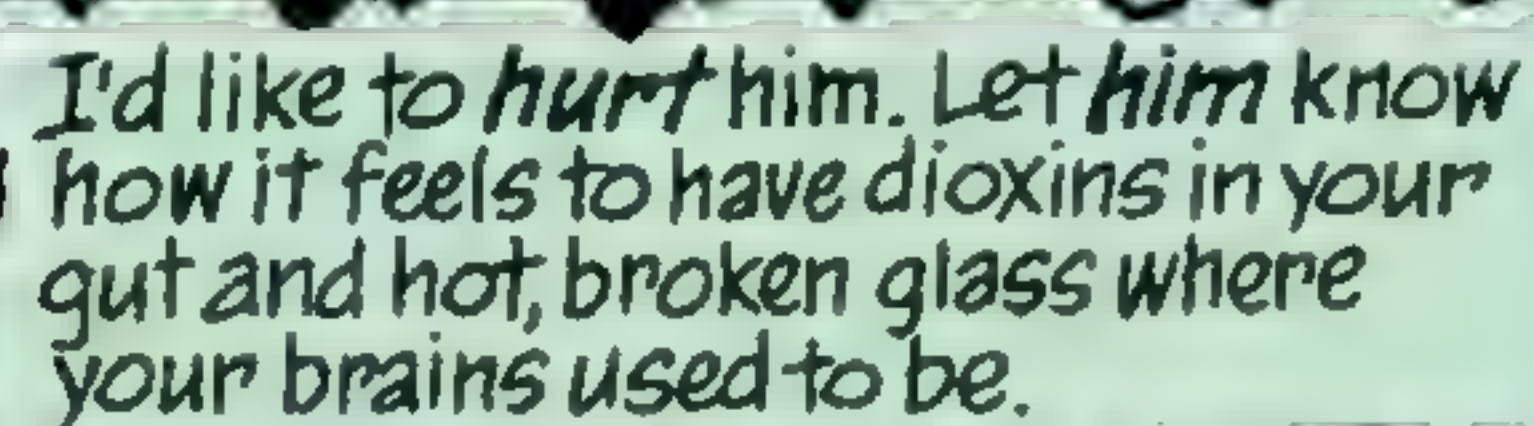
CORROSIVE MAN--THAT'S ONE I DON'T KNOW. BUT IF HE'S HEADING SOUTH FROM S.T.A.R. HE HAS TO CROSS THE GOTHAM EXPRESSWAY--!



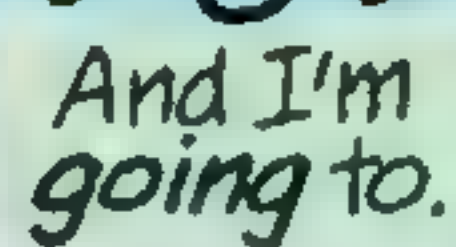
"How do you feel about Kadaver?" they asked.



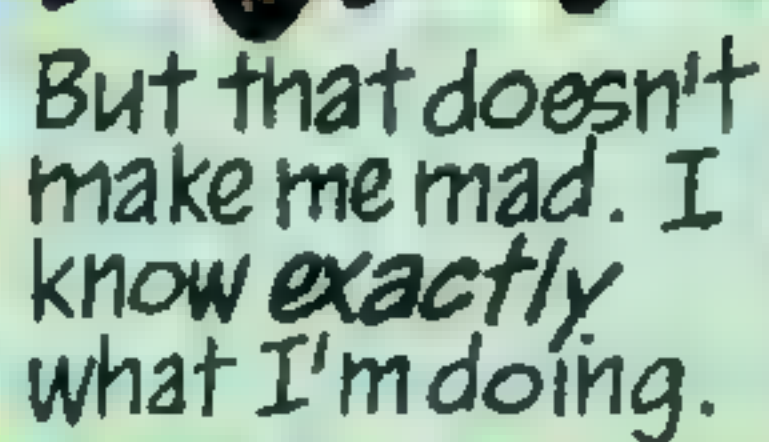
I hate him, don't I? It was Kadaver's double-cross that started this whole nightmare.



I'd like to hurt him. Let him know how it feels to have dioxins in your gut and hot, broken glass where your brains used to be.



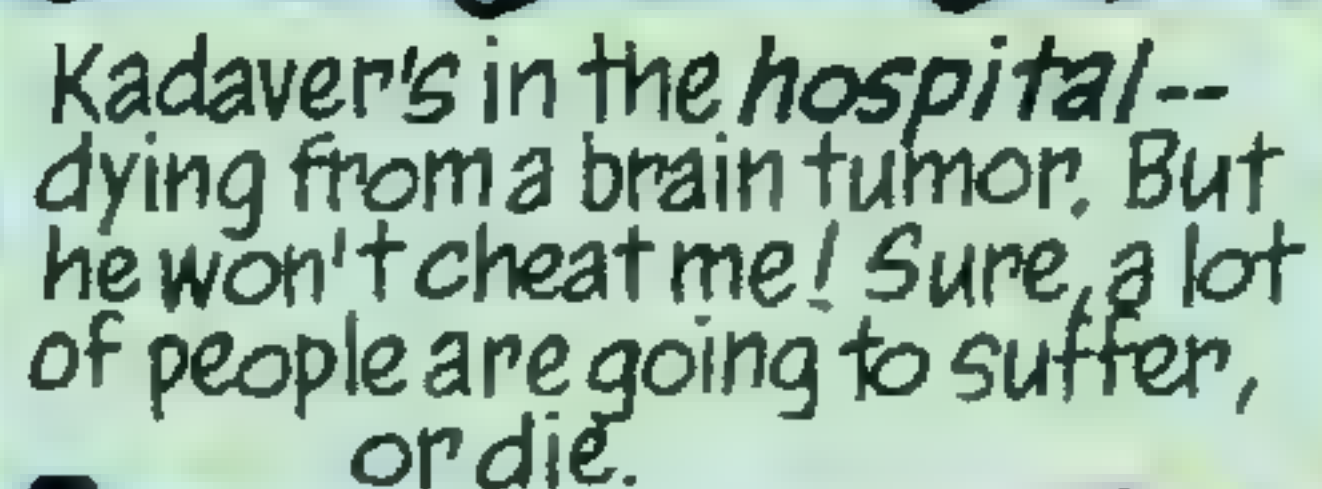
And I'm going to.



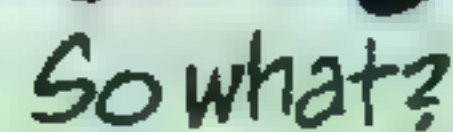
But that doesn't make me mad. I know *exactly* what I'm doing.



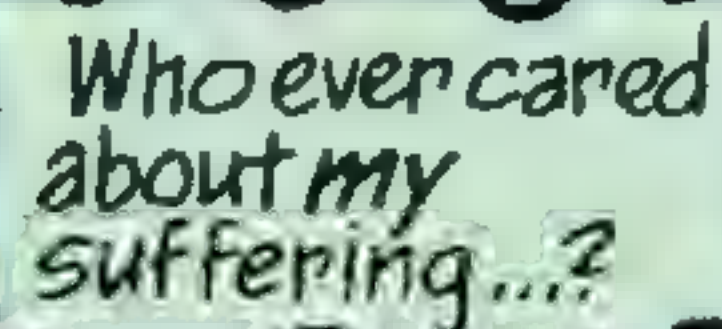
ZZZZZKKK



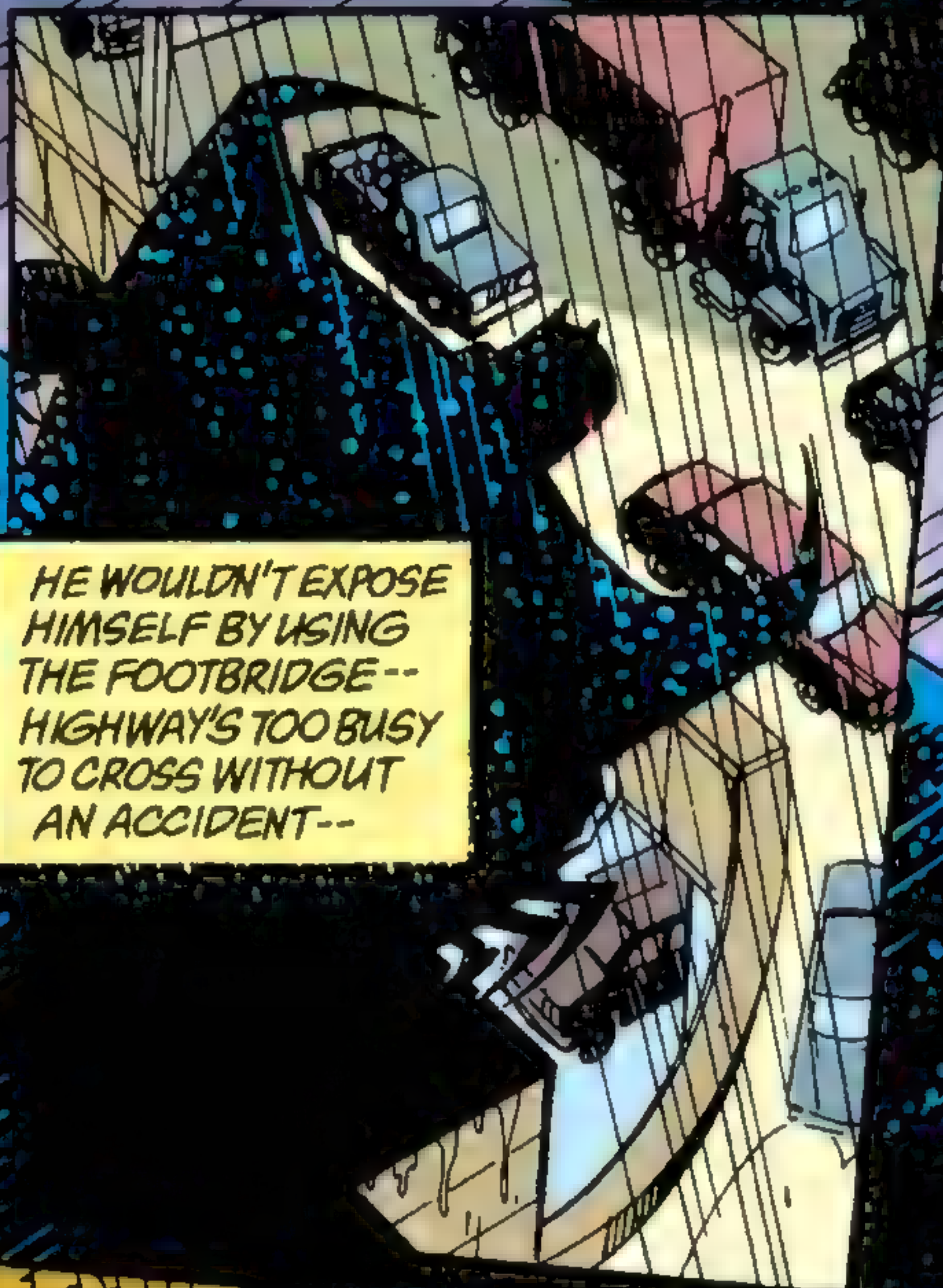
Kadaver's in the hospital-- dying from a brain tumor. But he won't cheat me! Sure, a lot of people are going to suffer, or die.



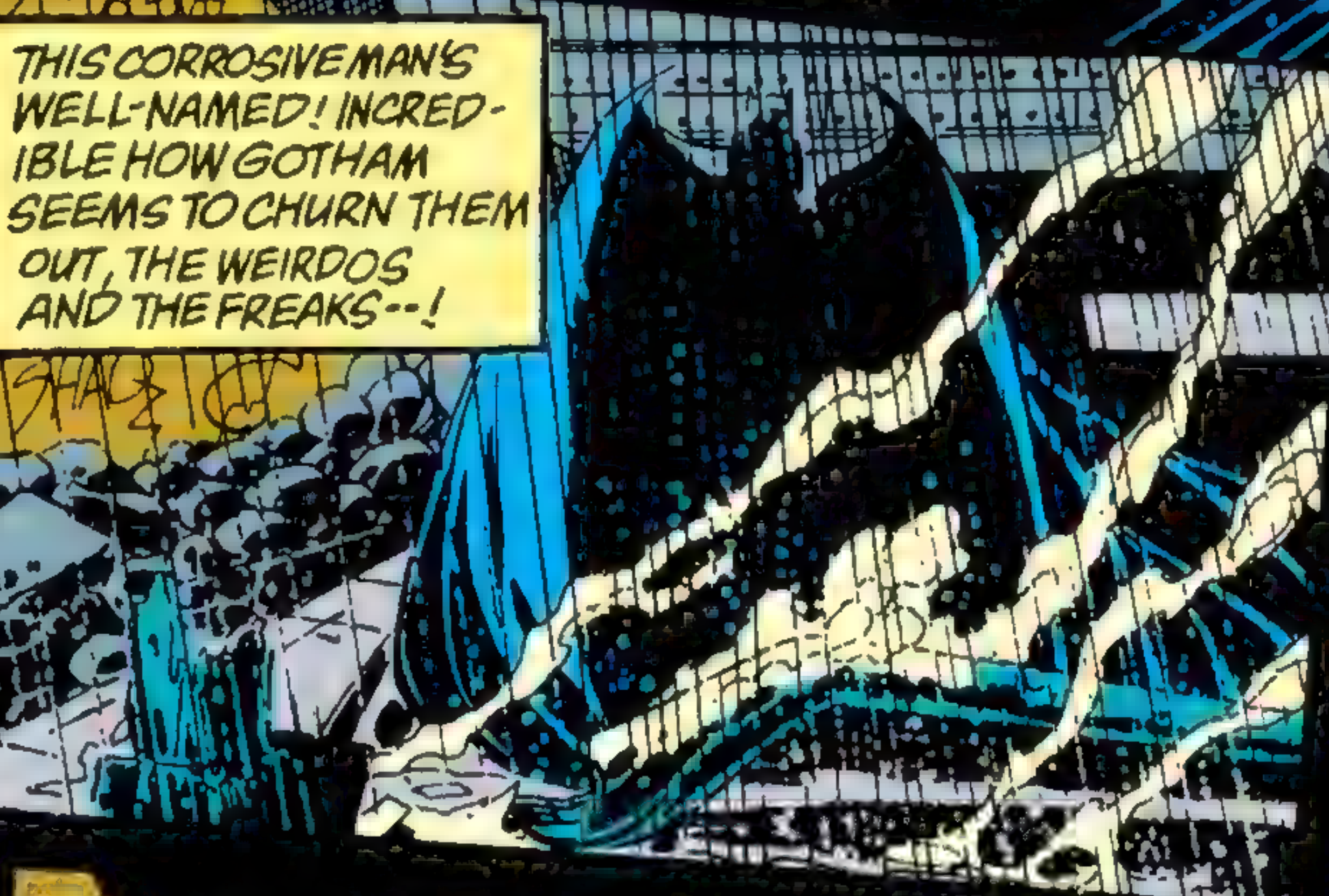
So what?



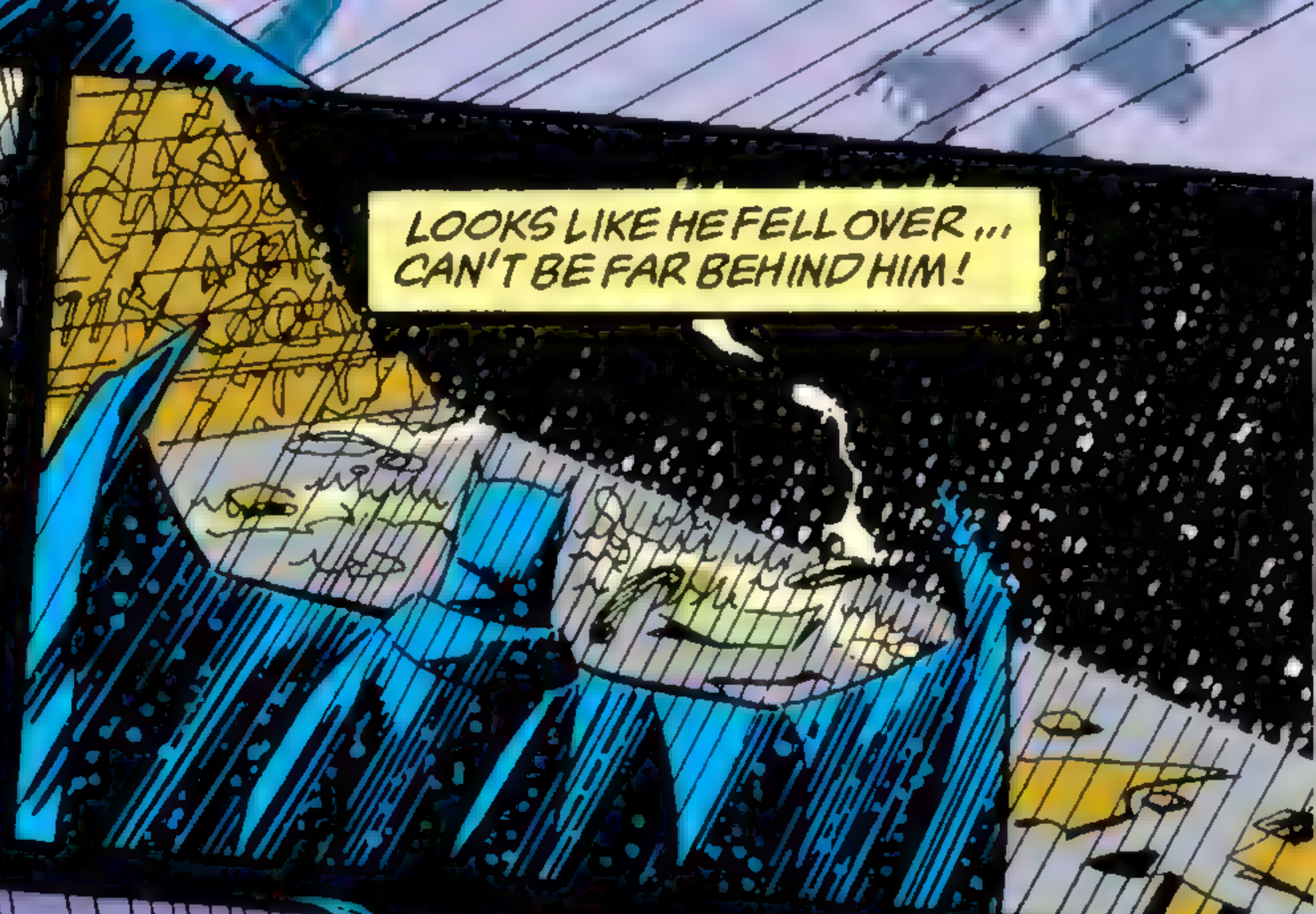
Who ever cared about my suffering...?



HE WOULDN'T EXPOSE
HIMSELF BY USING
THE FOOTBRIDGE--
HIGHWAYS TOO BUSY
TO CROSS WITHOUT
AN ACCIDENT--



THIS CORROSIVE MAN'S
WELL-NAMED! INCRED-
IBLE HOW GOTHAM
SEEMS TO CHURN THEM
OUT, THE WEIRDOS
AND THE FREAKS--!



LOOKS LIKE HE FELL OVER...
CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND HIM!



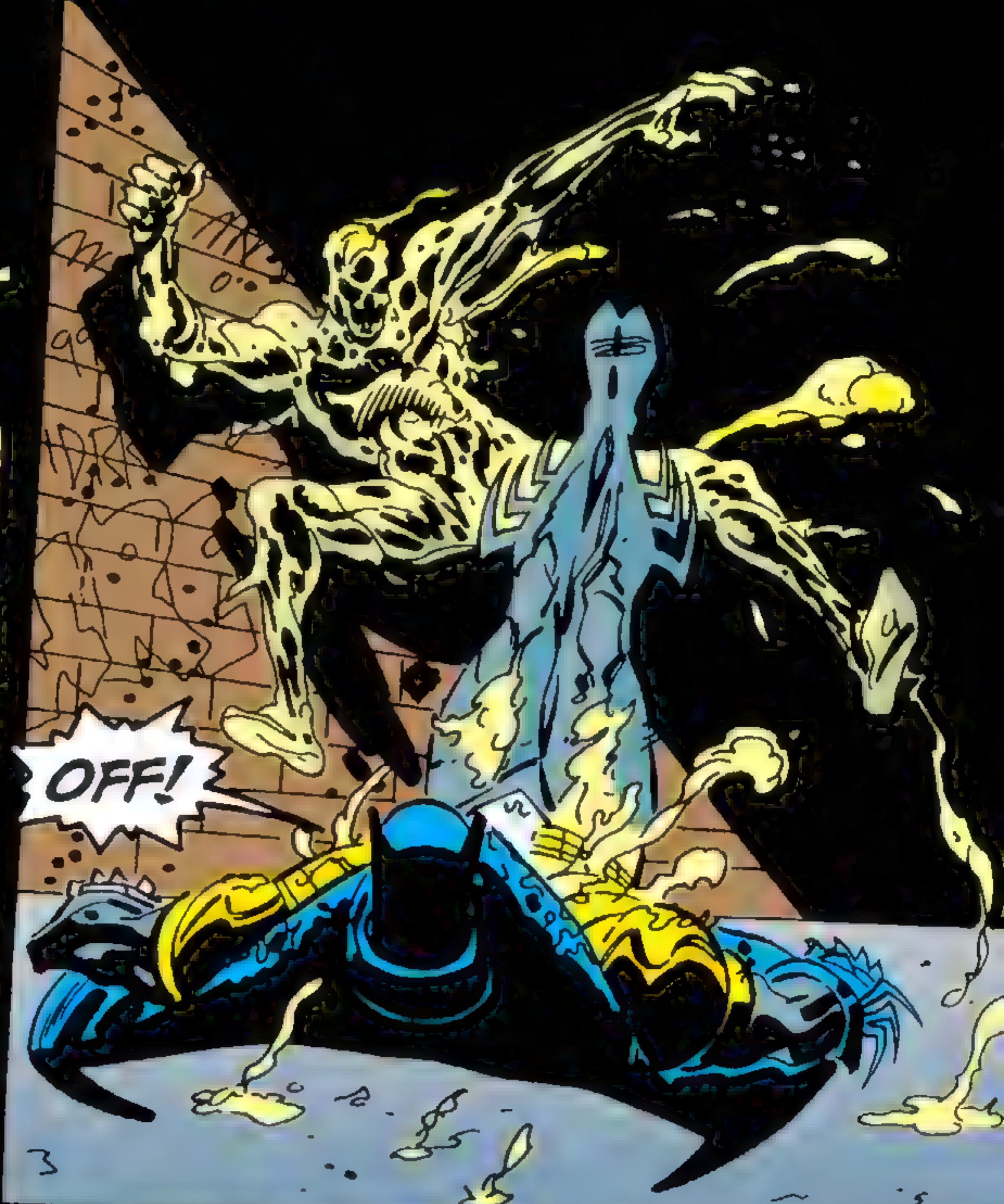
I DON'T LIKE THIS...



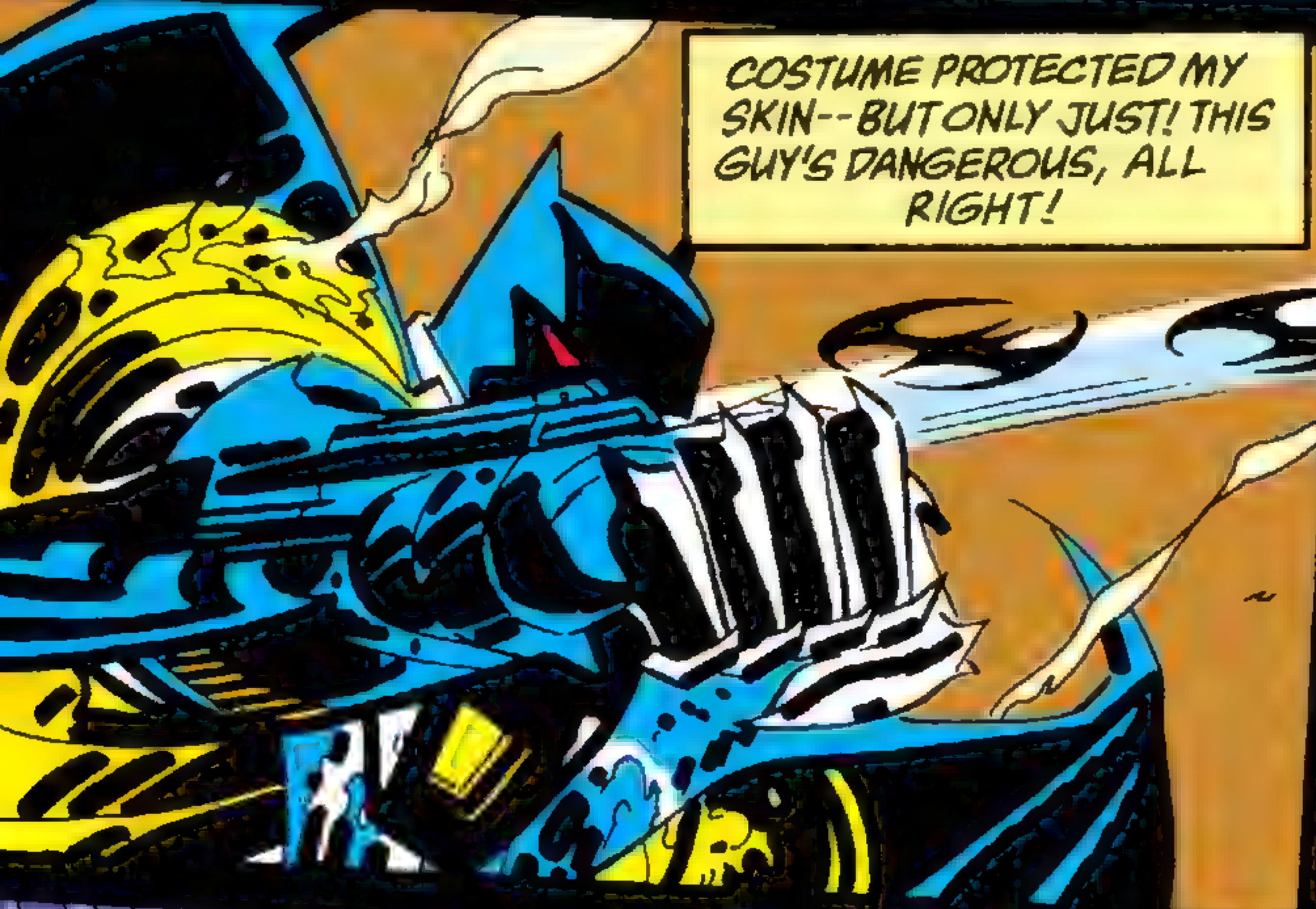


YOU'RE NOT
TAKING ME BACK
THIS TIME,
BATMAN!

SOME
KIND OF
ACID--
DRIPPING
ALL OVER
HIM!



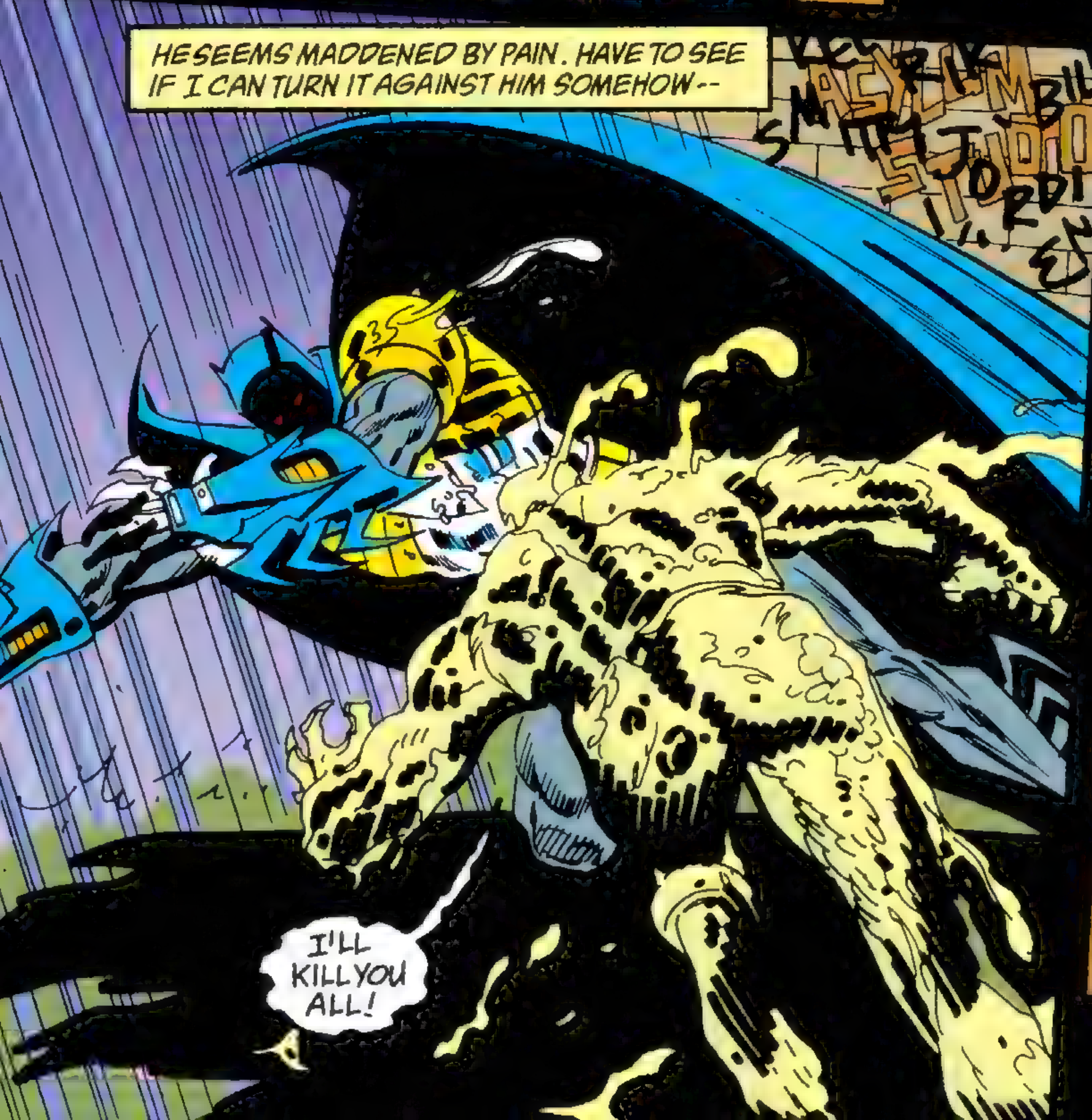
OFF!



COSTUME PROTECTED MY
SKIN-- BUT ONLY JUST! THIS
GUY'S DANGEROUS, ALL
RIGHT!



NOBODY'S
EVER TAKIN' ME
BACK!



HE SEEMS MADDENED BY PAIN. HAVE TO SEE
IF I CAN TURN IT AGAINST HIM SOMEHOW--

I'LL
KILL YOU
ALL!



YOU-- KADAVER--
ANYBODY THAT GETS
IN MY WAY! YOU'LL
ALL DIE!

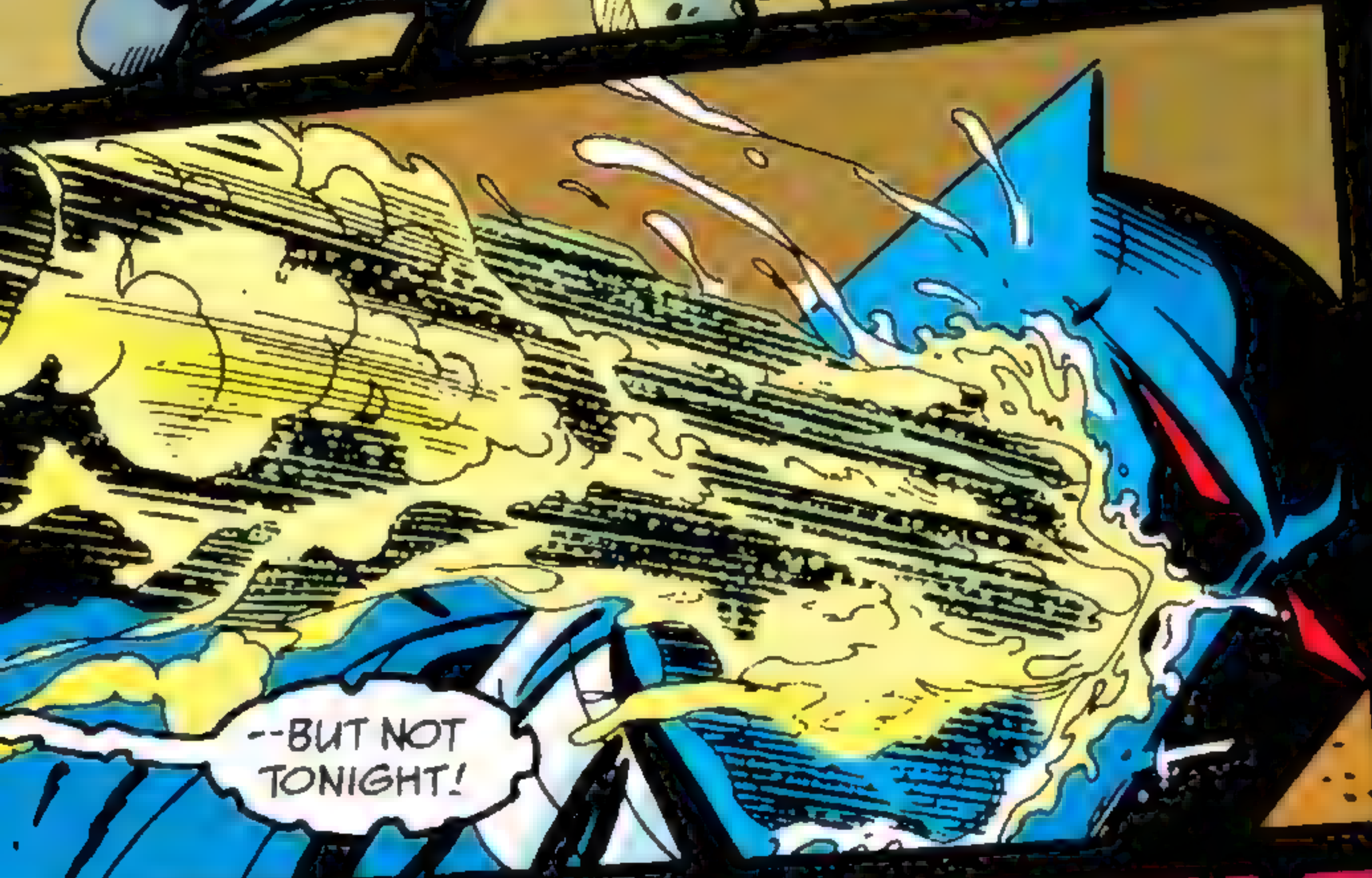
HIS HAND BURNED
THROUGH MY CAPE! HE'S--



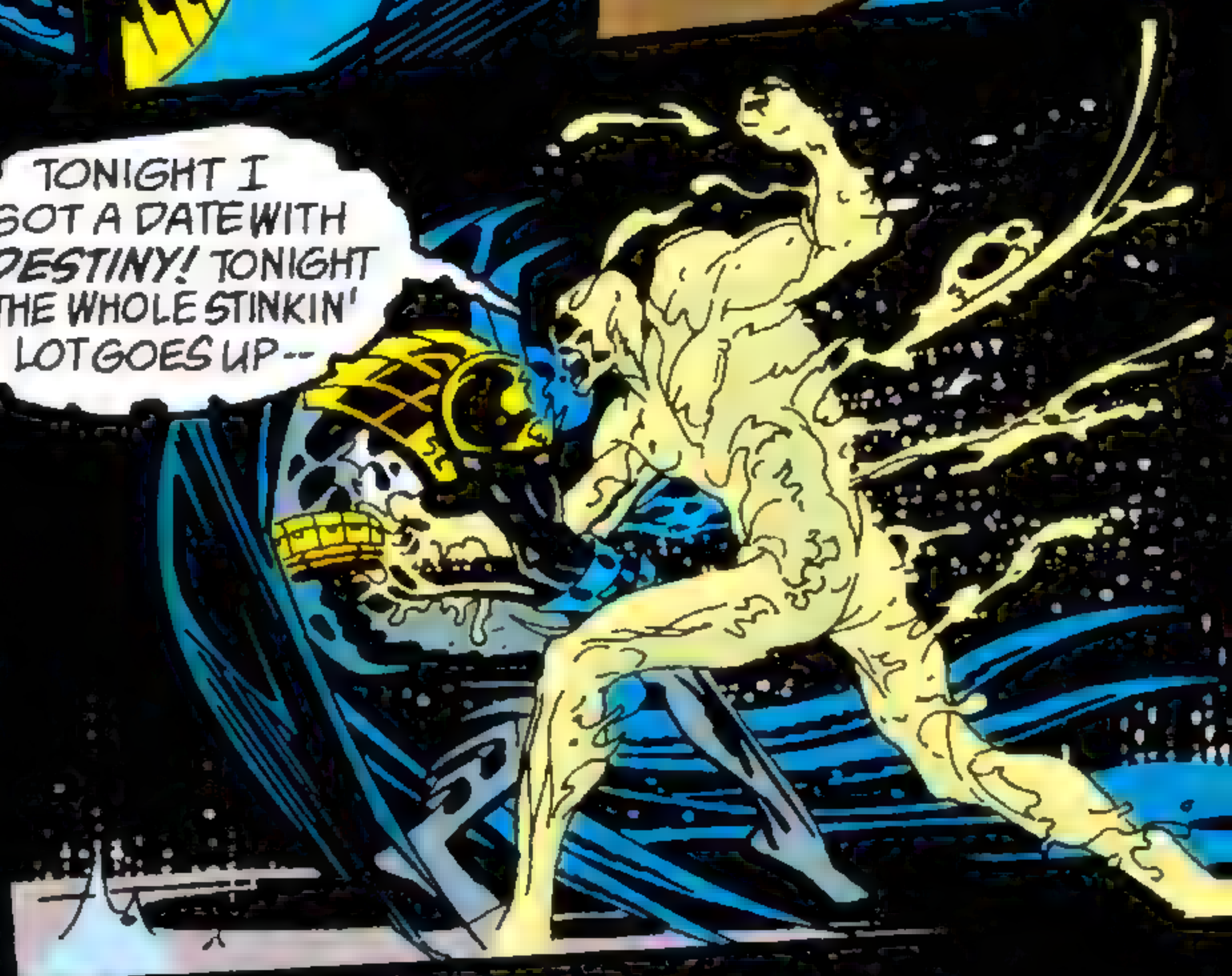
YOU
BEAT ME
ONCE--



TONIGHT I
GOT A DATE WITH
DESTINY! TONIGHT
THE WHOLE STINKIN'
LOT GOES UP--



--BUT NOT
TONIGHT!

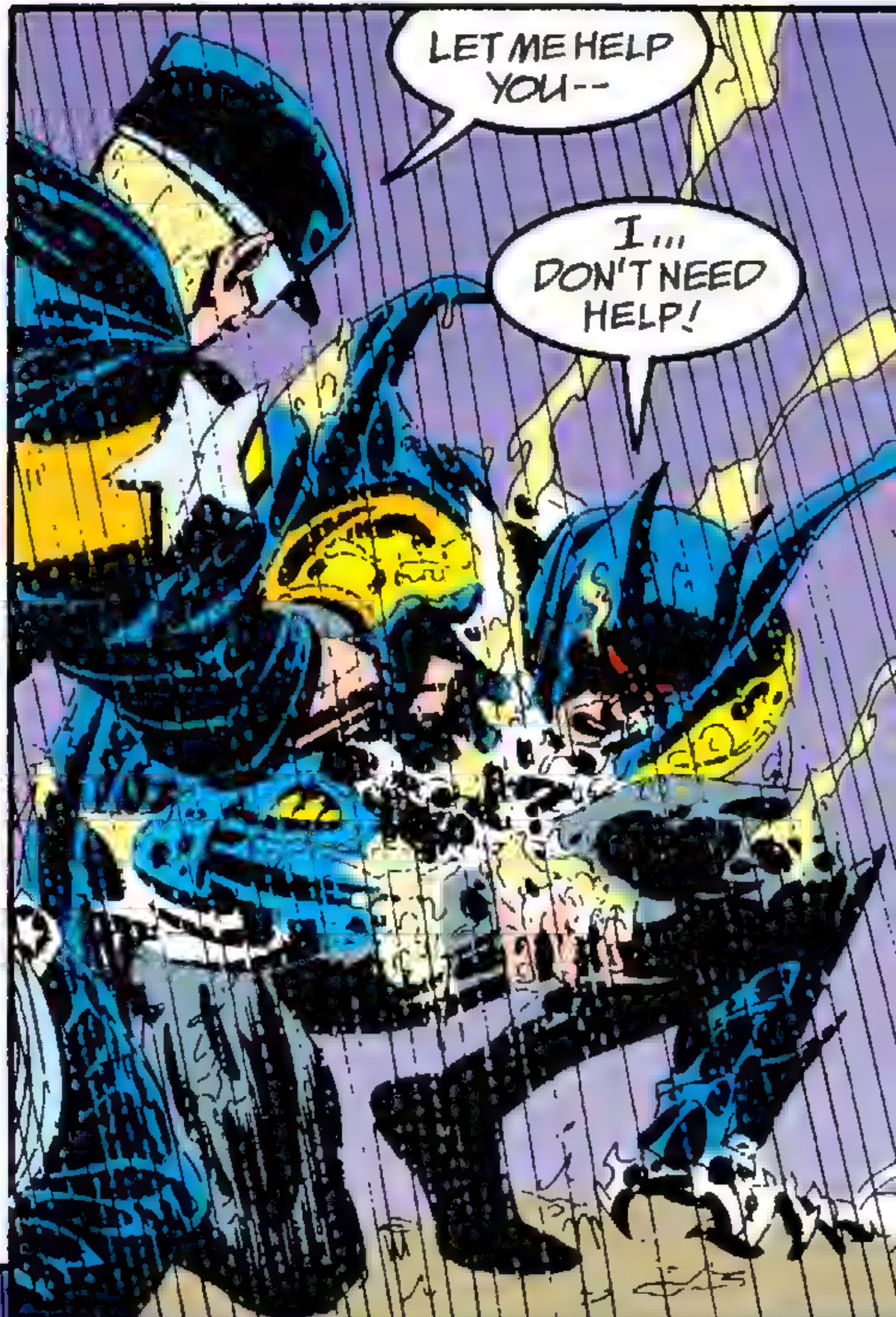
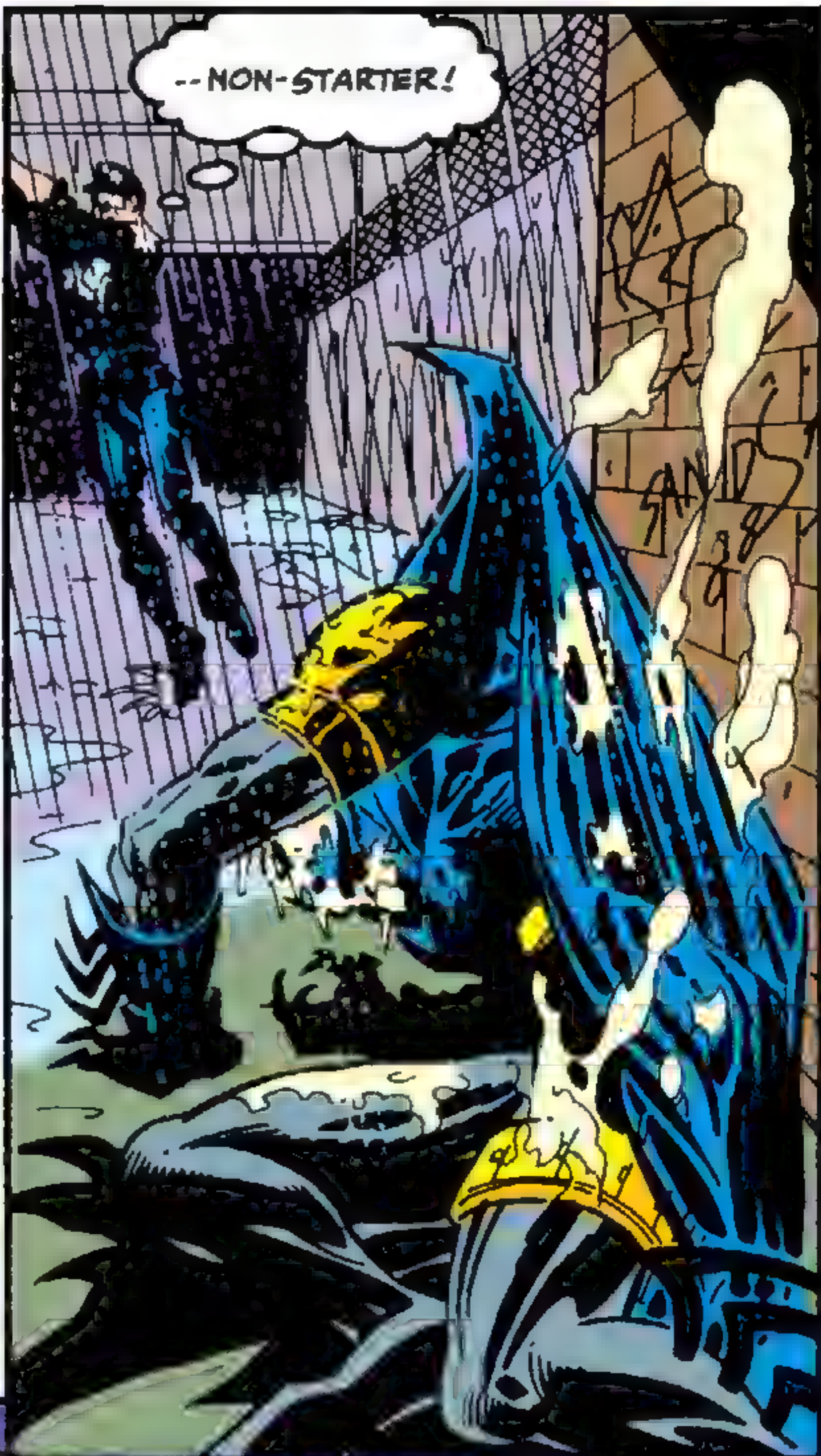
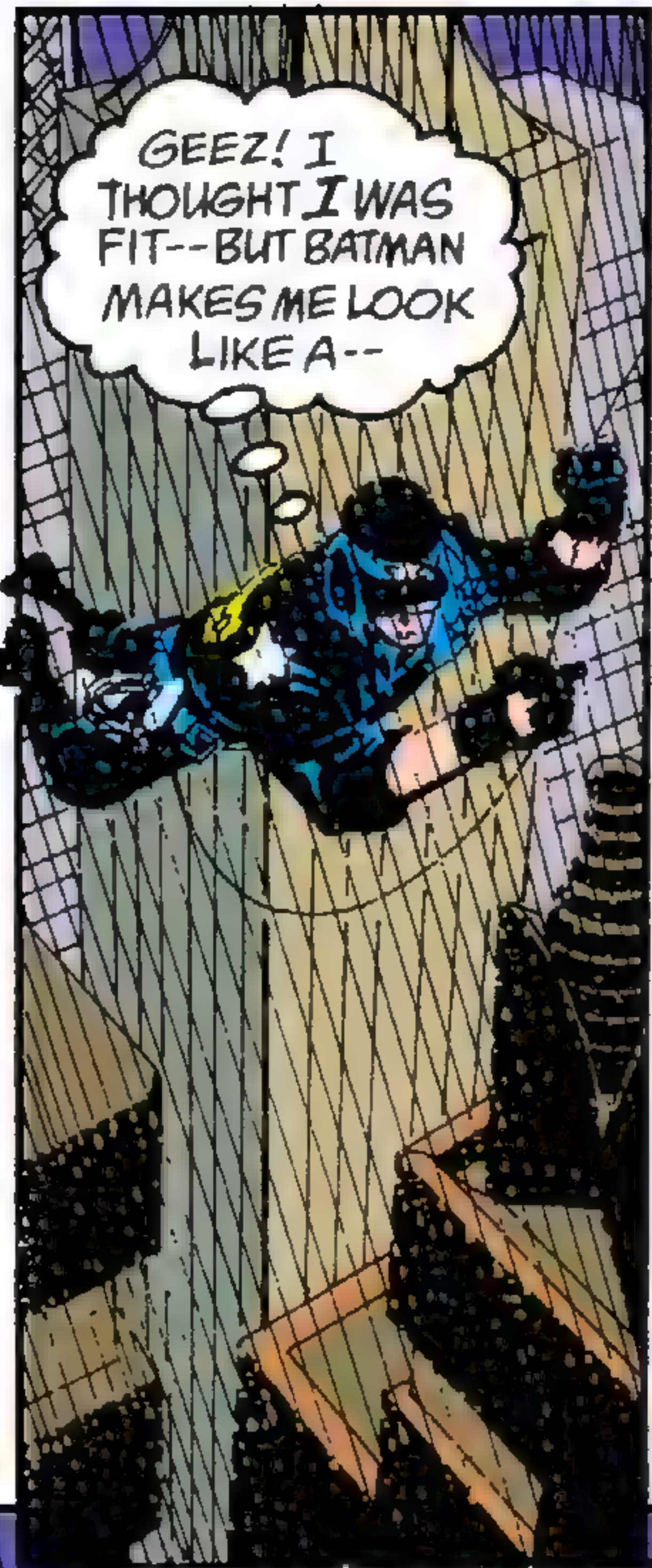


WHAKK!

--ME AND
MORT KADAVAR,
AND LIGHTNING AND
CHEMICALS!



HAHAHAHAHAHA



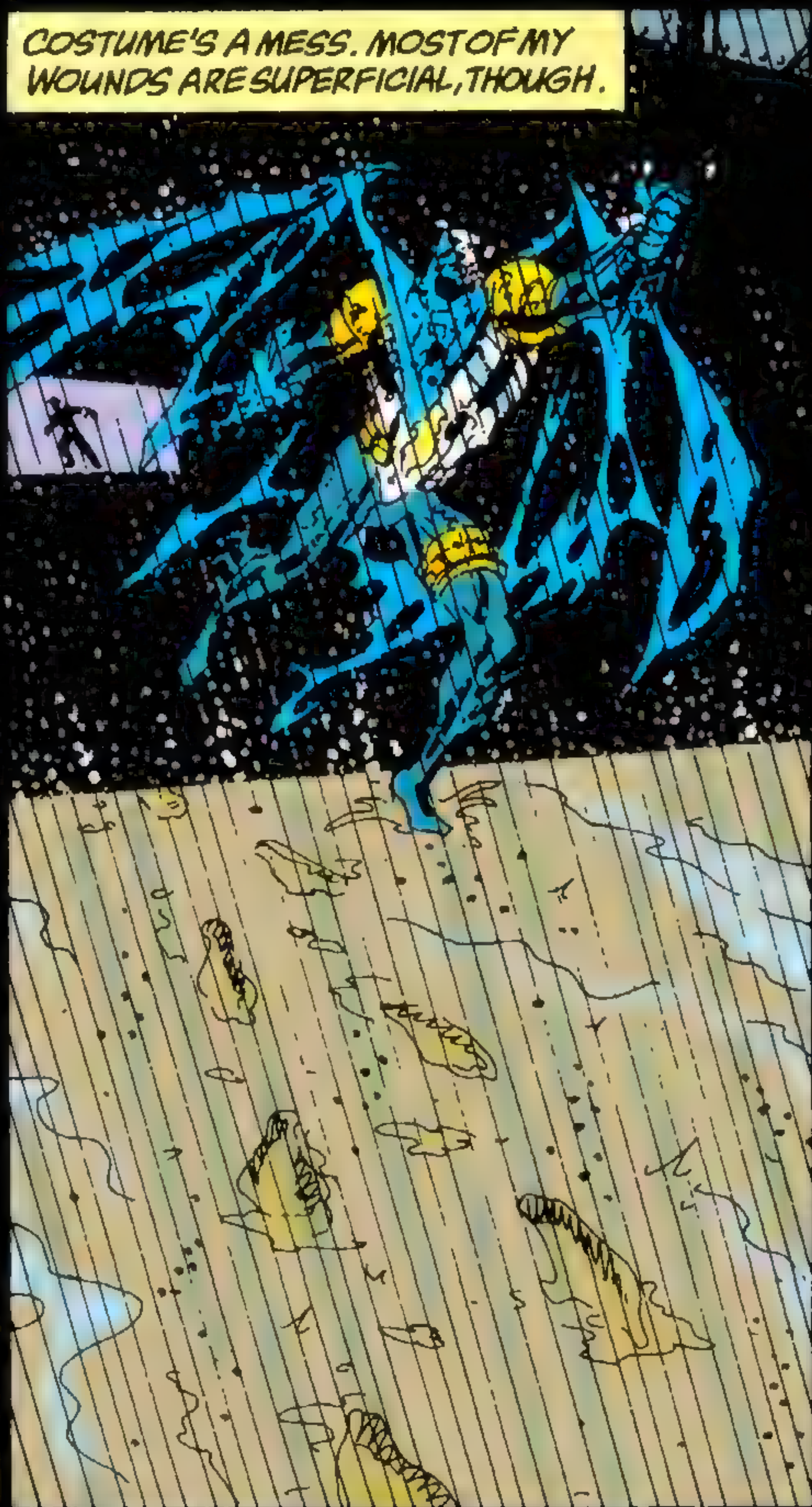
HE SAID "THE WHOLE LOT GOES UP." WHAT'S THAT MEAN? AND WHO'S MORTKADAVER?

YOU DON'T KNOW? HE'S THE GUY YOU STOPPED FROM SPREADING PLAGUE-- IT WAS IN ALL THE NEWSPAPERS. HE'S IN THE HOSPITAL NOW, DYING OF A BRAIN TUMOR.

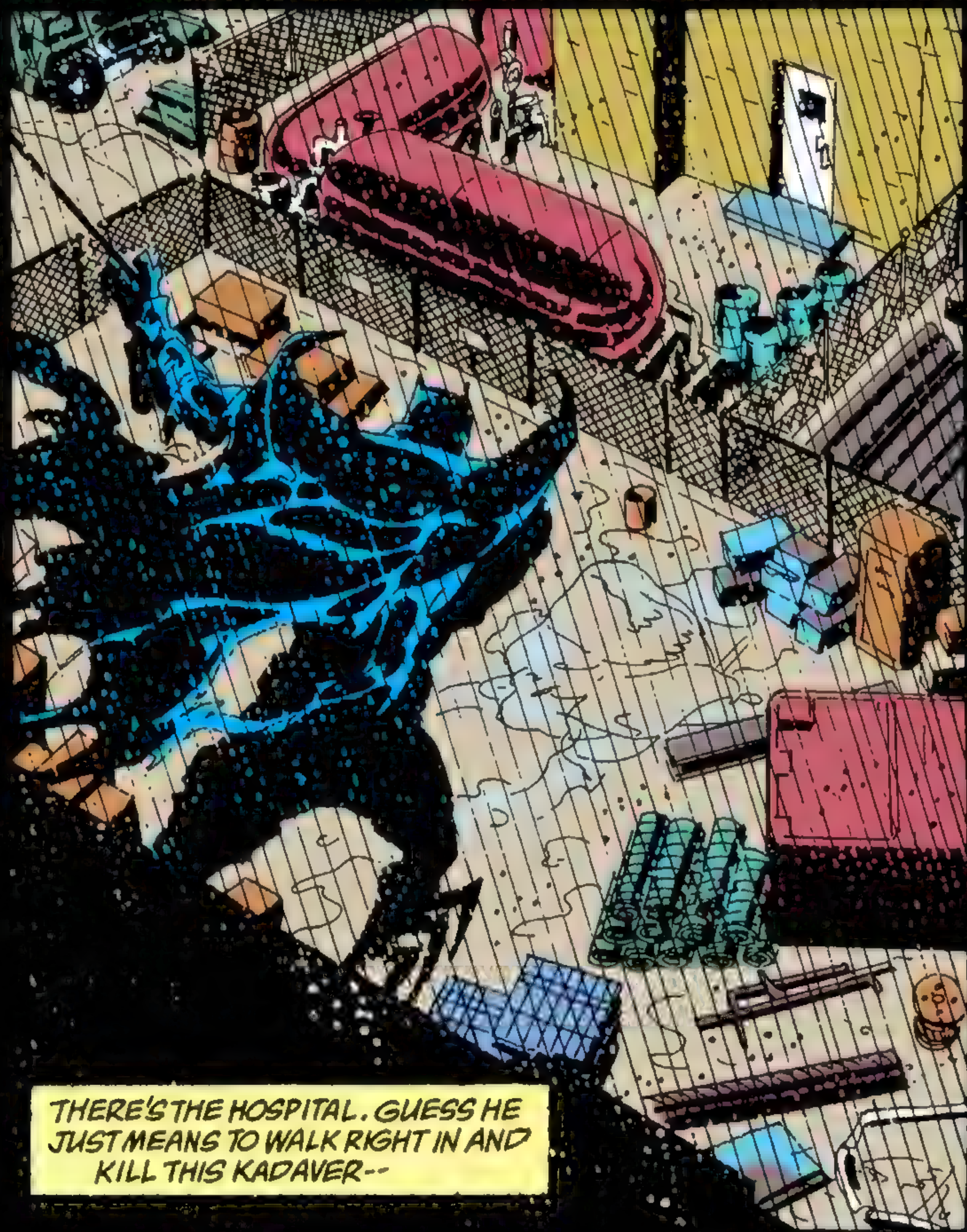
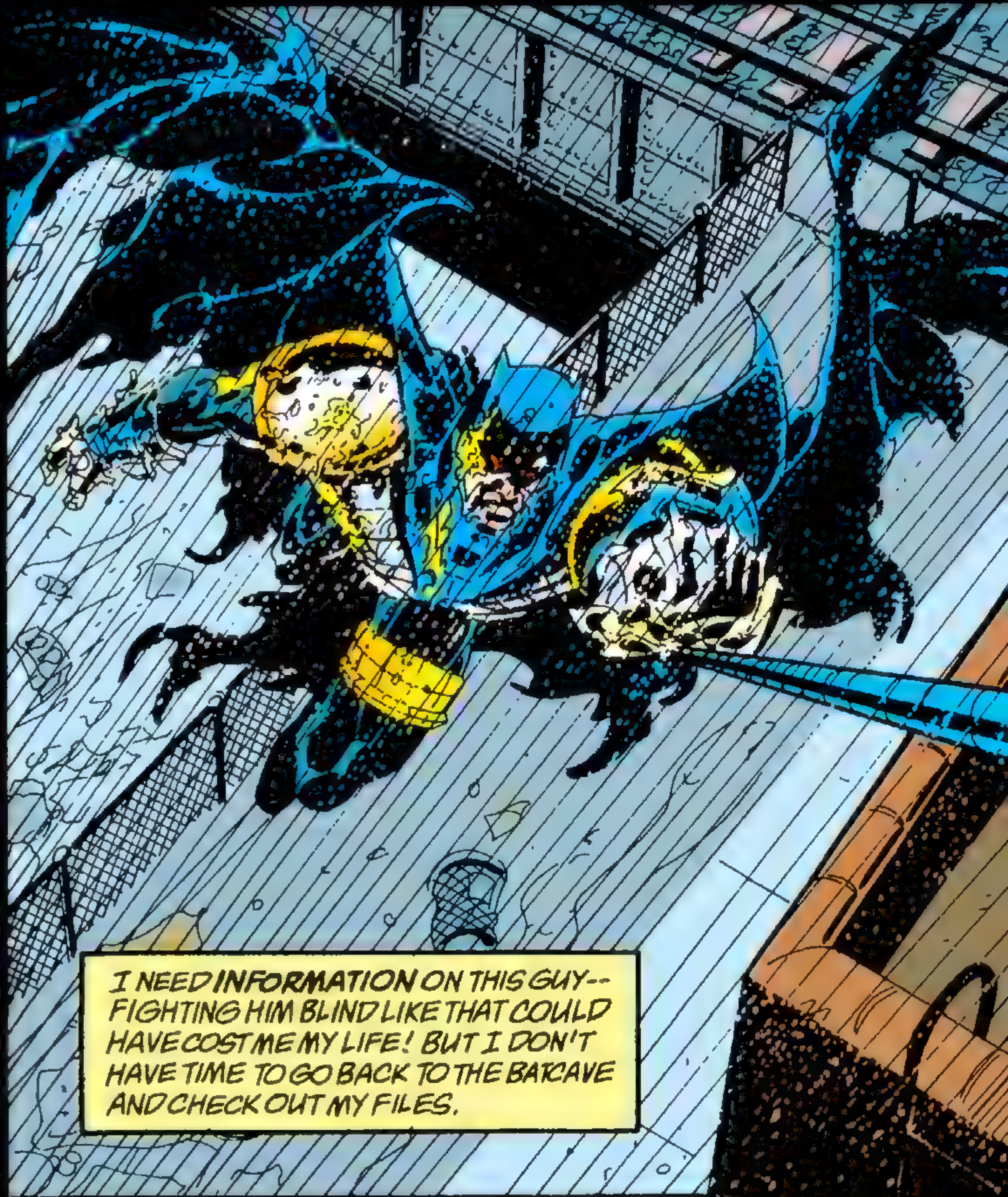
HEY! MAYBE CORROSIVE MAN IS LOOKING FOR KADAVER BECAUSE HE WANTS **REVENGE** OR SOMETHING! THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE!



COSTUME'S A MESS. MOST OF MY WOUNDS ARE SUPERFICIAL, THOUGH.



I NEED INFORMATION ON THIS GUY-- FIGHTING HIM BLIND LIKE THAT COULD HAVE COST ME MY LIFE! BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GO BACK TO THE BATCAVE AND CHECK OUT MY FILES.



THERE'S THE HOSPITAL. GUESS HE JUST MEANS TO WALK RIGHT IN AND KILL THIS KADAVER--

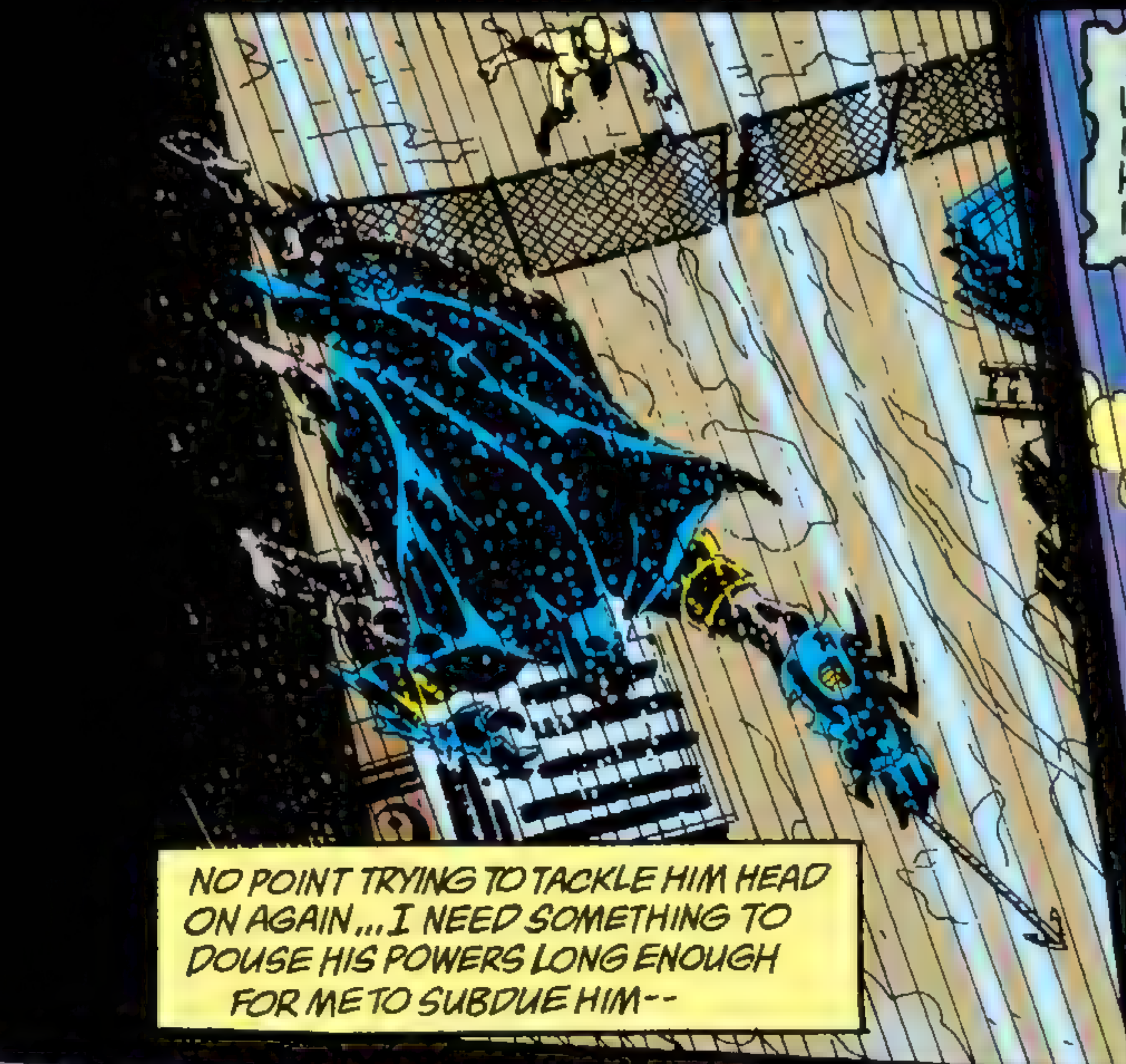
UNLESS...

KEEP OUT!

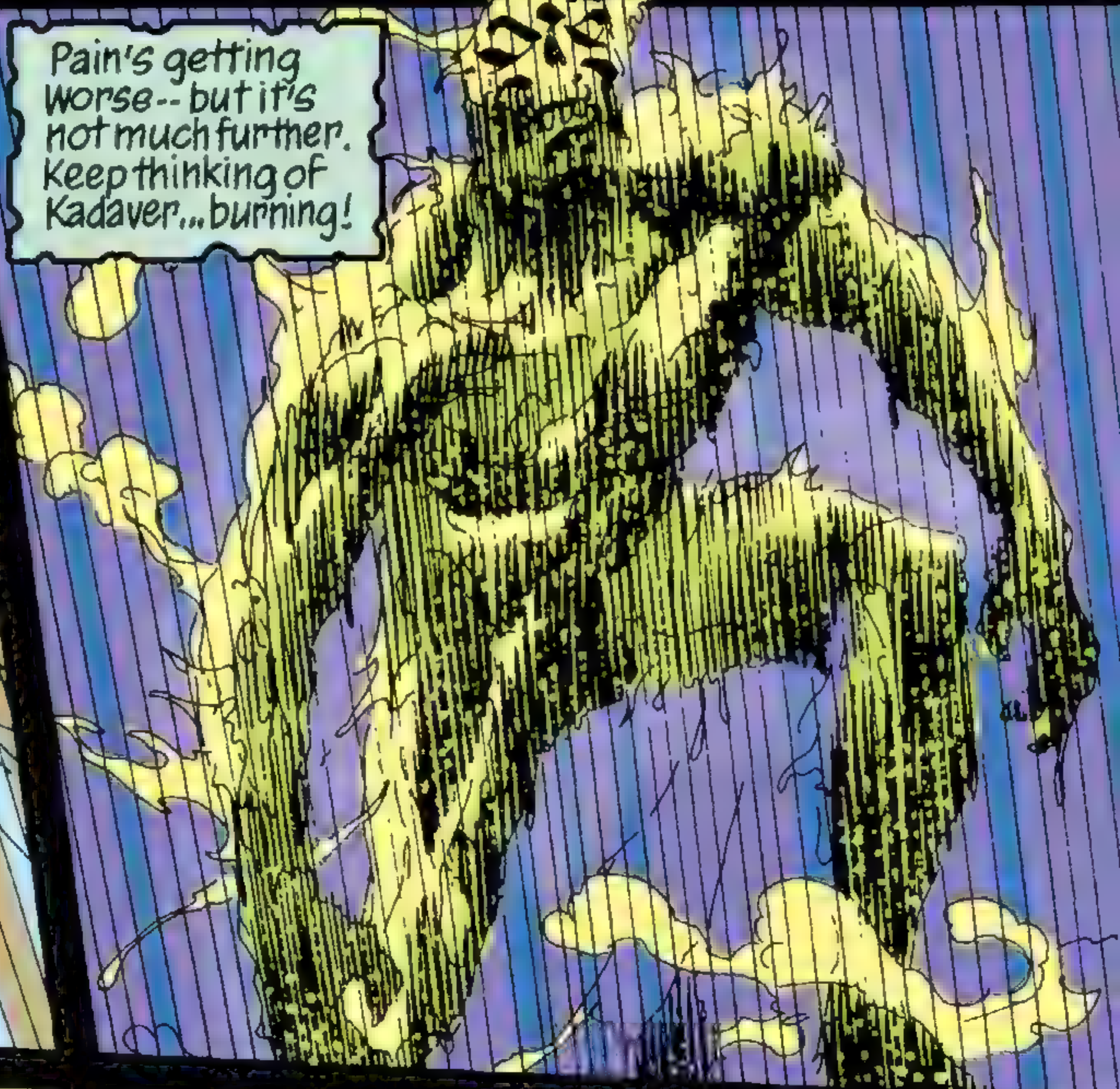
GOOD LORD--THE GAS STORAGE TANK! IF HE IGNITES THAT, THE WHOLE PLACE'LL VANISH OFF THE MAP!

THERE HE IS--!

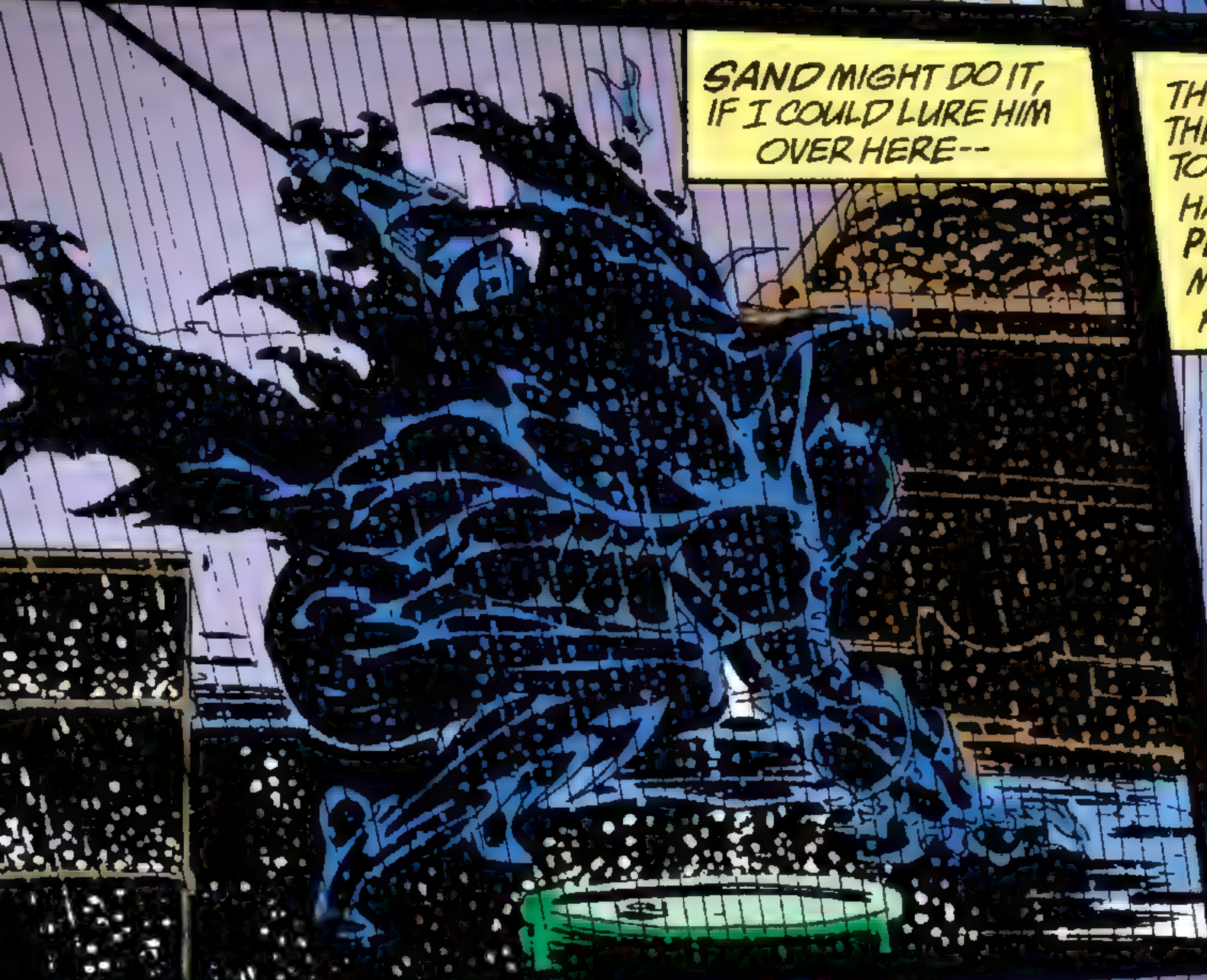




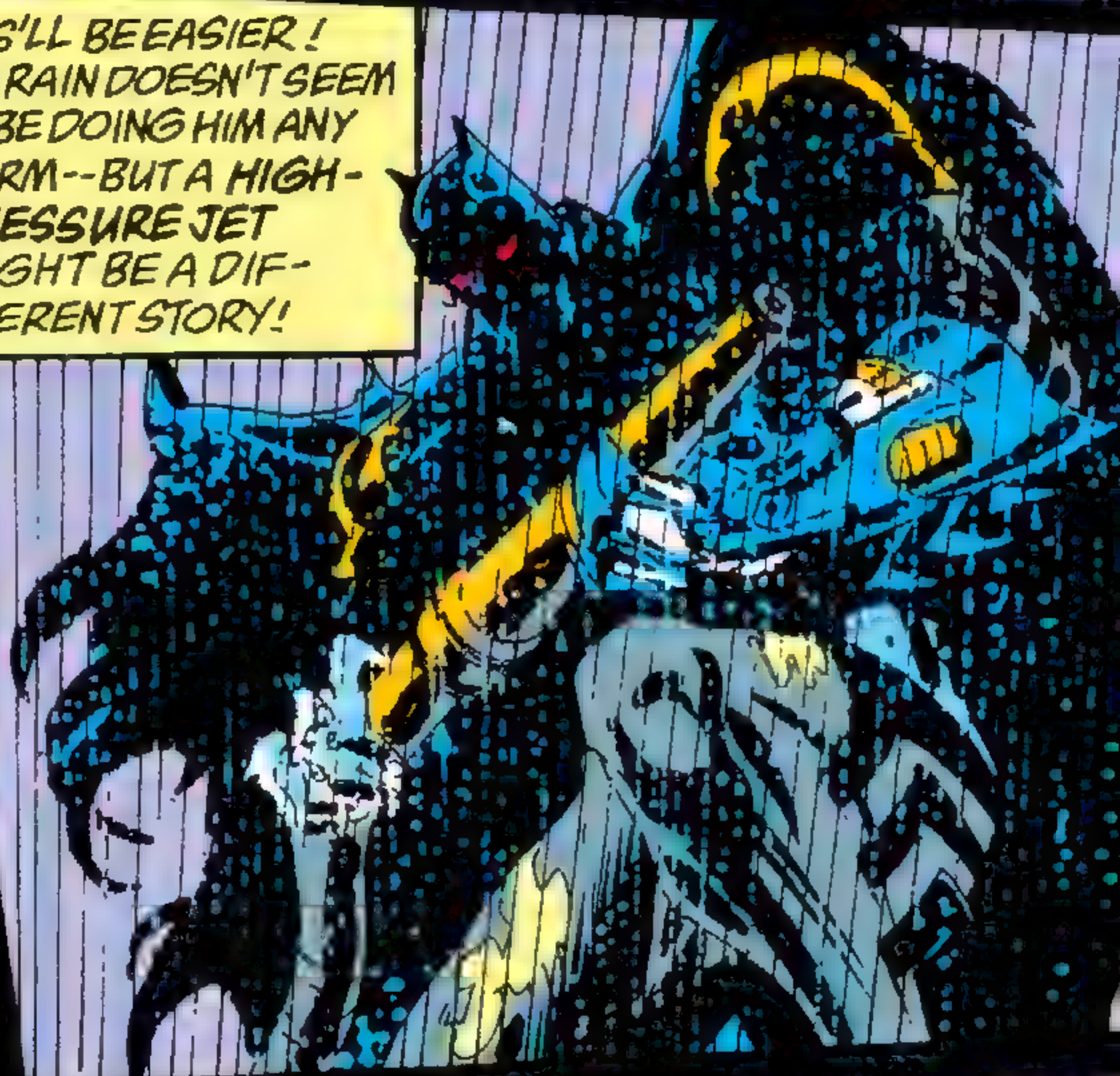
NO POINT TRYING TO TACKLE HIM HEAD ON AGAIN... I NEED SOMETHING TO DOUSE HIS POWERS LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO SUBDUE HIM--



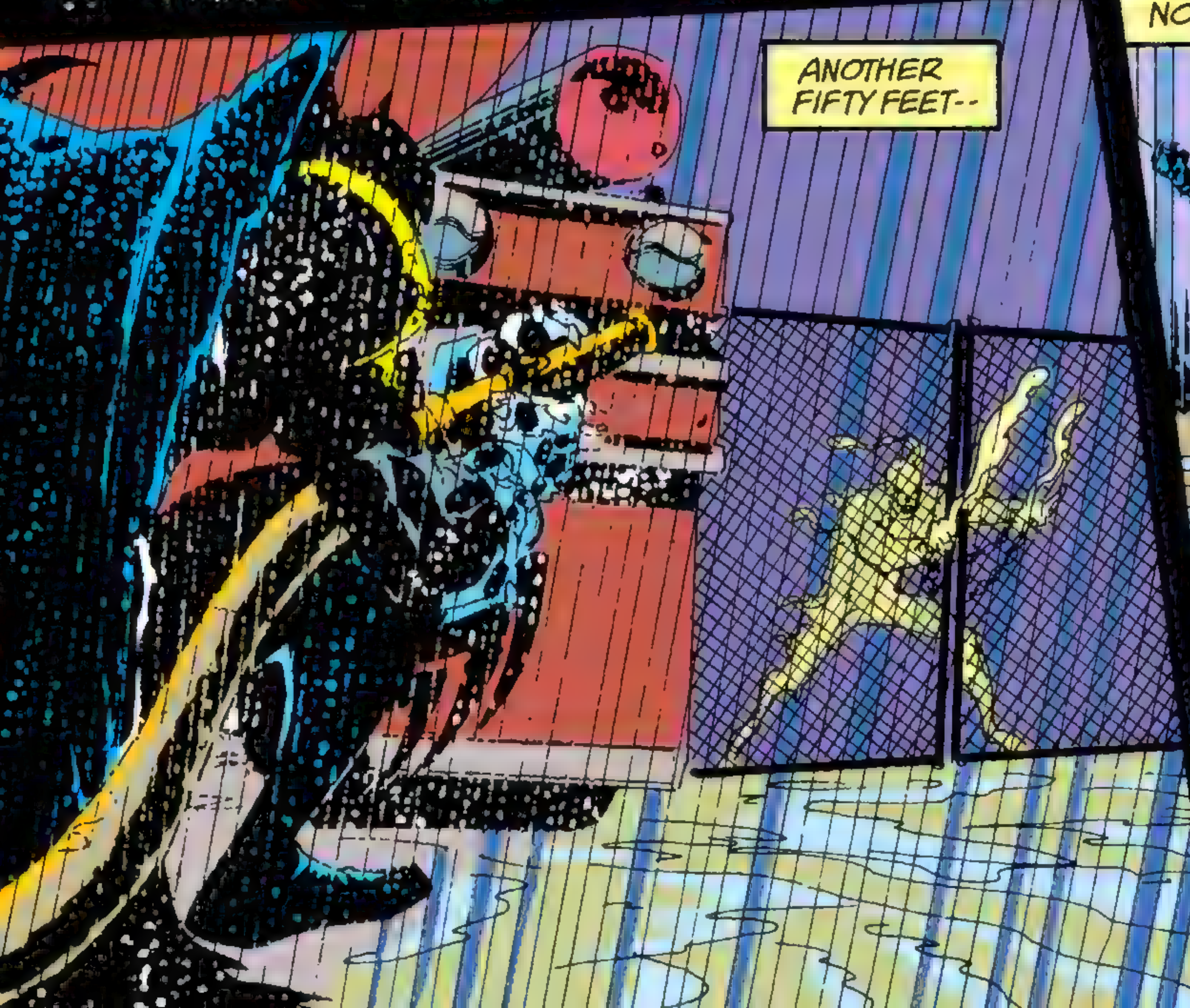
Pain's getting worse-- but it's not much further. Keep thinking of Kadaver... burning!



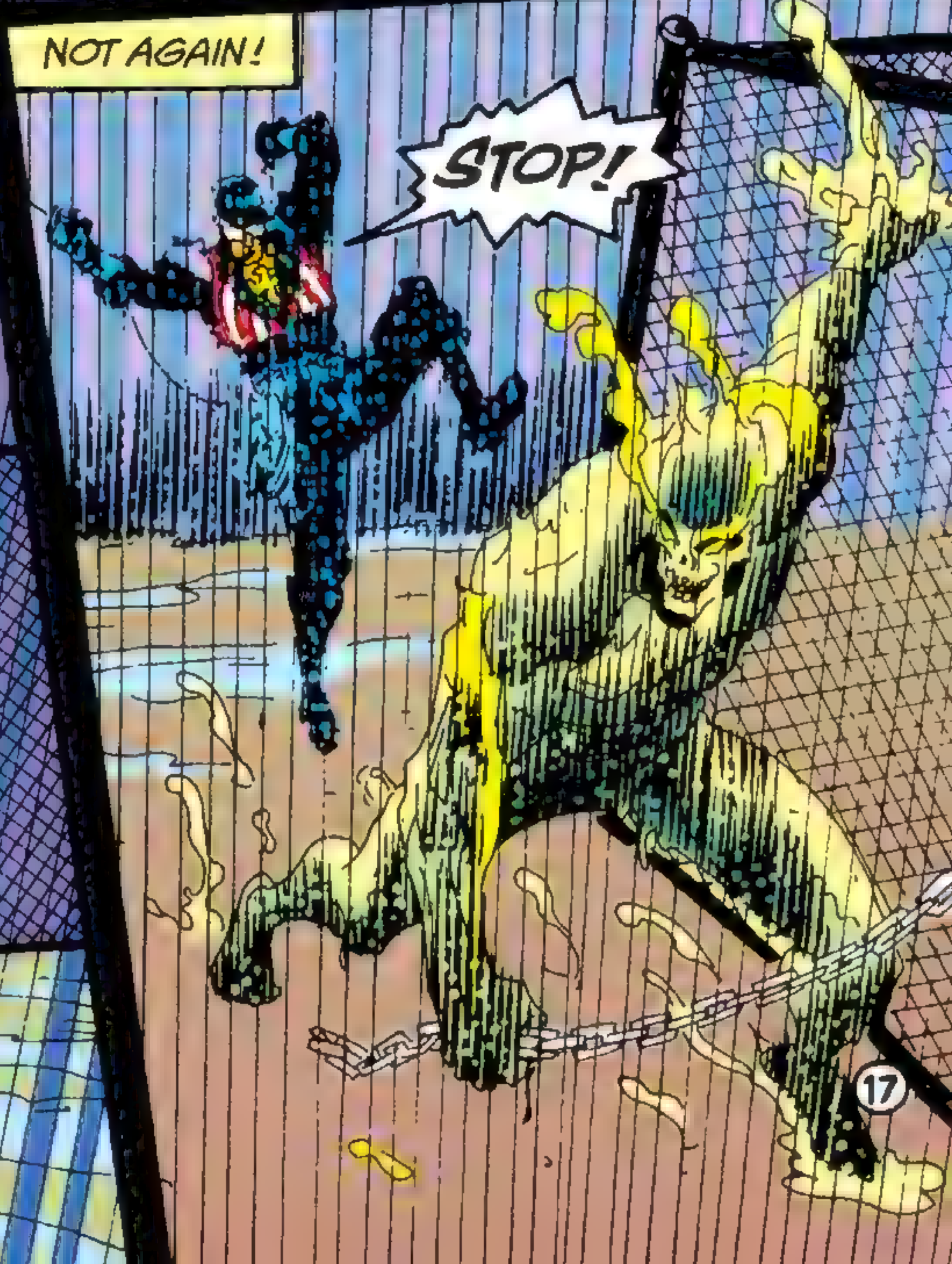
SAND MIGHT DO IT, IF I COULD LURE HIM OVER HERE--



THIS'LL BEEASIER! THE RAIN DOESN'T SEEM TO BE DOING HIM ANY HARM-- BUT A HIGH-PRESSURE JET MIGHT BE A DIFFERENT STORY!



ANOTHER FIFTY FEET--



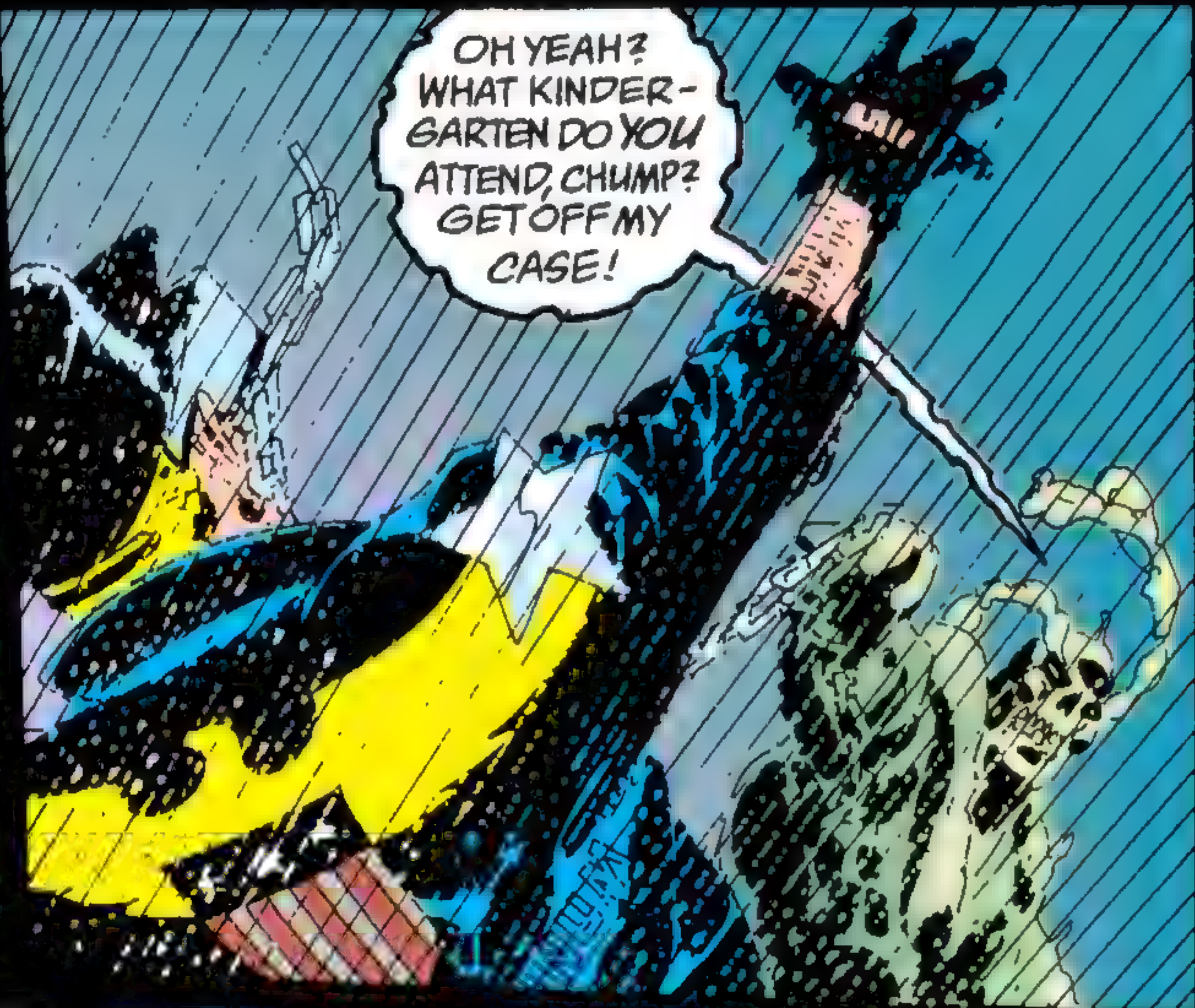
NOT AGAIN!

STOP!



YOU'RE IN A BAD WAY, FRIEND, AND I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU. BUT **KILLING** IS NO WAY TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL BETTER!

GIVE YOURSELF UP. I'M SURE THE AUTHORITIES WILL TRY TO HELP YOU.



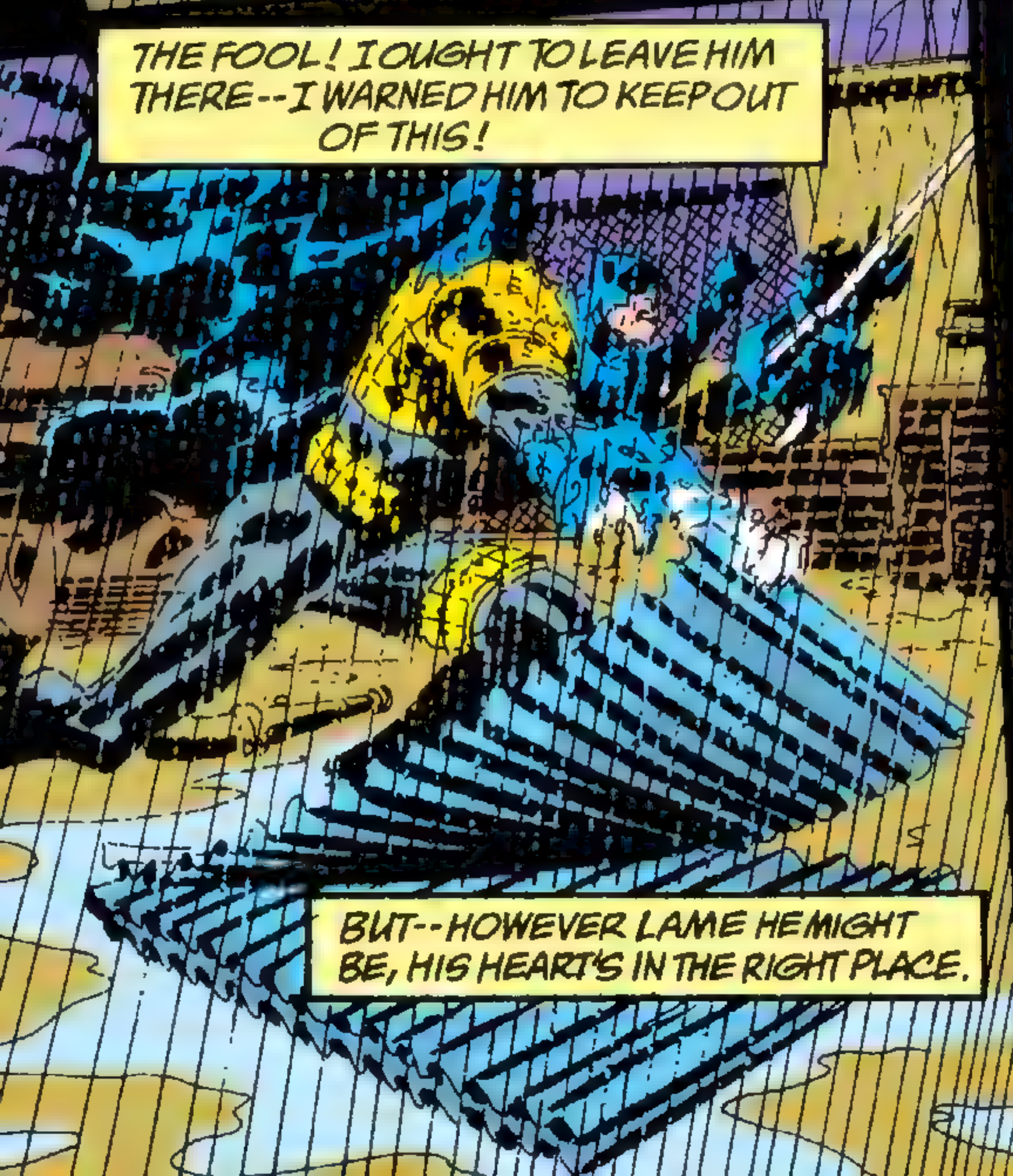
OH YEAH? WHAT KINDERGARTEN DO YOU ATTEND, CHUMP? GET OFF MY CASE!



I DON'T CARE WHO DIES! I'M GONNA DO WHAT I'M GONNA DO--

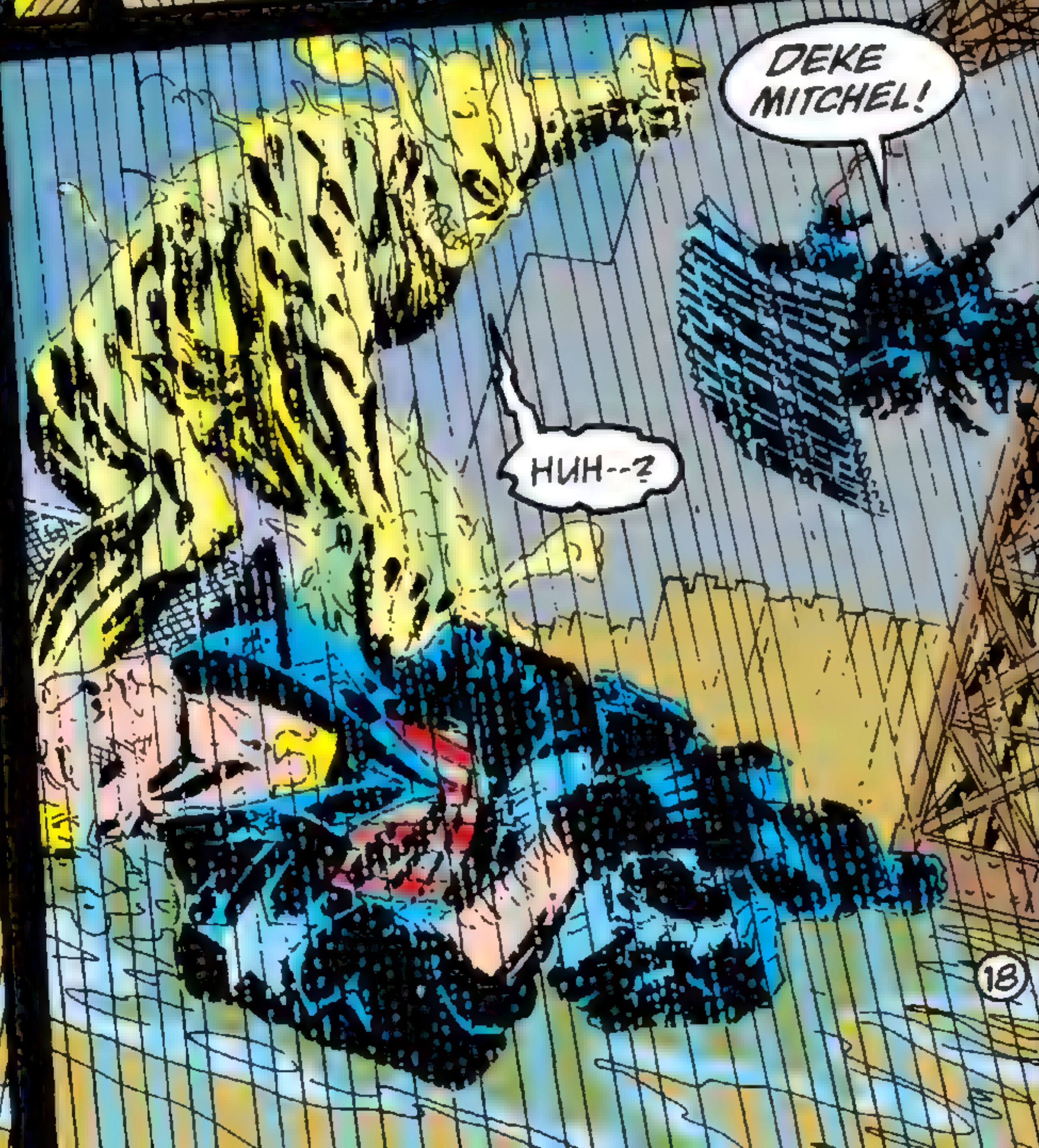


--AND SATAN HIMSELF WON'T STOP ME!



THE FOOL! I OUGHT TO LEAVE HIM THERE--I WARNED HIM TO KEEP OUT OF THIS!

BUT--HOWEVER LAME HE MIGHT BE, HIS HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE.



DEKE MITCHEL!

HUH--?



BURNING
THROUGH
IT ALREADY--

SLAM!

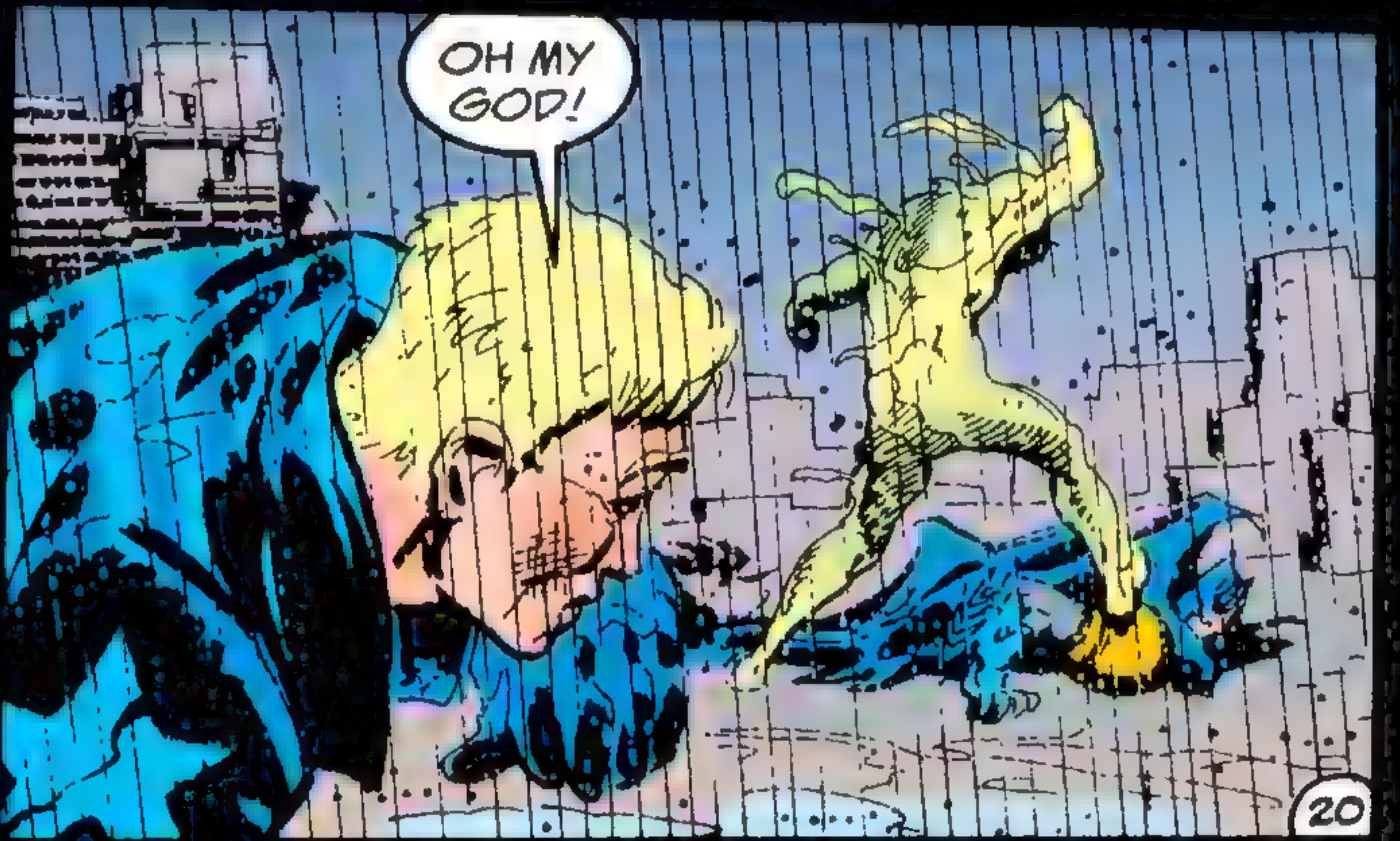
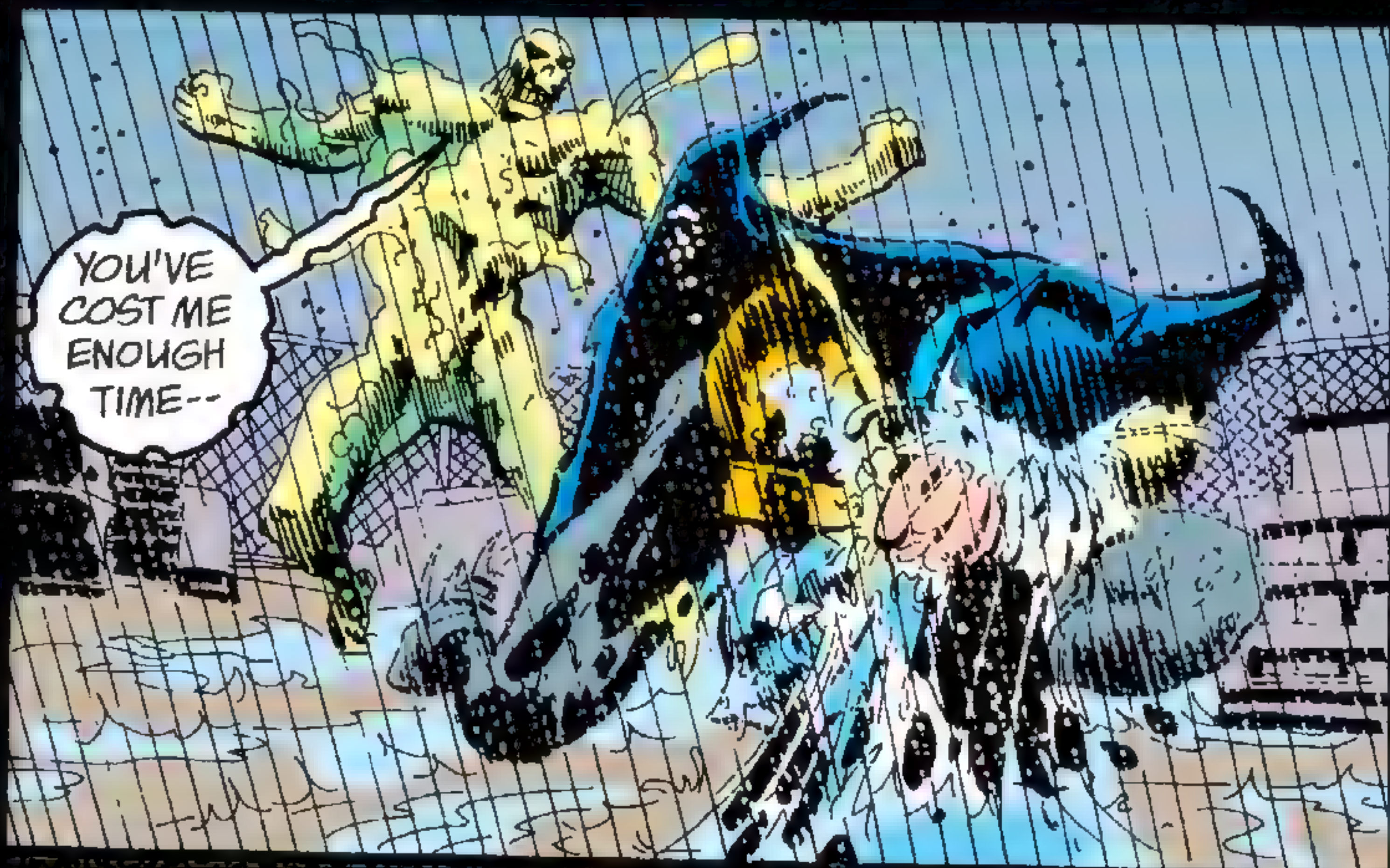
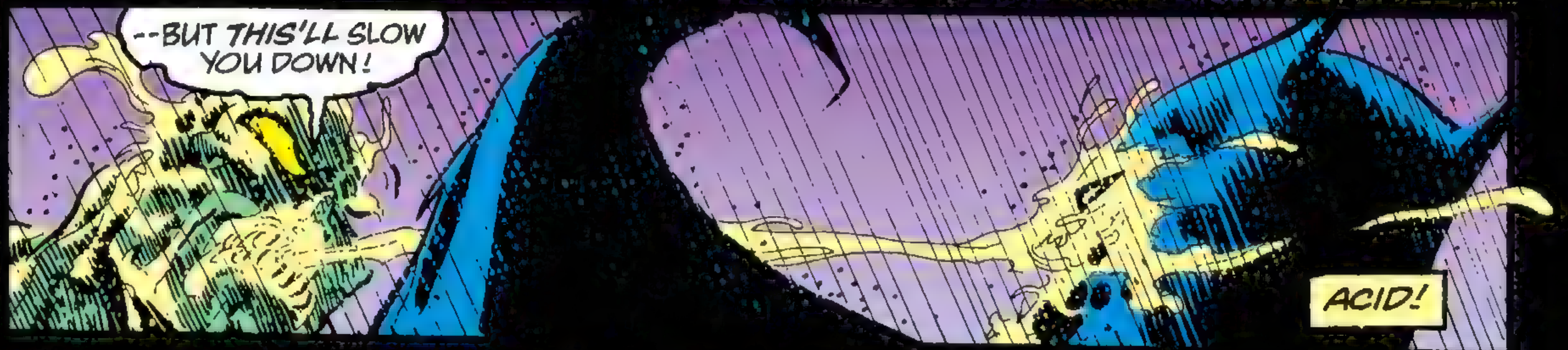
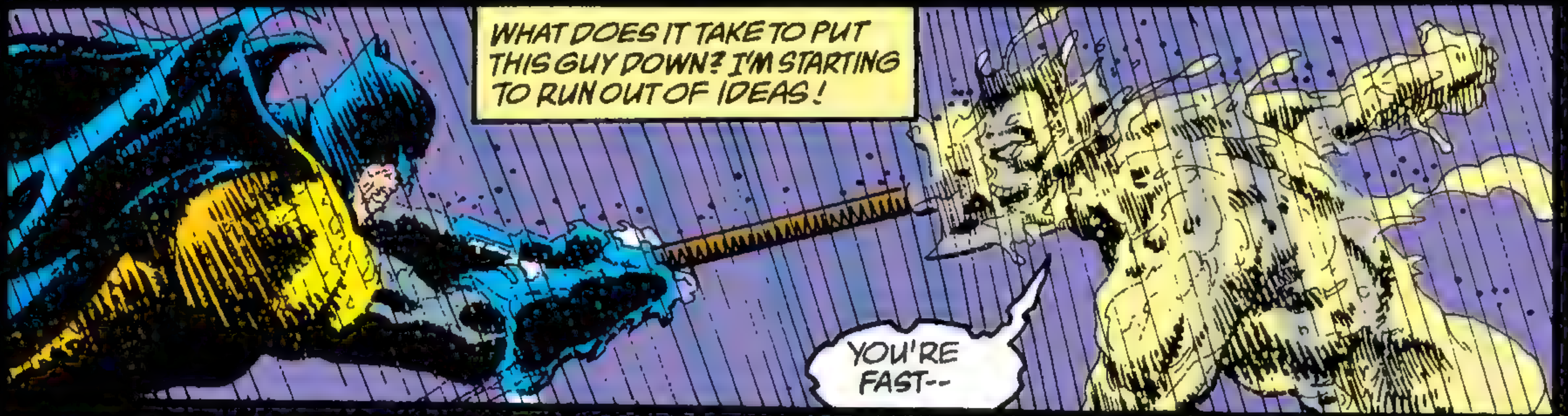
--TIME I WAS
OUT OF HERE!

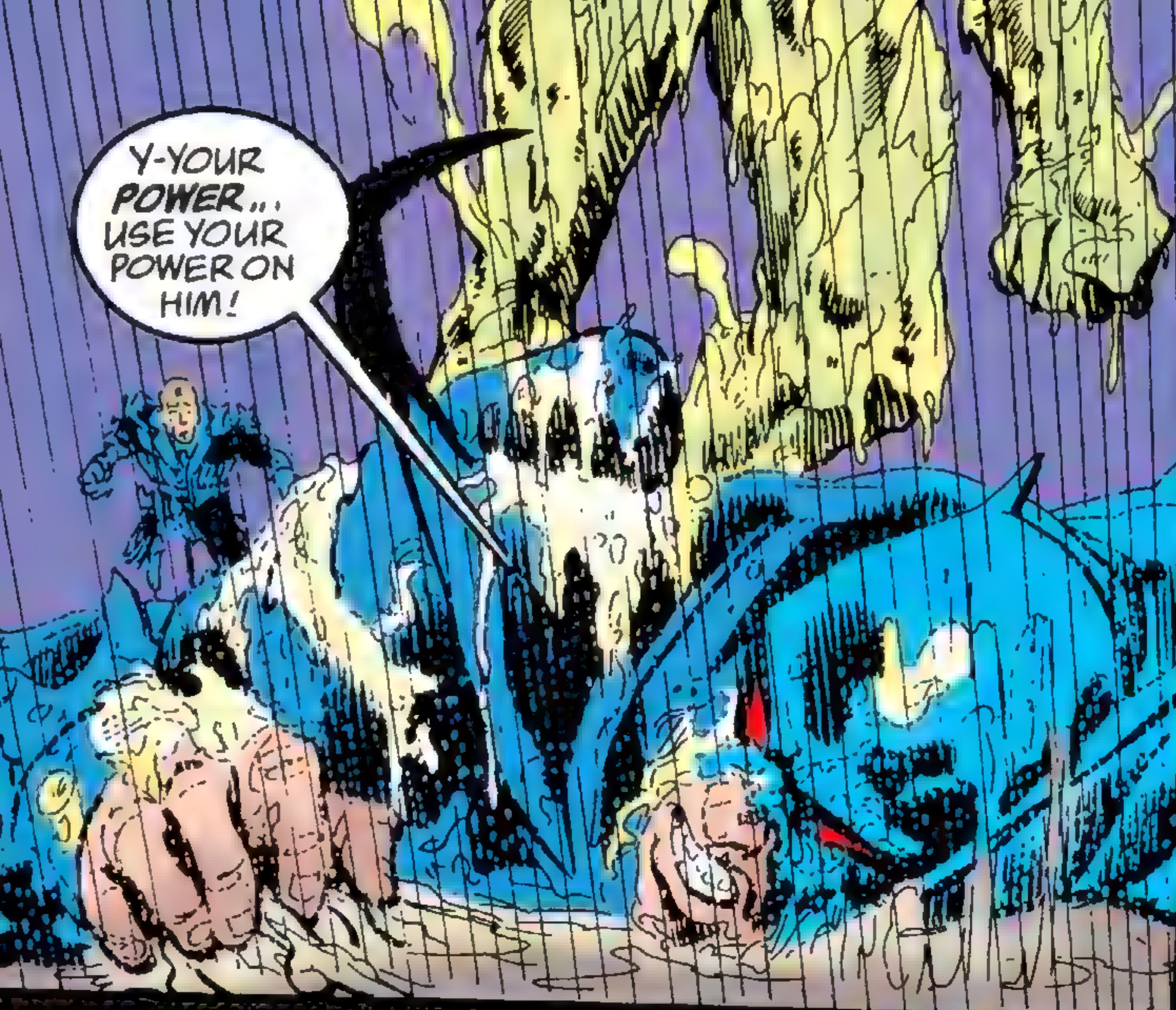
I'D HAVE TRIED GAS
PELLETS EARLIER, BUT I
FIGURED THEY'D JUST
VAPORIZE ON CONTACT--

--AND I WAS RIGHT!

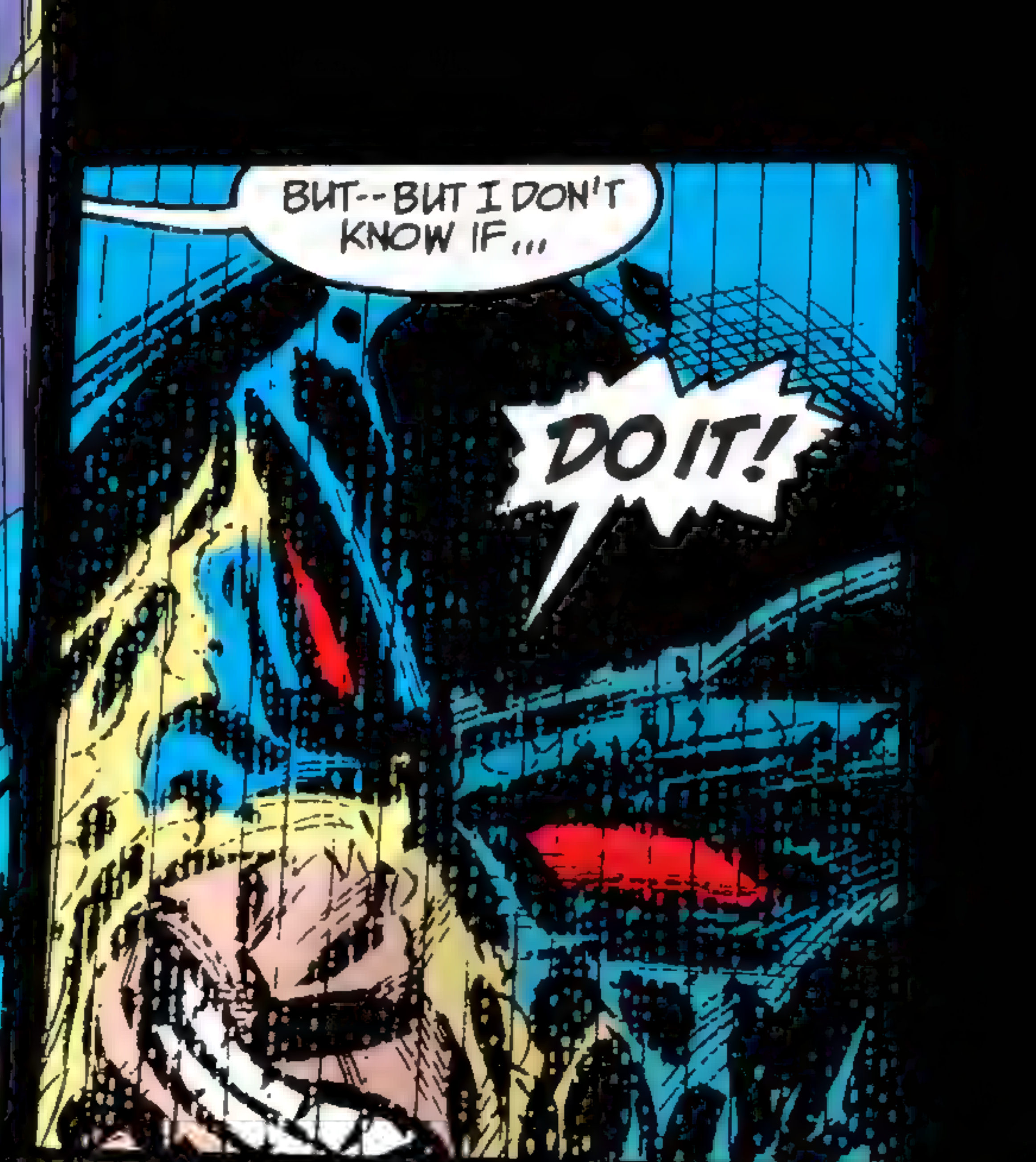
YOUR TRICKS
WON'T WORK
ON ME!

NOTHING
WORKS ON
ME!



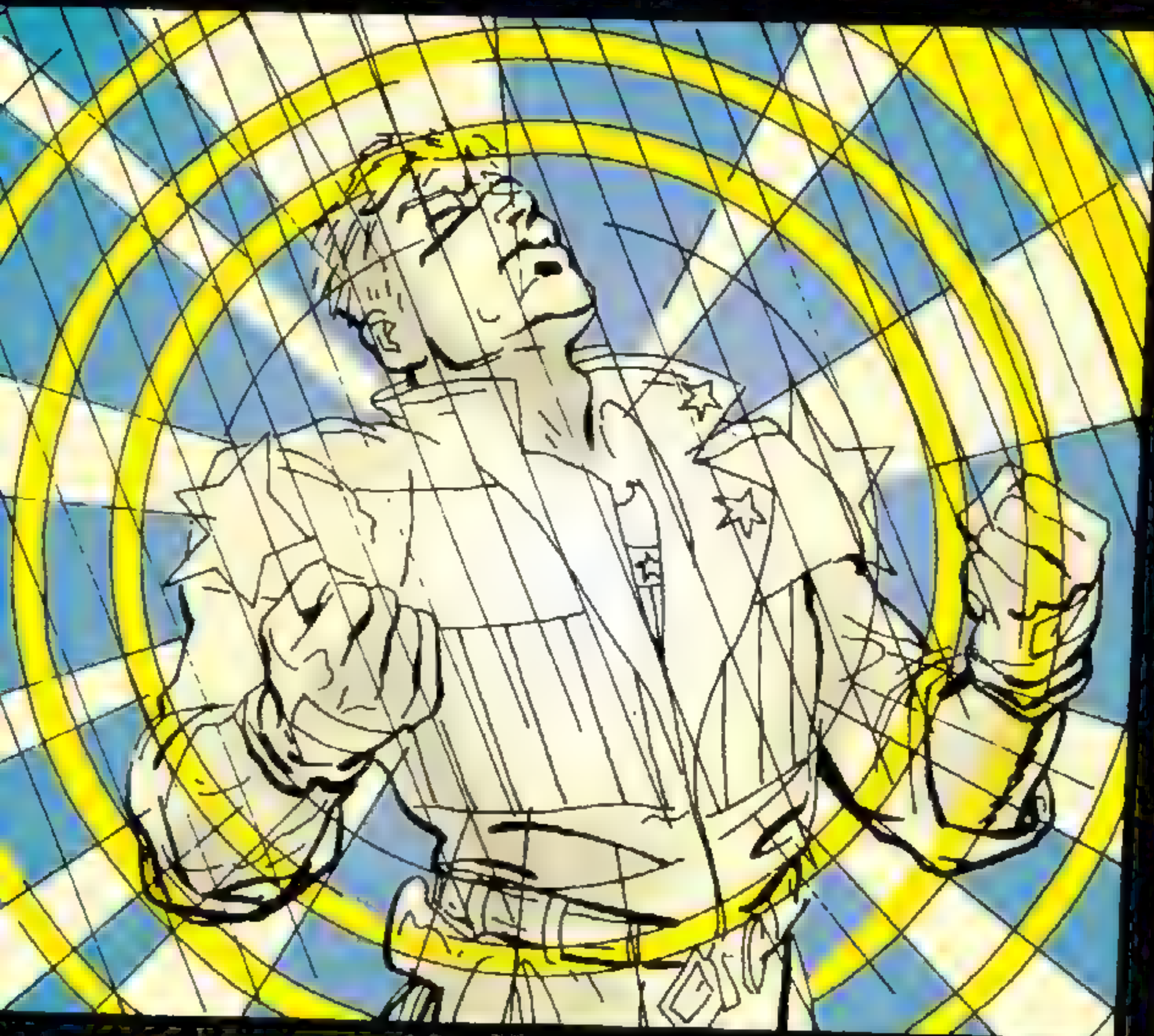


Y-YOUR
POWER...
USE YOUR
POWER ON
HIM!



BUT--BUT I DON'T
KNOW IF...

DO IT!

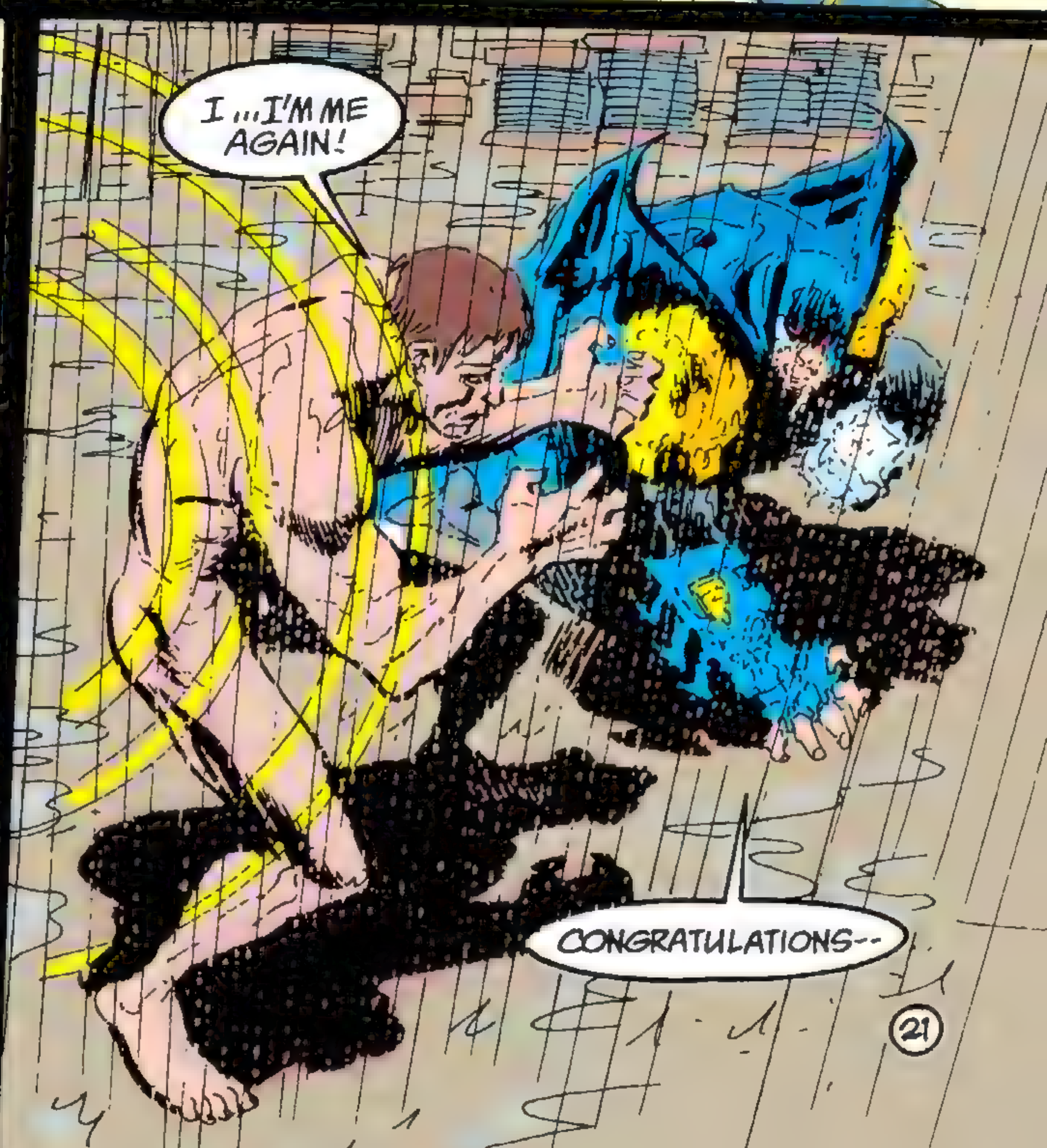


WH-WHAT'S
HAPPENING?! I
FEEL WEAK...!

THE PAIN--
IT'S FADING
AWAY!

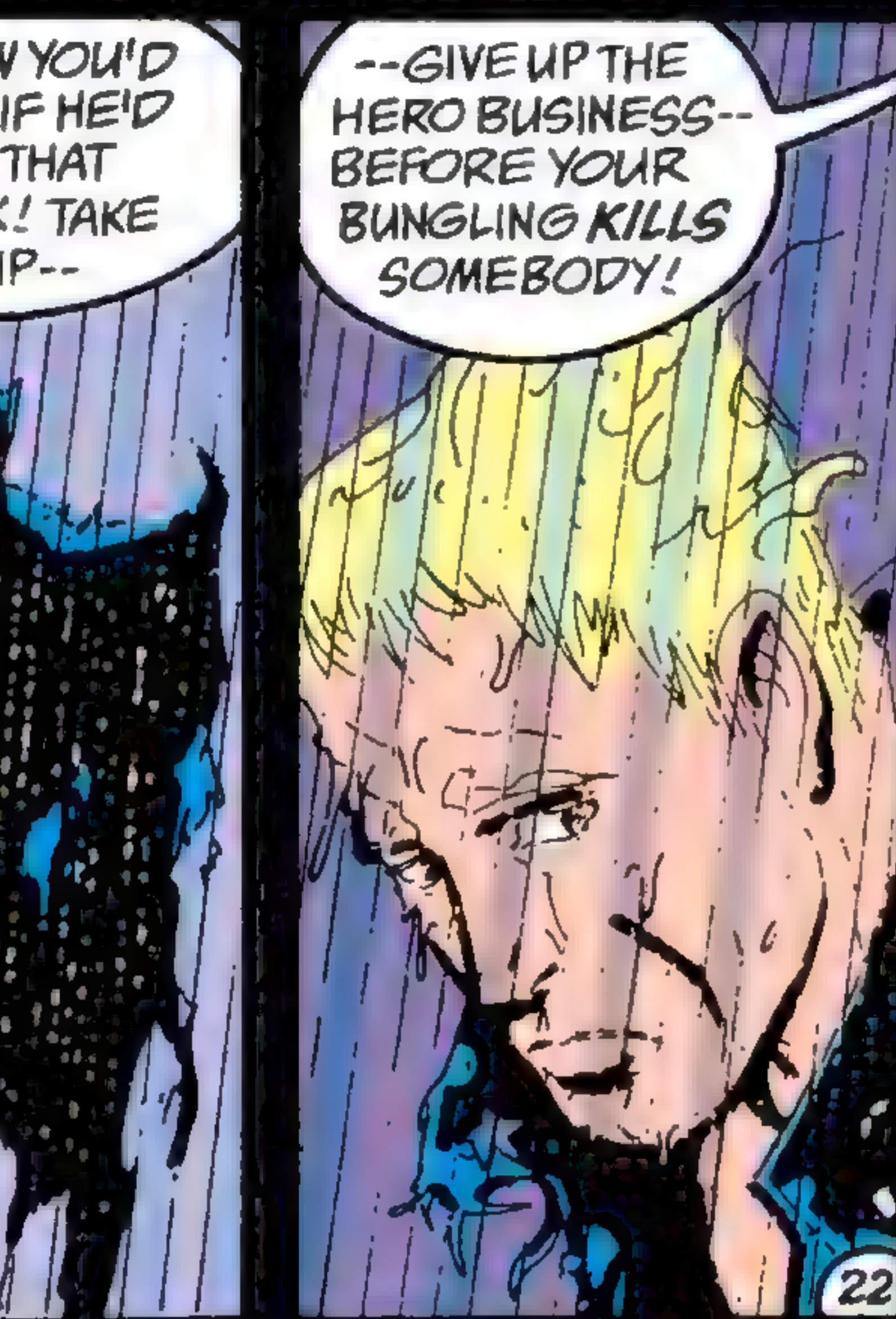
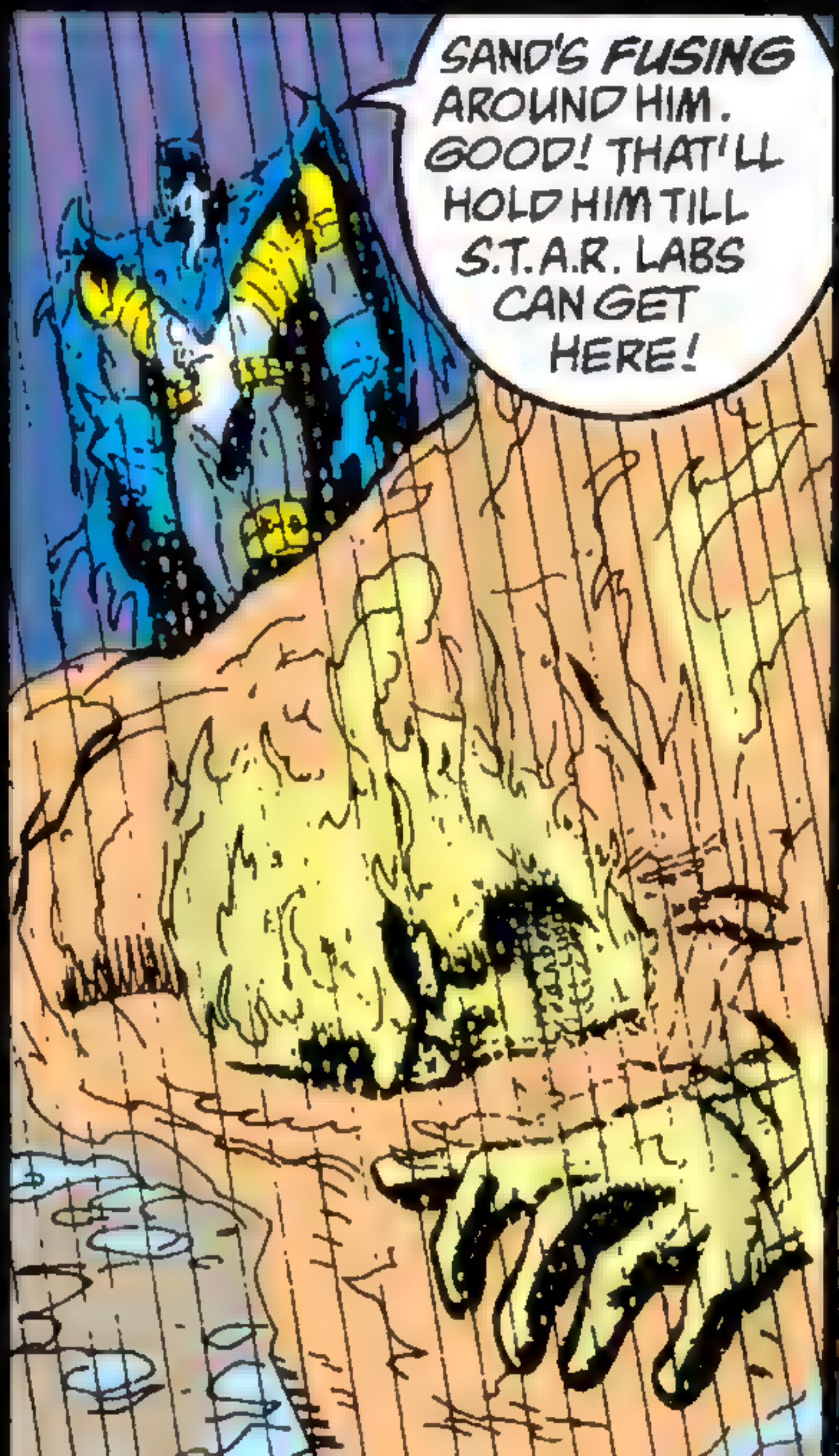
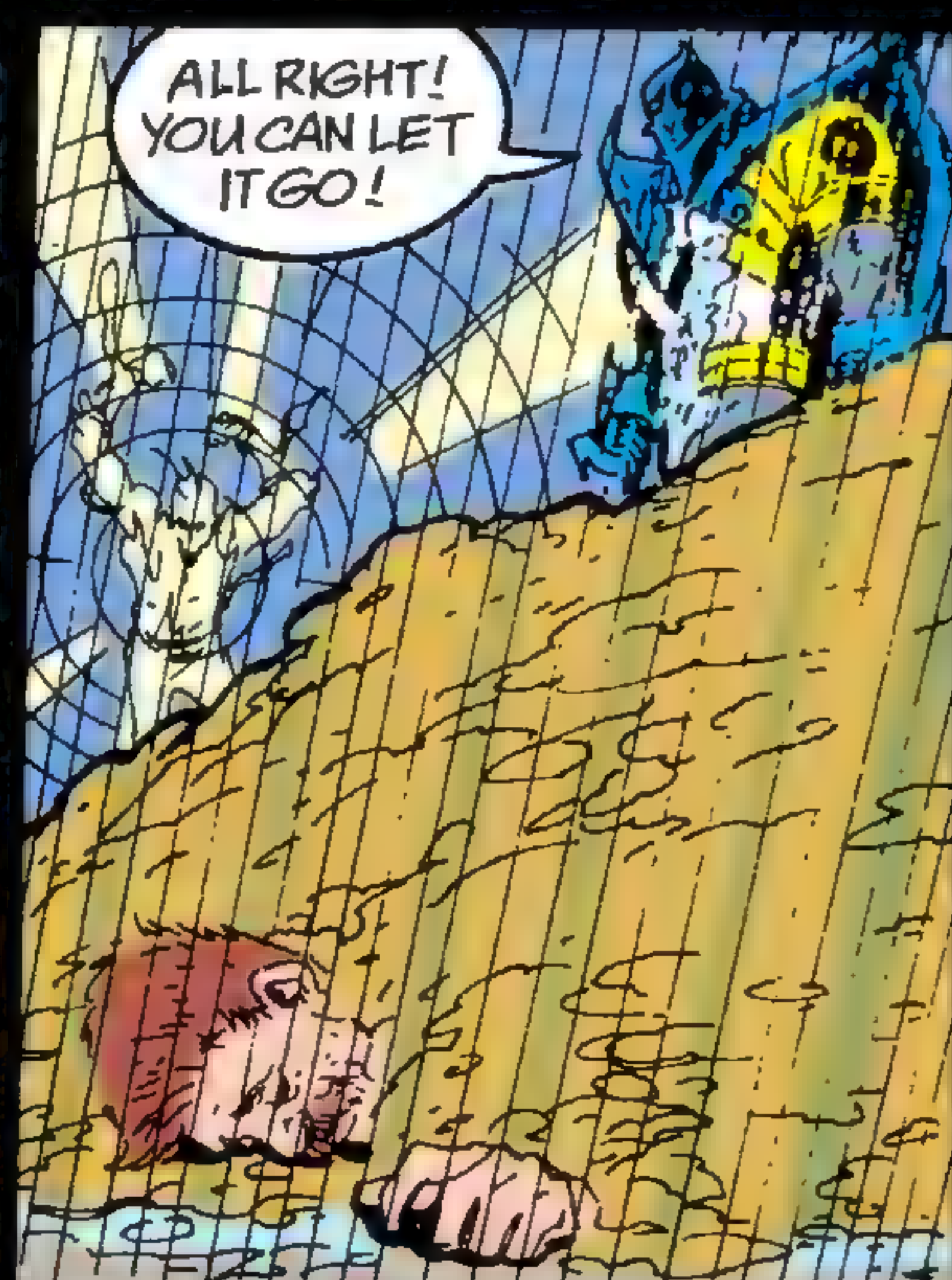
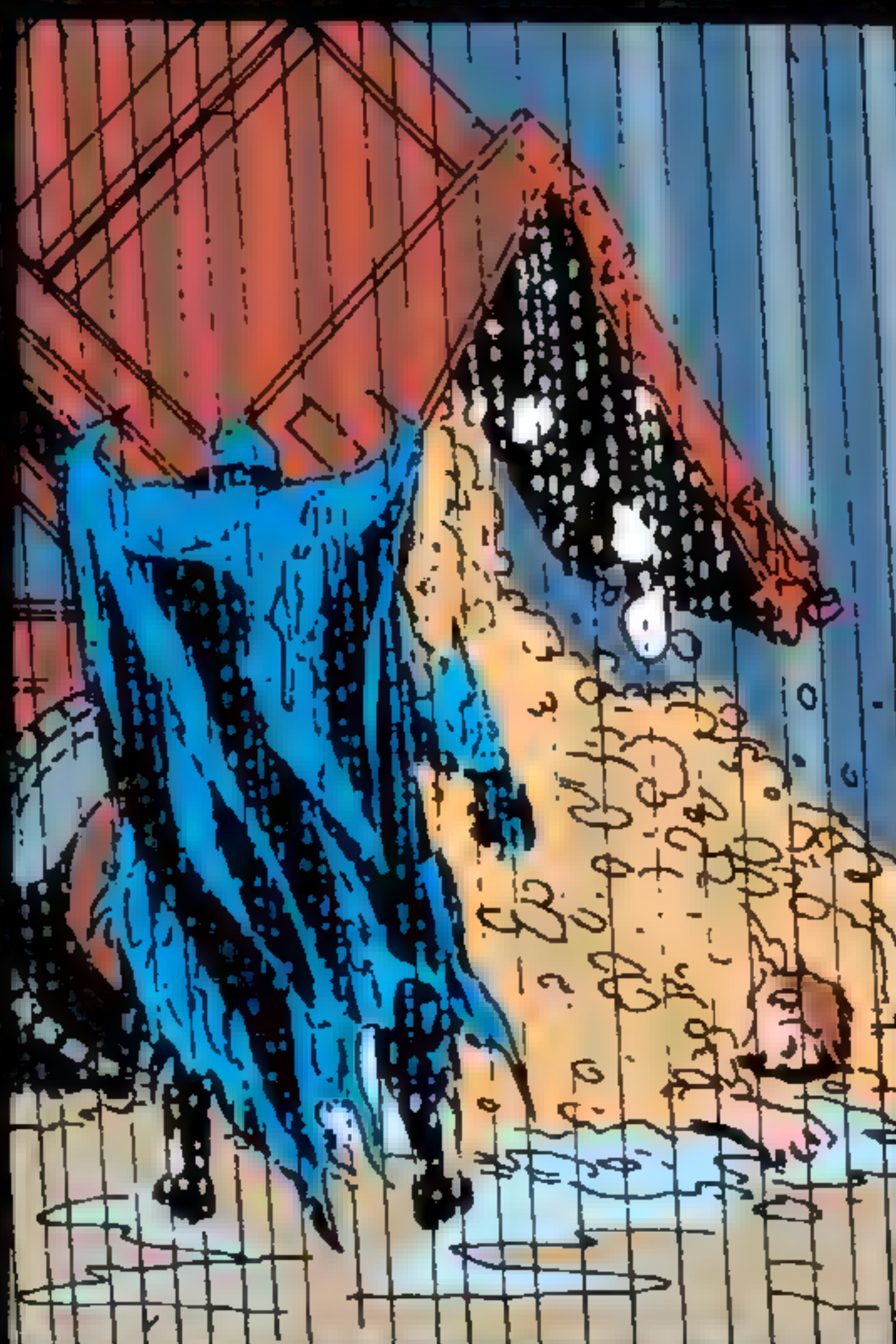
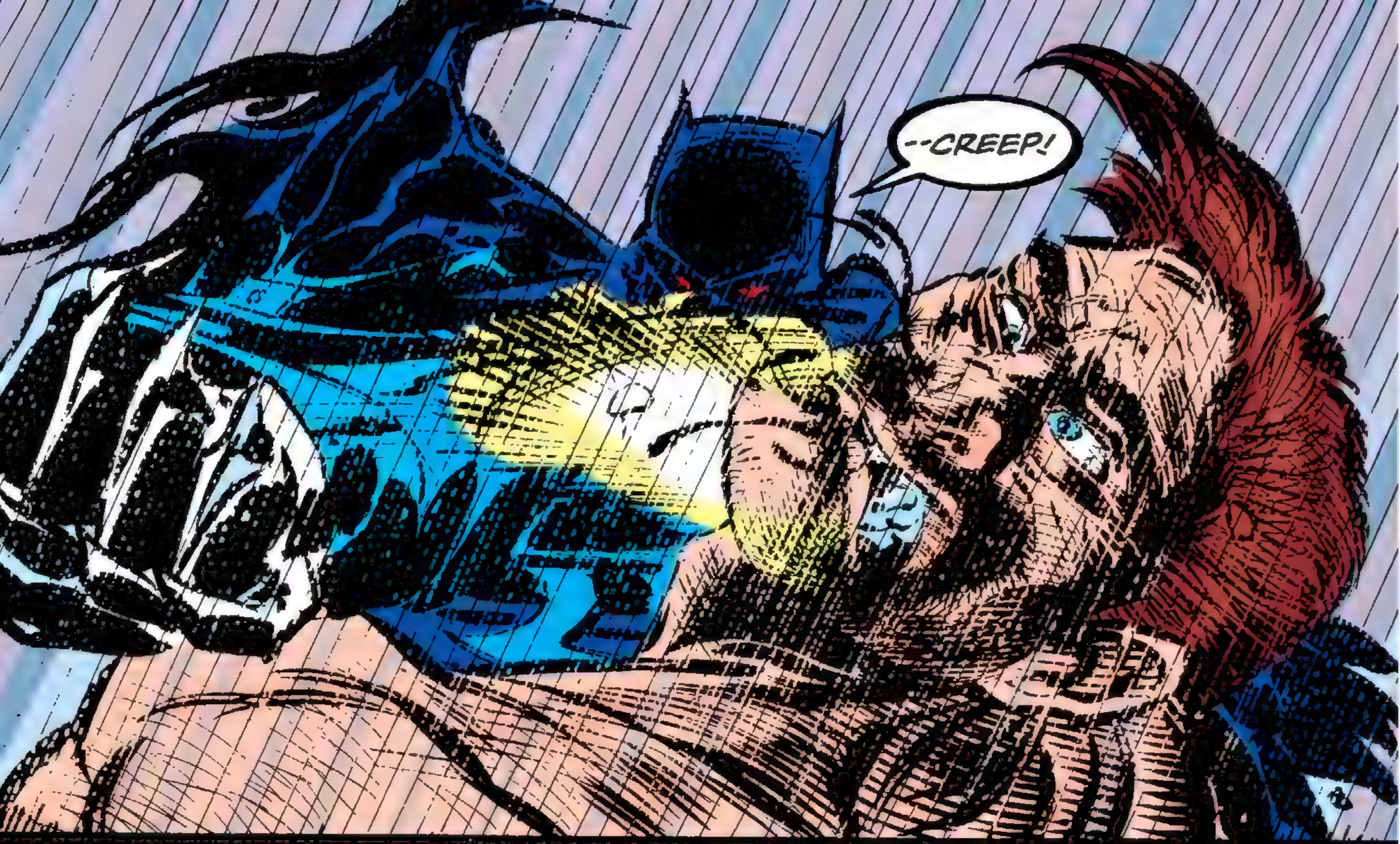


THE PAIN... **AAAAAAHHHHH!**



I...I'M ME
AGAIN!

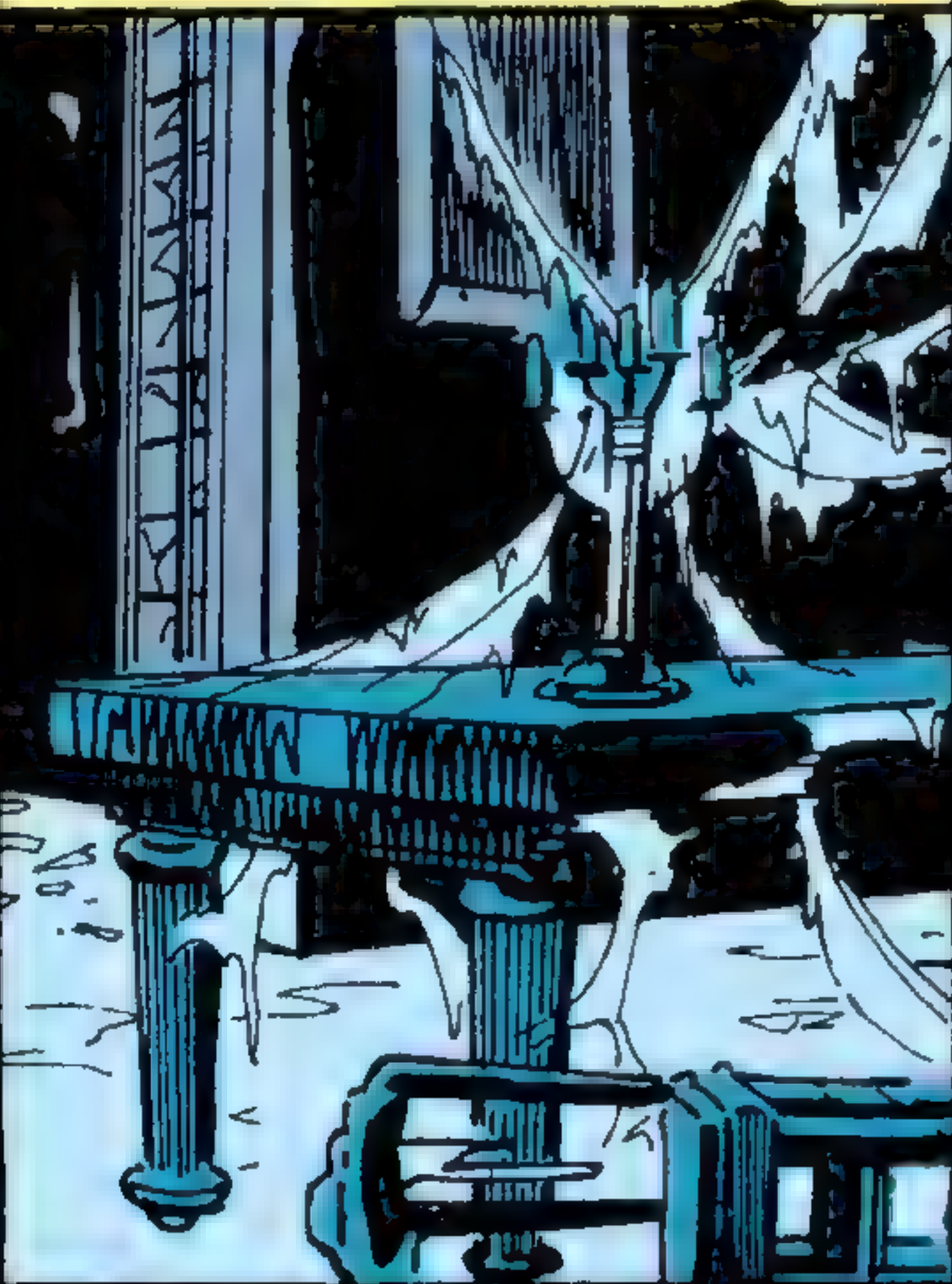
CONGRATULATIONS--



THE SYSTEM CLICKED IN AS SOON AS I ENTERED THE CAVE.



LAST NIGHT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, HAVING TO RELY ON A NOVICE TO SAVE ME. IF I'M GOING UP AGAINST CREEPS WITH THAT KIND OF FIREPOWER, I NEED TO BE ABLE TO TAKE IT.



BETTER HEAT PROTECTION. STREAM-LINE THE CAPE. MAKE IT ACID-PROOF.



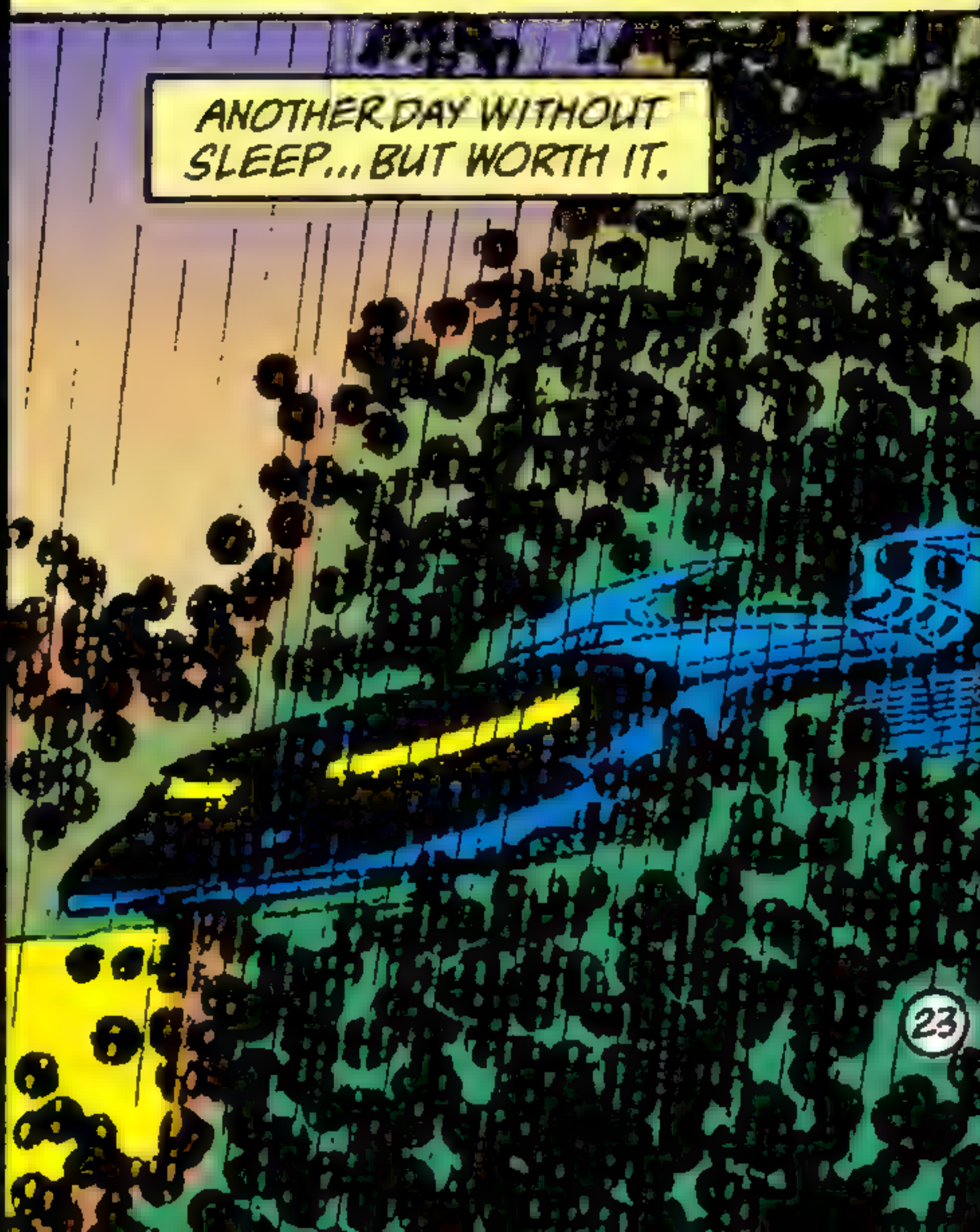
COULDN'T GET DATA WHEN I NEEDED IT. SO WHY NOT CONNECT MYSELF DIRECTLY TO THE CRAYS...?

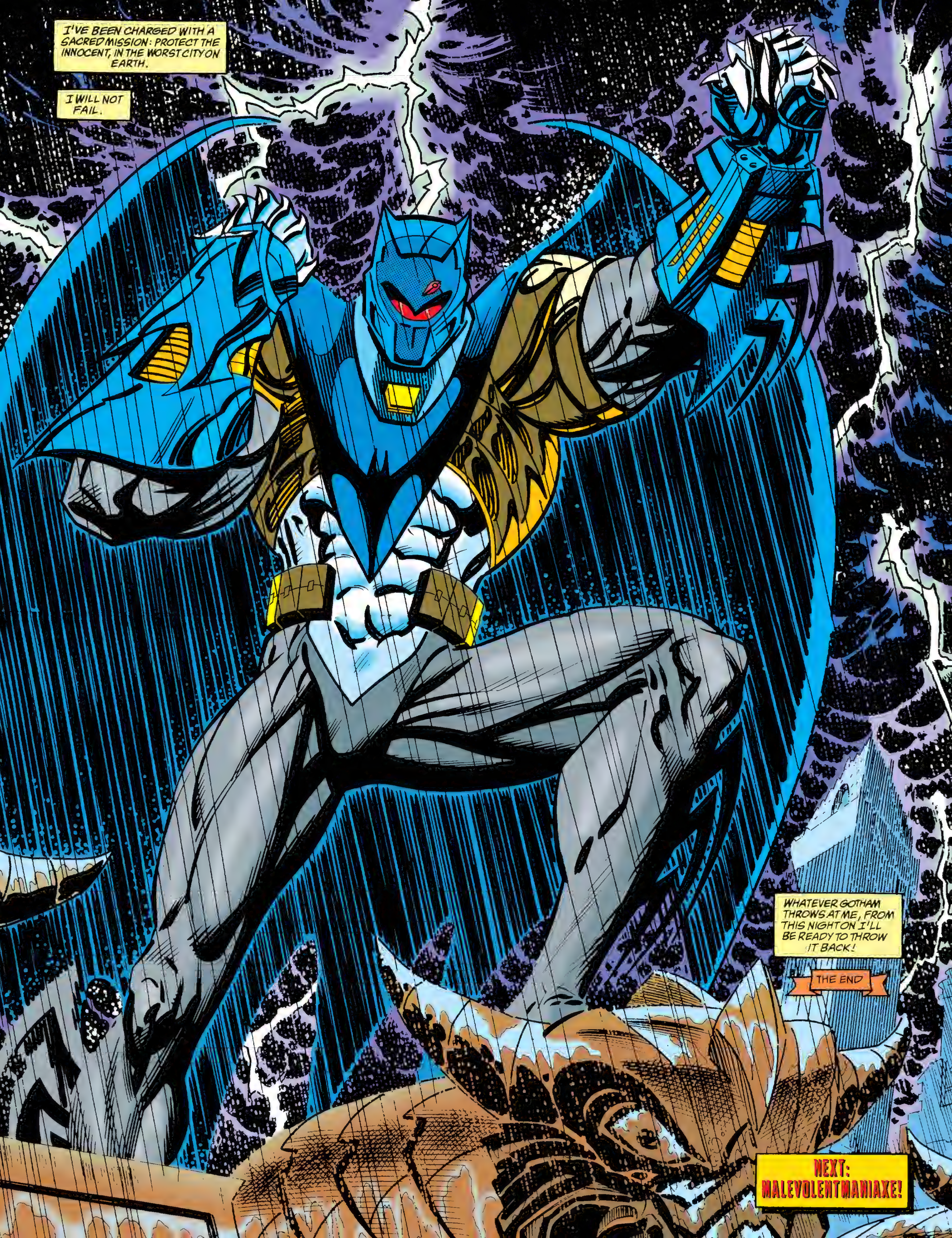
DIMLY I'M AWARE OF MY MIND RACING, MY HANDS DRAWING UP PLANS...



IT'S SUNSET WHEN I FINISH. HOW DID WAYNE EVER MANAGE TO RUN TWO LIVES SUCCESSFULLY?

ANOTHER DAY WITHOUT SLEEP... BUT WORTH IT.





I'VE BEEN CHARGED WITH A
SACRED MISSION: PROTECT THE
INNOCENT, IN THE WORST CITY ON
EARTH.

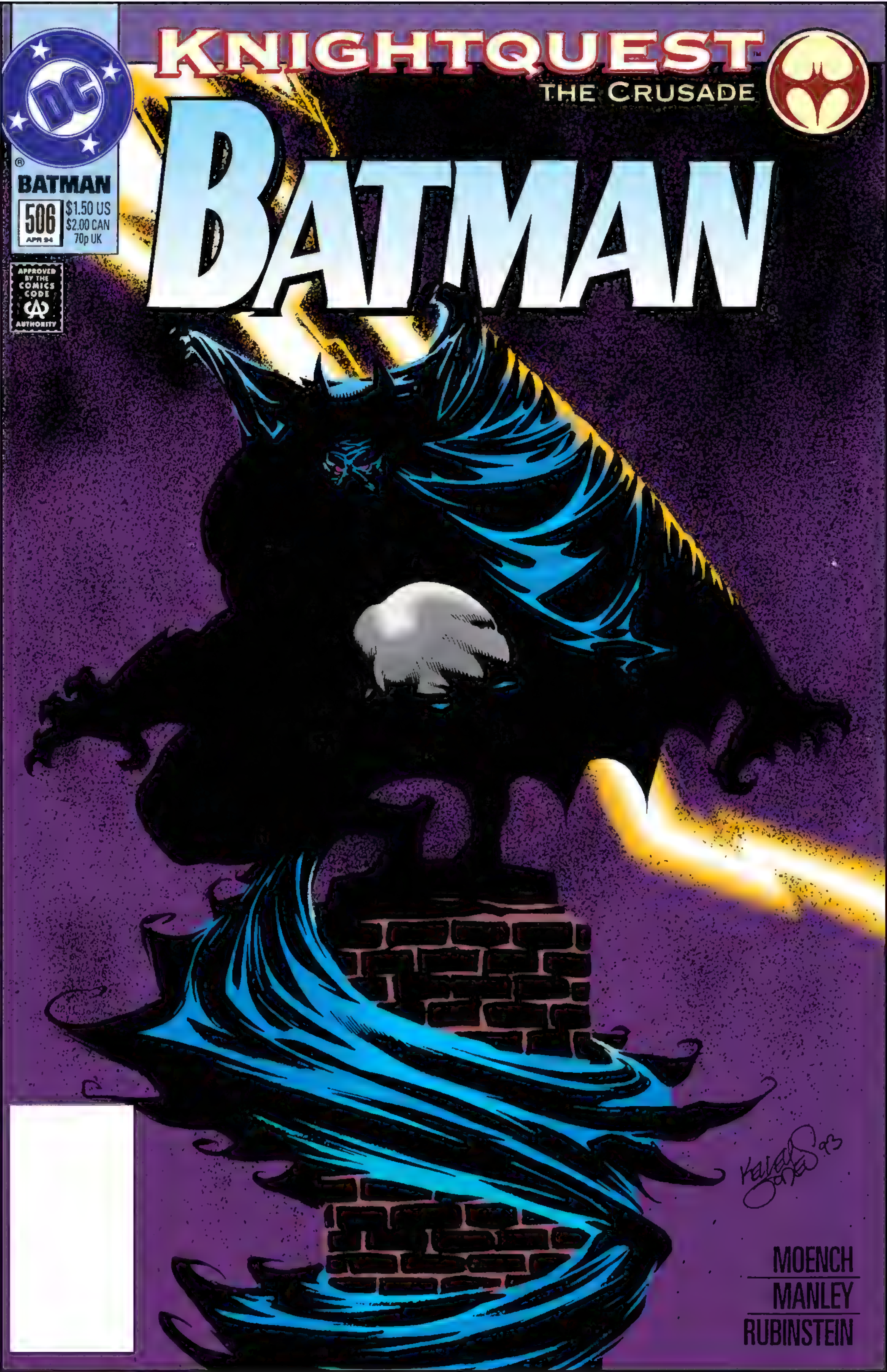
I WILL NOT
FAIL.

WHATEVER GOTHAM
THROWS AT ME, FROM
THIS NIGHTON I'LL
BE READY TO THROW
IT BACK!

THE END

NEXT:
MALEVOLENTMANIAXE!

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



MALEVOLENT MANIAXE

THE NEW COSTUME
SUITS HIS CHARACTER—
MASKS AS MENACE,
CLOAKING A DARK
HEART BUT REVEALING
AS MUCH AS IT HIDES.

ABATTOIR
IS STILL AT
LARGE BECAUSE
I WASN'T
EQUIPPED TO
STOP HIM.

AND AS
HIS RELATIVE,
GRAHAM ETCHISON
IS LITERALLY A
BORN VICTIM—

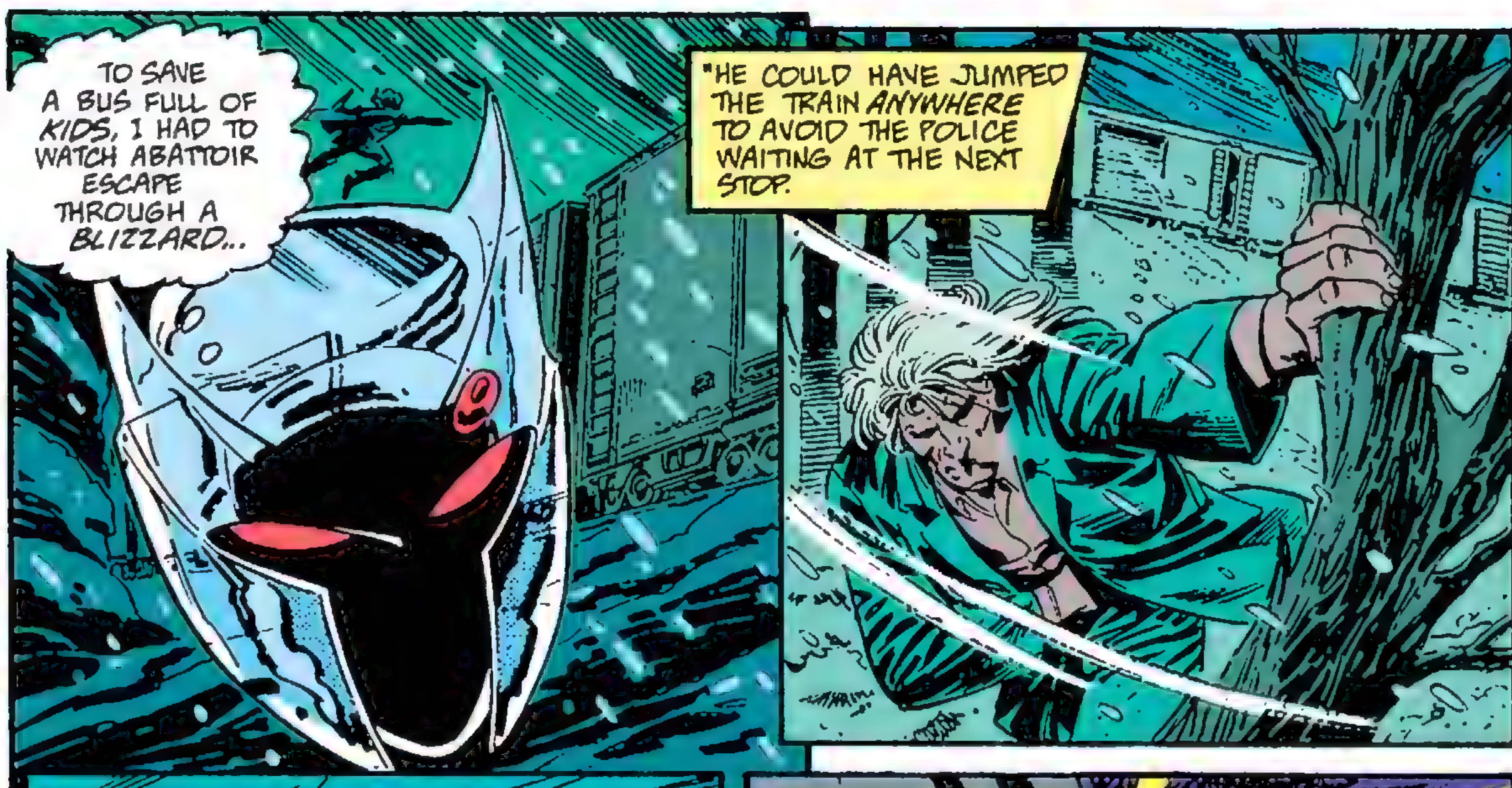
—WHO WILL
NEVER BE SAFE,
REGARDLESS OF
POLICE PROTECTION,
UNTIL ABATTOIR
GOES DOWN.

HIS OLD ARMOR
ALREADY FORGOTTEN,
HE SLASHES THE
NIGHT, NOW CLAD
IN A WEAPON.

Batman created by
BOB KANE

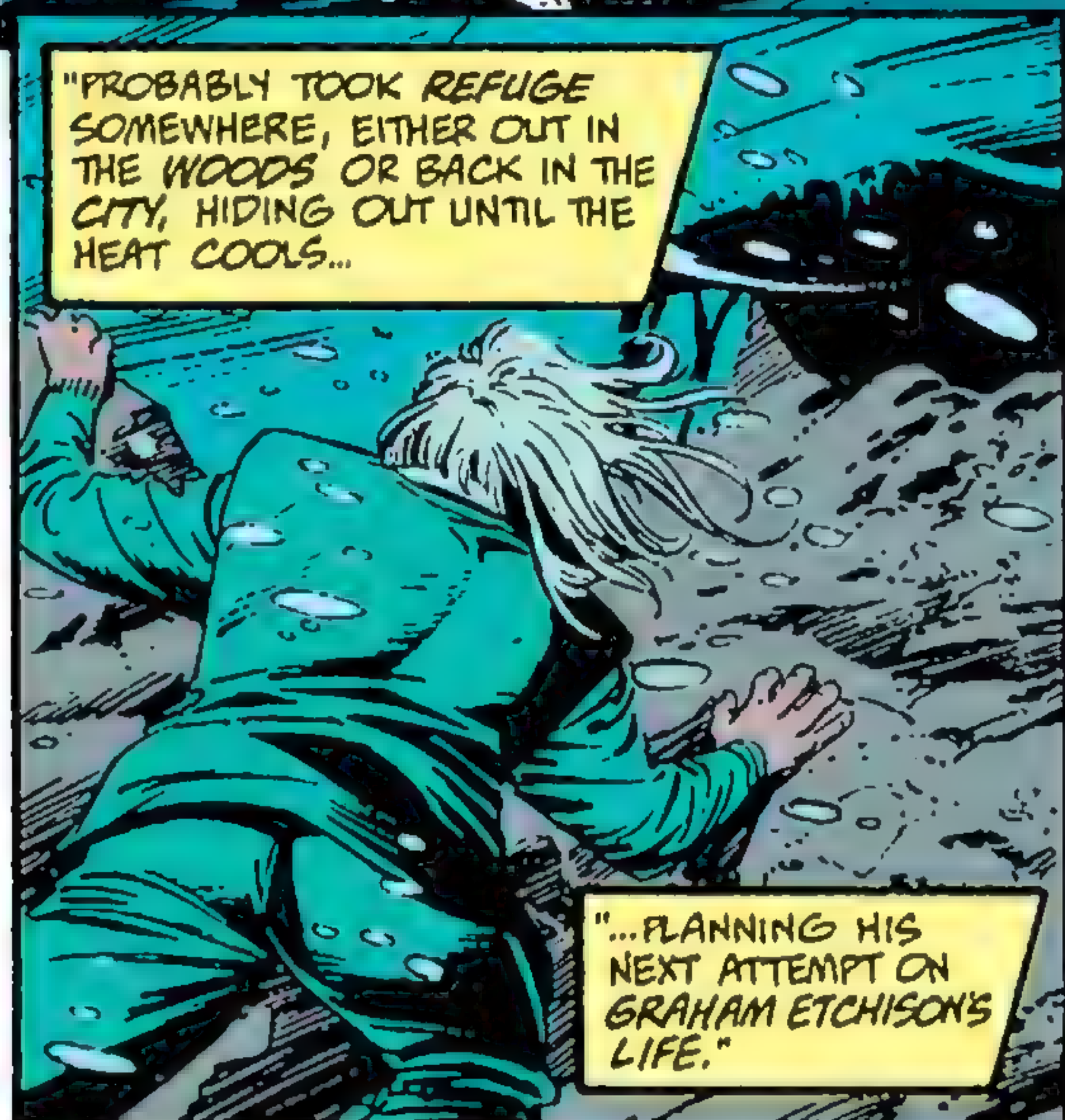
Ballistic created by
DOUG MOENCH MIKE MANLEY

DOUG MOENCH - MIKE MANLEY - JOSEF RUBINSTEIN - ADRIENNE ROY - KEN BRUZENAK - JORDAN B. GORFINKEL - DENNIS O'NEIL
writer artists colorist letterer assistant editor editor



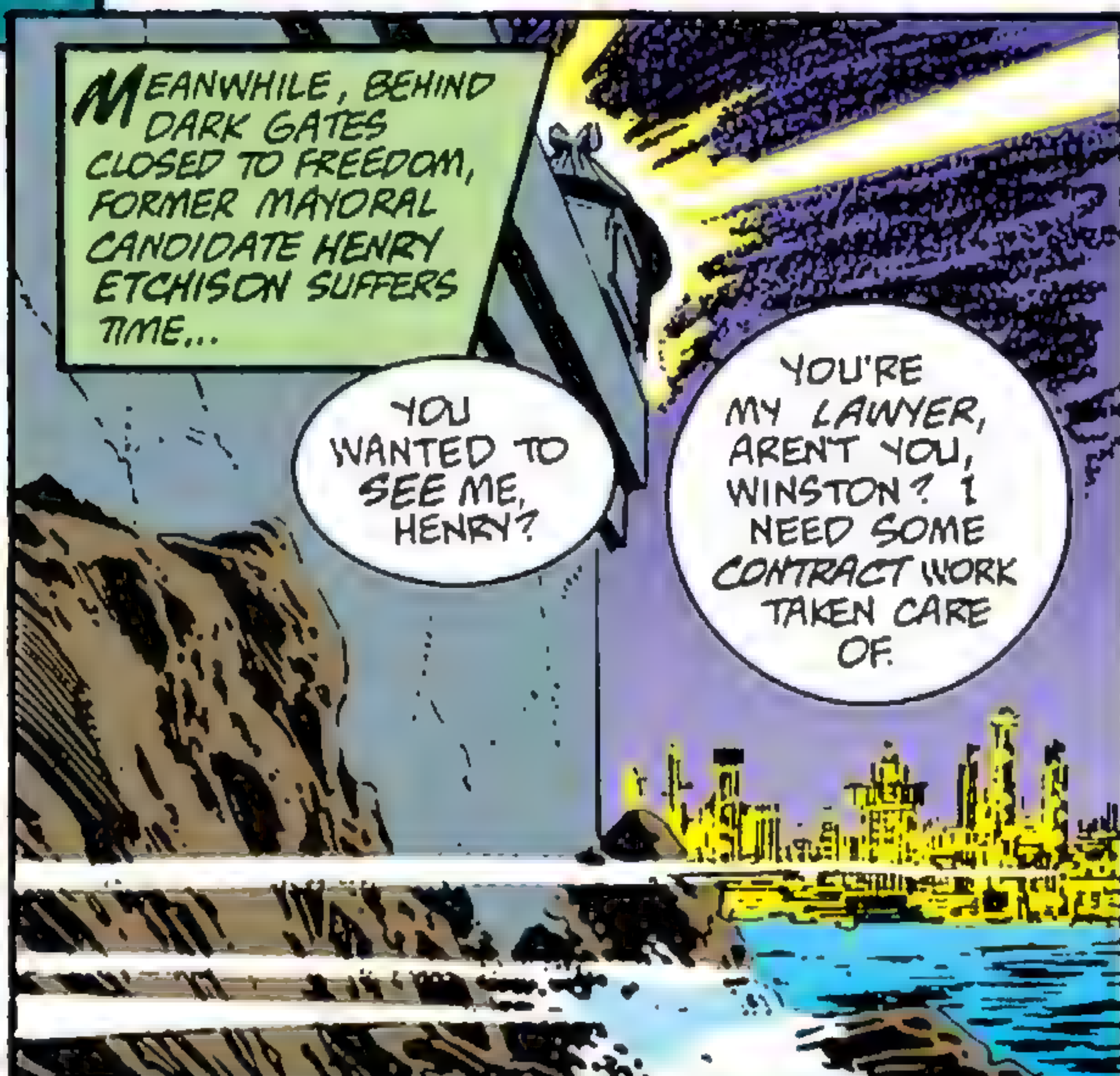
TO SAVE
A BUS FULL OF
KIDS, I HAD TO
WATCH ABATTOIR
ESCAPE
THROUGH A
BLIZZARD...

"HE COULD HAVE JUMPED
THE TRAIN ANYWHERE
TO AVOID THE POLICE
WAITING AT THE NEXT
STOP."



"PROBABLY TOOK REFUGE
SOMEWHERE, EITHER OUT IN
THE WOODS OR BACK IN THE
CITY, HIDING OUT UNTIL THE
HEAT COOLS..."

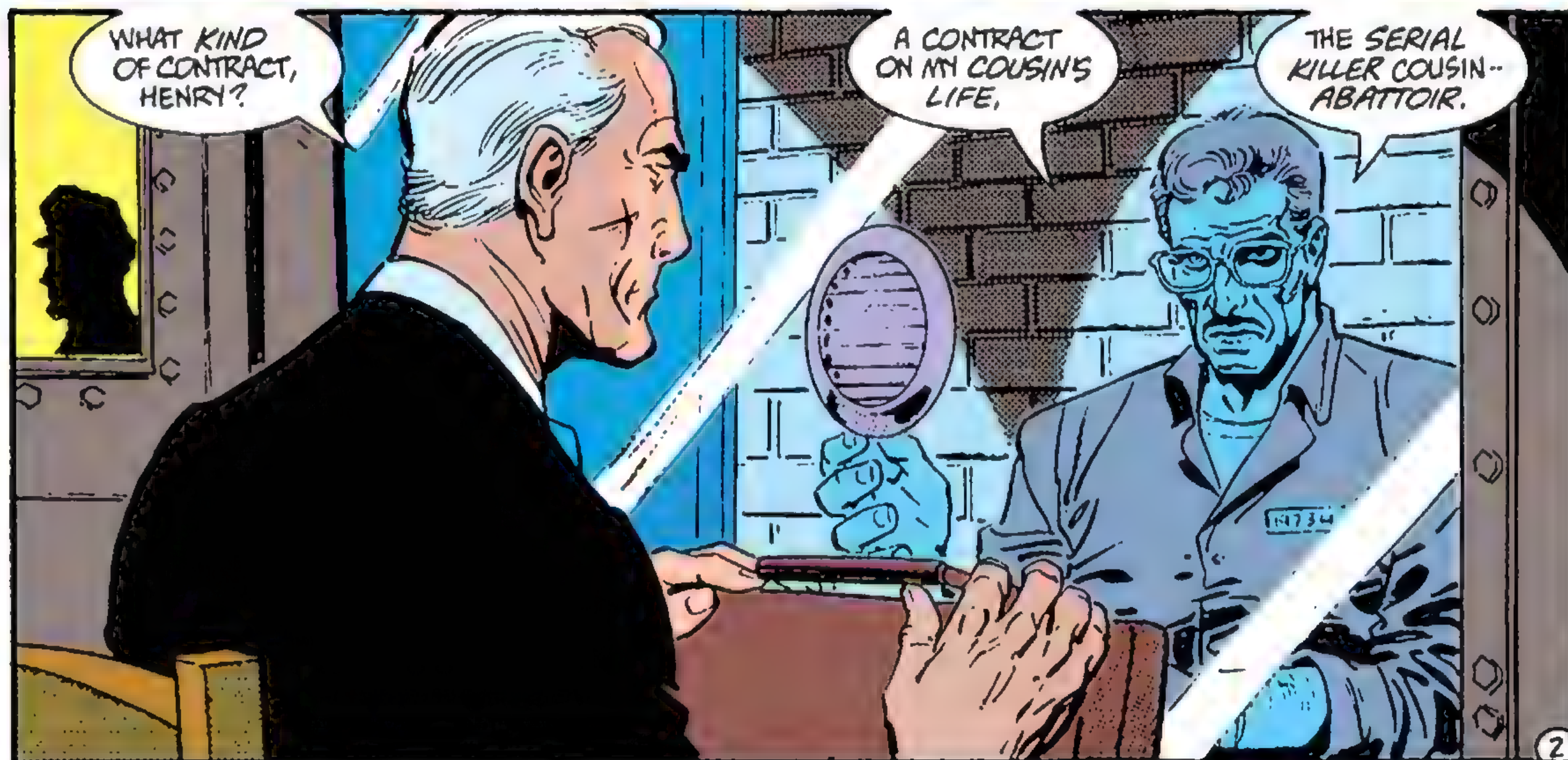
"...PLANNING HIS
NEXT ATTEMPT ON
GRAHAM ETCHISON'S
LIFE."



MEANWHILE, BEHIND
DARK GATES
CLOSED TO FREEDOM,
FORMER MAYORAL
CANDIDATE HENRY
ETCHISON SUFFERS
TIME...

YOU
WANTED TO
SEE ME,
HENRY?

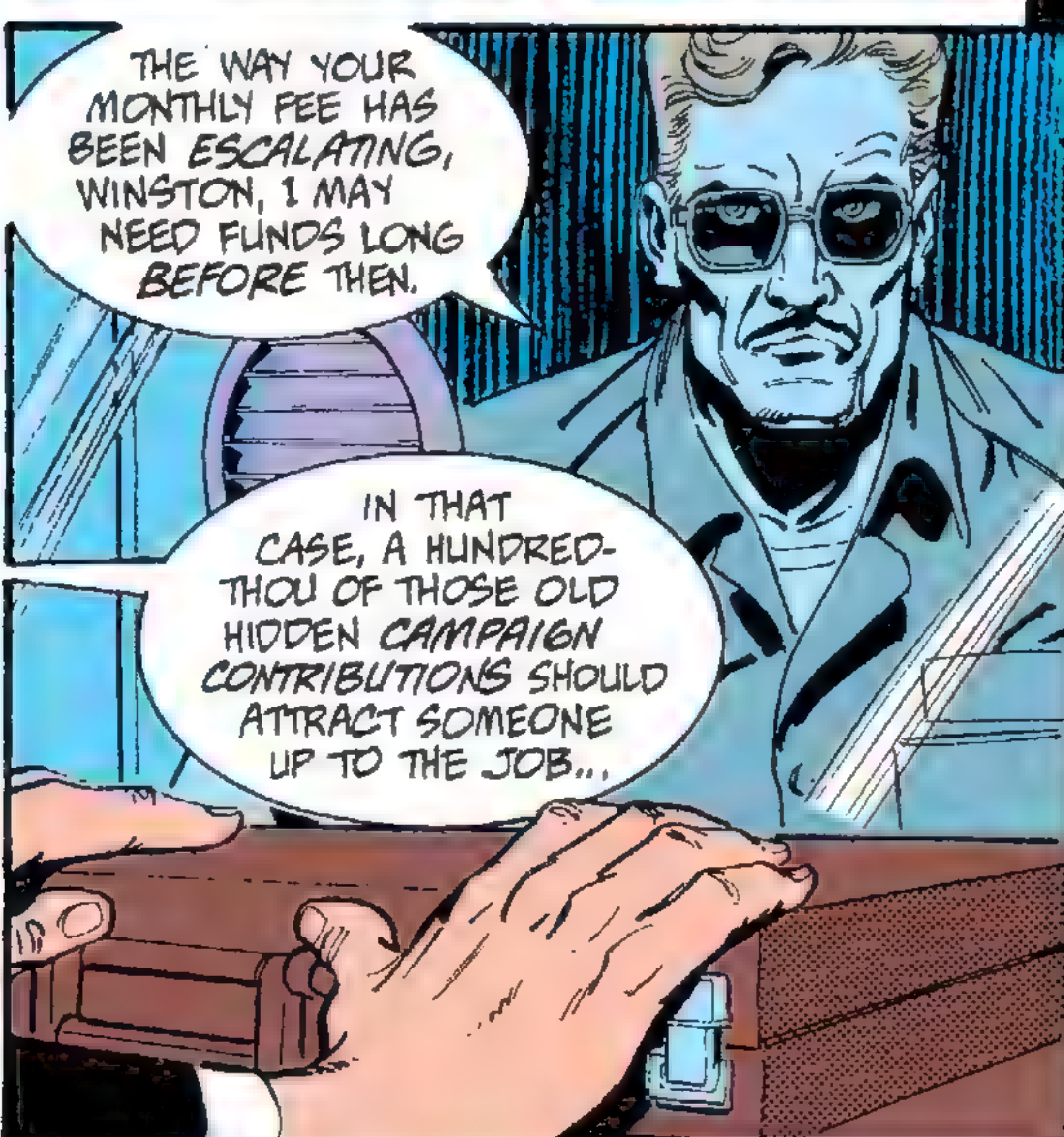
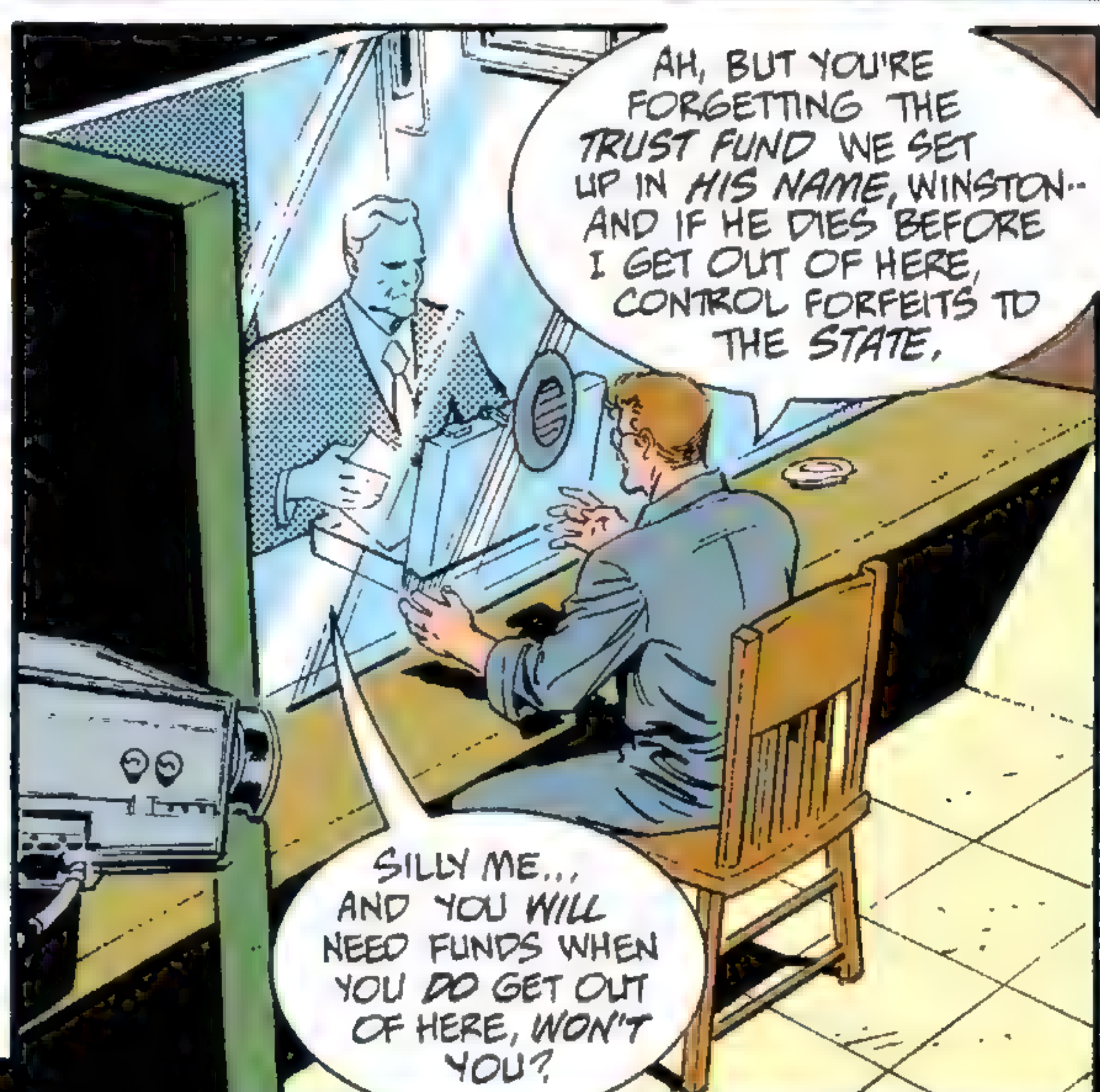
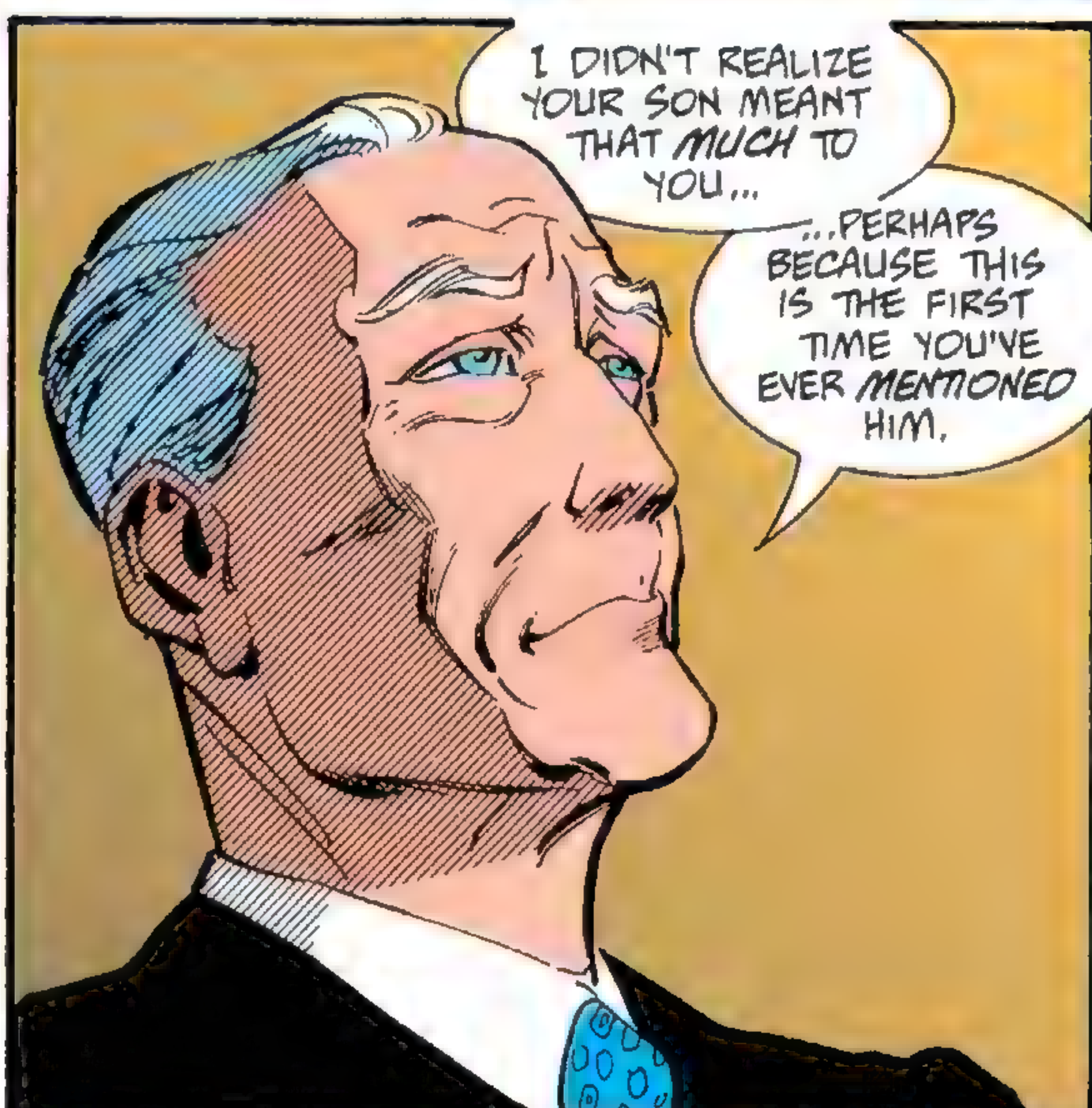
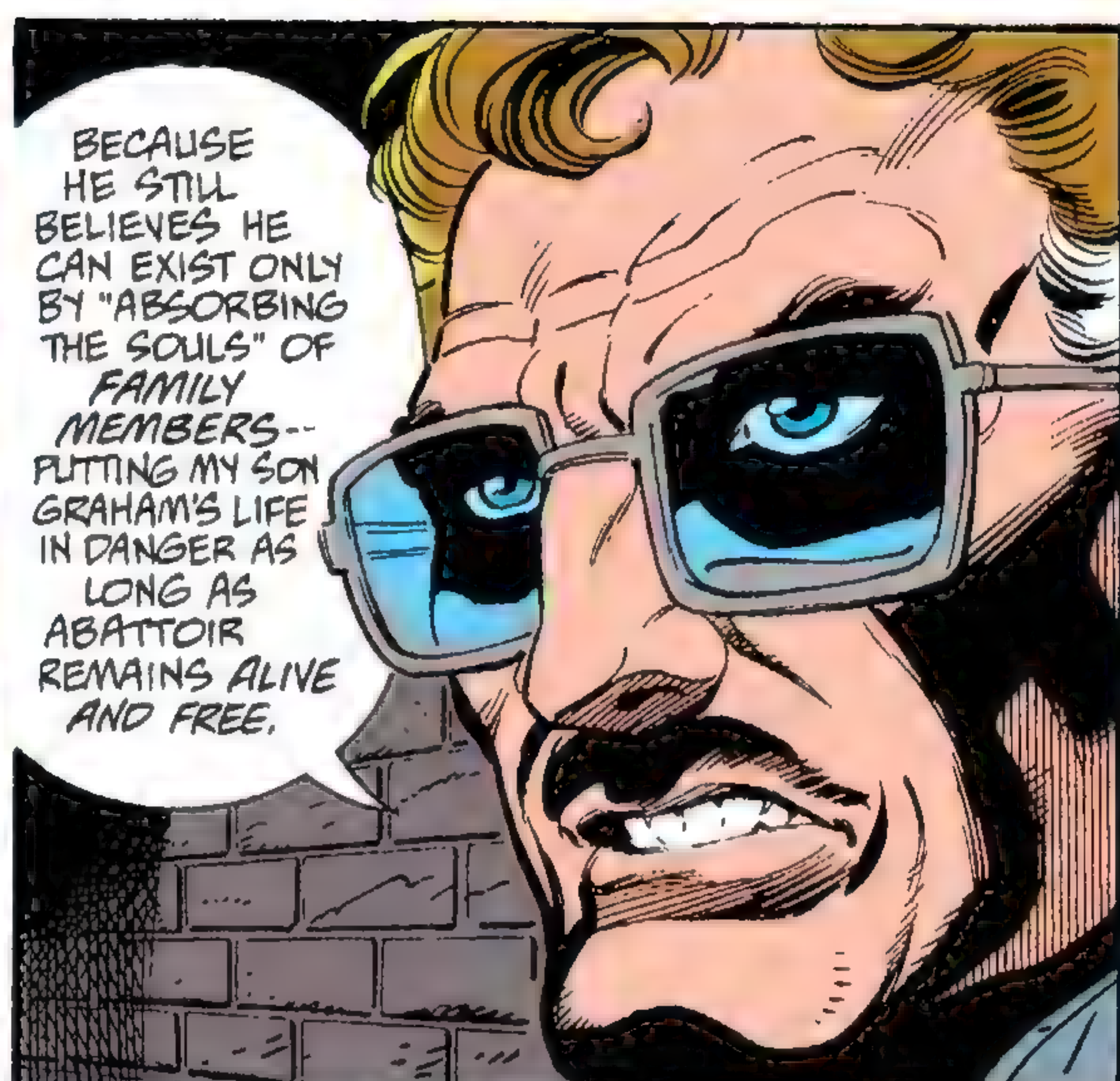
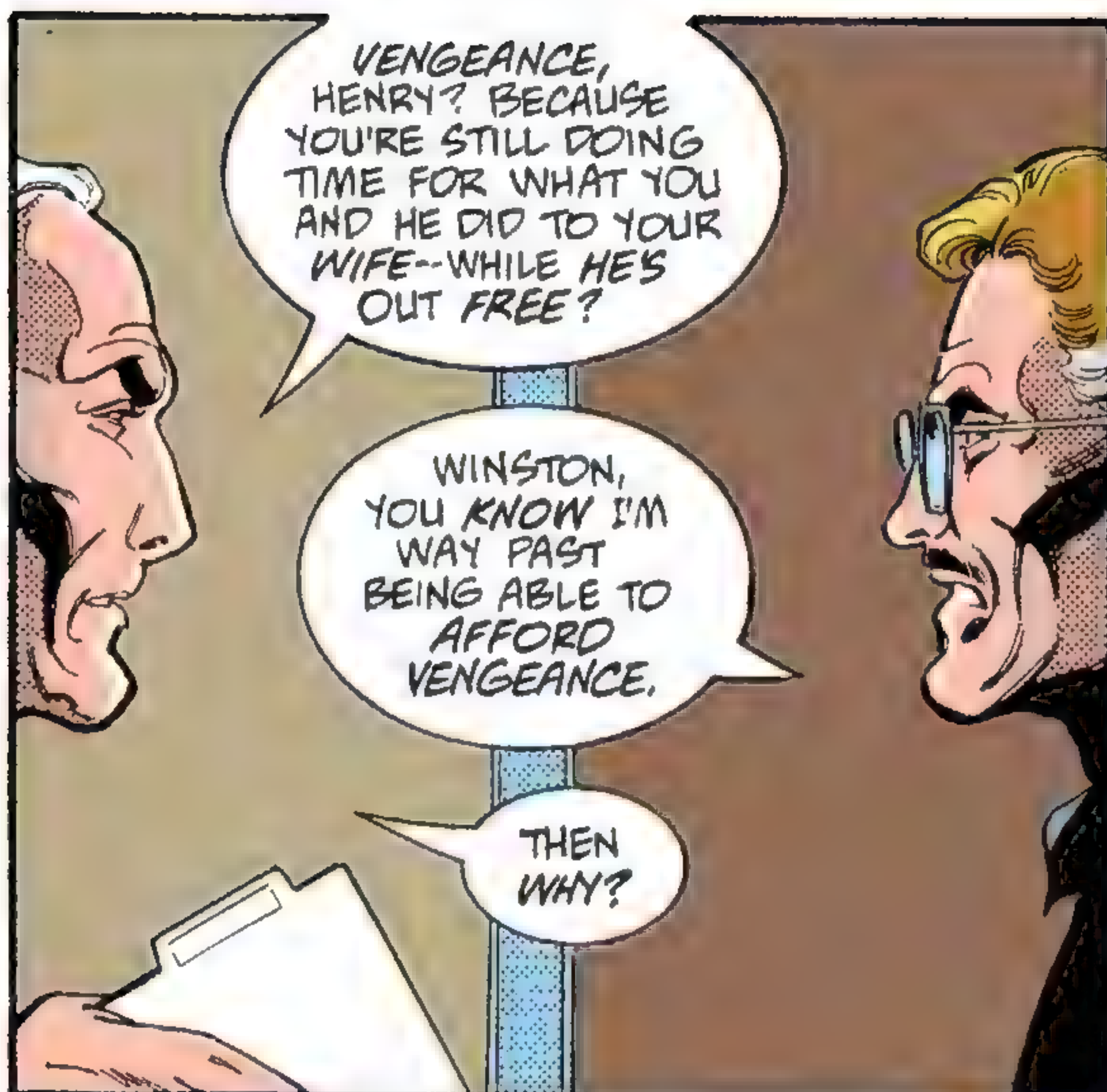
YOU'RE
MY LAWYER,
AREN'T YOU,
WINSTON? I
NEED SOME
CONTRACT WORK
TAKEN CARE
OF.

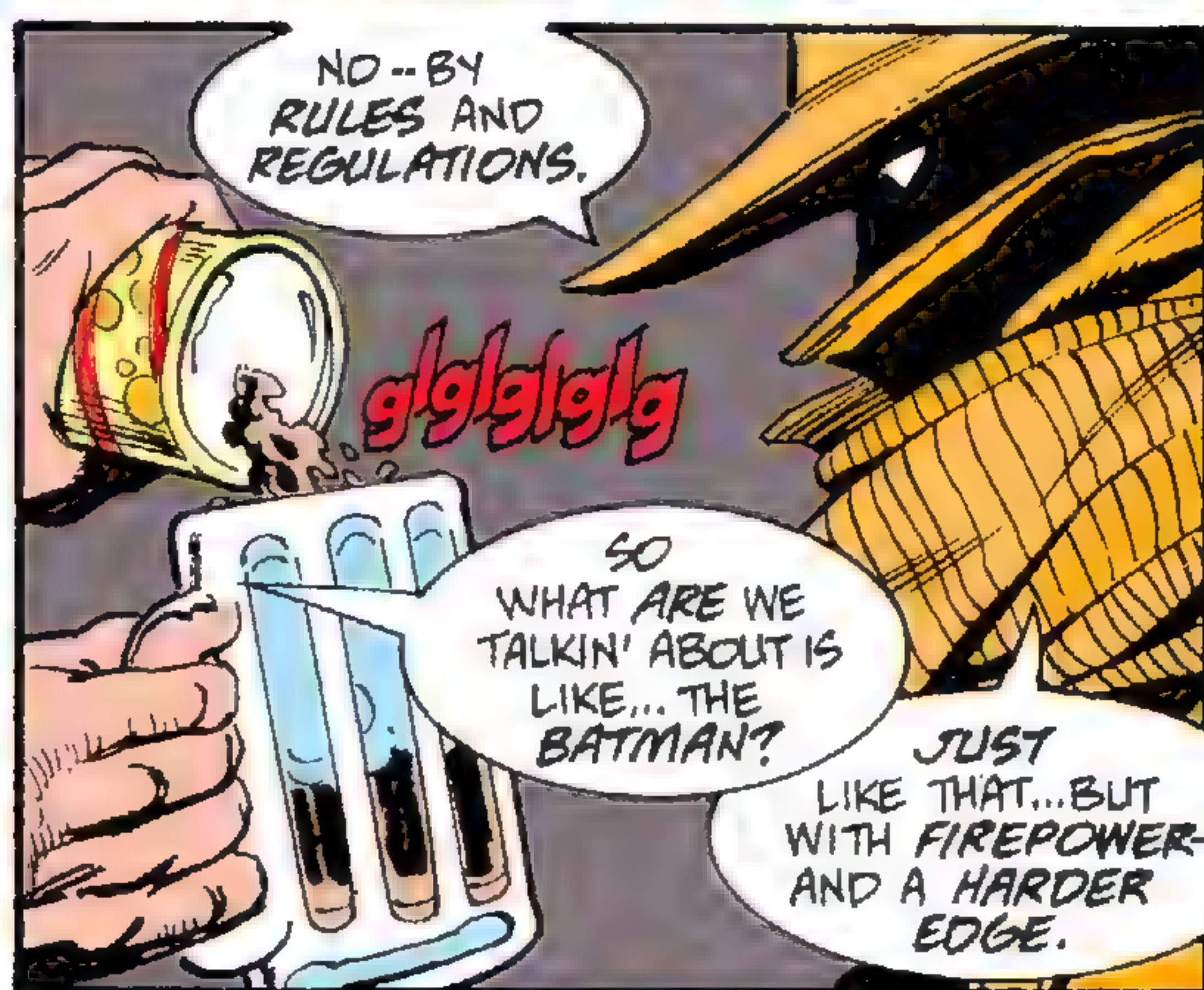
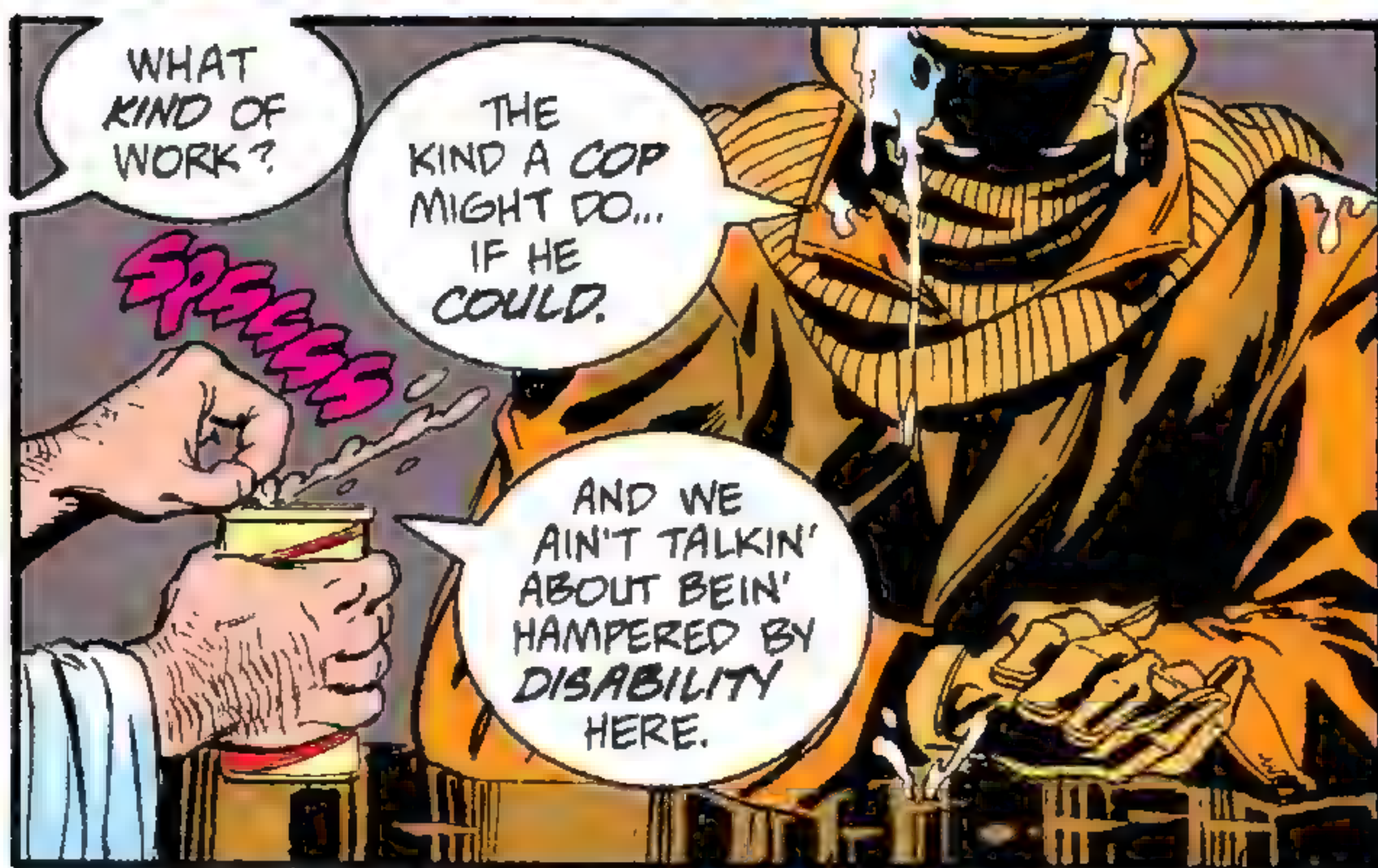
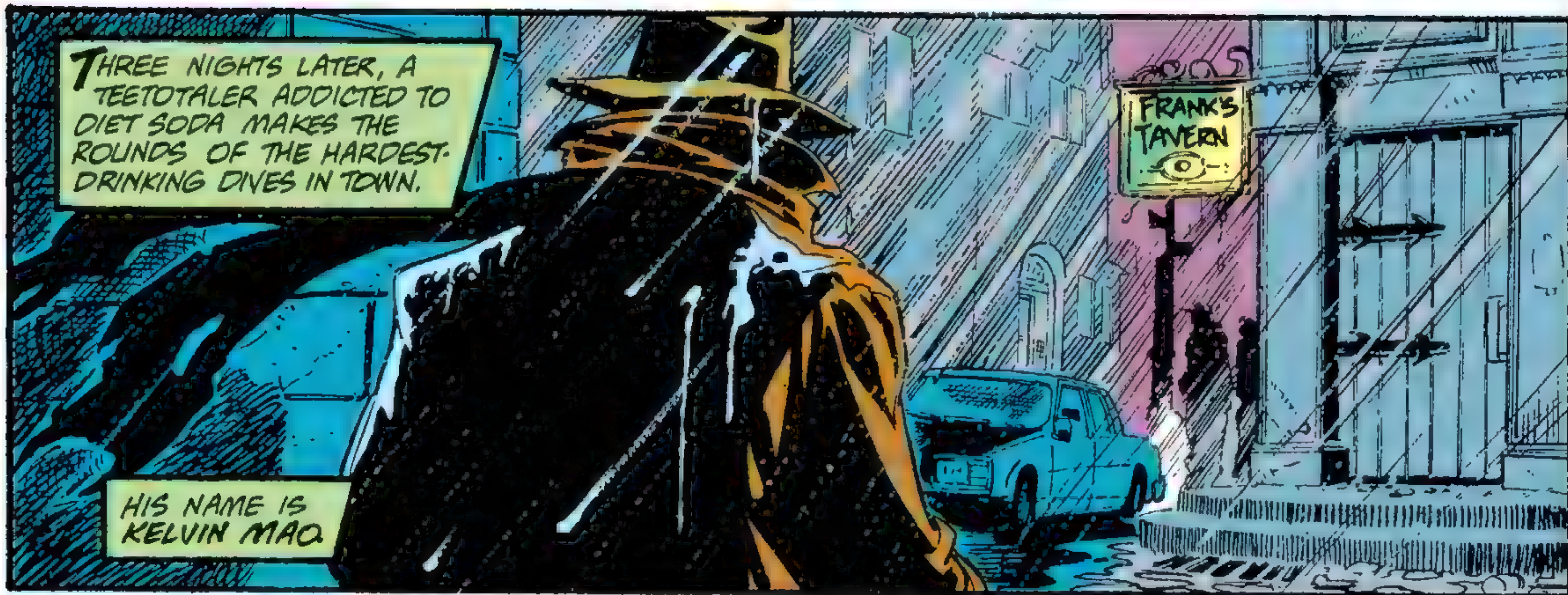


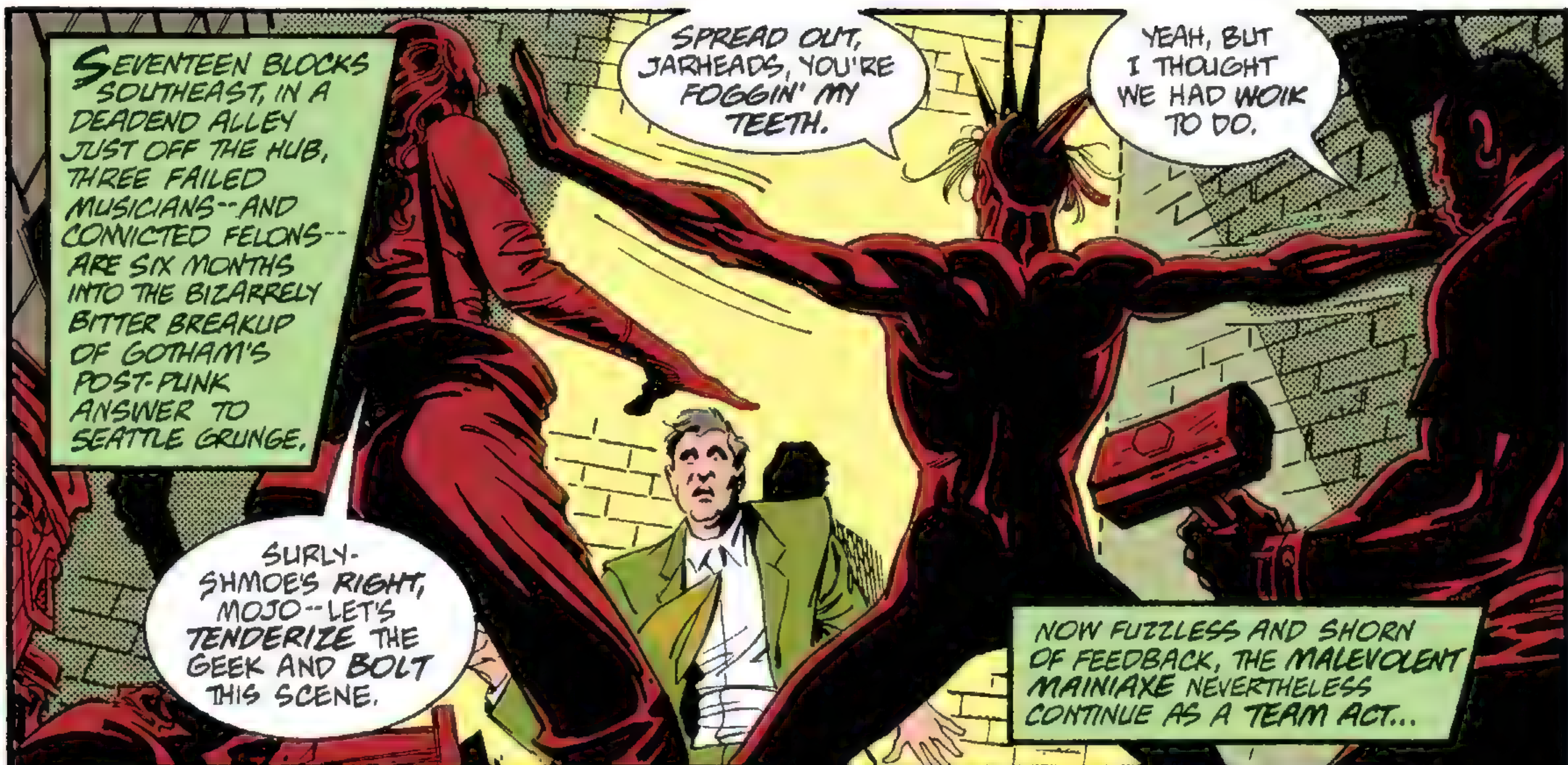
WHAT KIND
OF CONTRACT,
HENRY?

A CONTRACT
ON MY COUSIN'S
LIFE,

THE SERIAL
KILLER COUSIN--
ABATTOIR.









IZZAT SO?
AWRIGHT, DEADBEAT,
YOU WANNA COMMIT
SUICIDE, G'WAN AN'
MAKE A MESS--

--BUT
DON'T DRAG YER
BLEEDIN' WRISTS
BACK TO US.

LAST
TIME IT WAS
A POLITE MATTER
O' SCORCHIN' YER
EYEBROWS, BUT NOW
YOU'RE INTO THE
ROSELLI BOYS FOR
BETTER'N FIVE
GRAND...

SO
THIS TIME
WE GOTTA--

PLEASE...
PLEASE...

--AXE YA
HARDER.

YEEAAHRR!

BAMAKSH!

LET
HIM CRAWL,
BOYS--HE'S GOT
GAMBLIN' DEBTS
TO MAKE
GOOD.

M-MY
LEG...MY
L-LEG...!



Y'KNOW, MOJO, DIS WOIK IS GETTIN' BORING.

FOR ONCE, SURLY-SHMDE, I AGREE.

WE NEED A BIG SCORE IF WE DON'T WANNA BE LOWLY LEG-BREAKERS THE REST OF OUR WRETCHED LIVES.



HEY, I HEARD ABOUT A BIG SCORE--HUNNED GRAND CONTRACT ON SOME CRAZY KILLER NAMED ABATTOIR.



'AVE A TWAR YERSELF, NITWIT!

OWTCH!



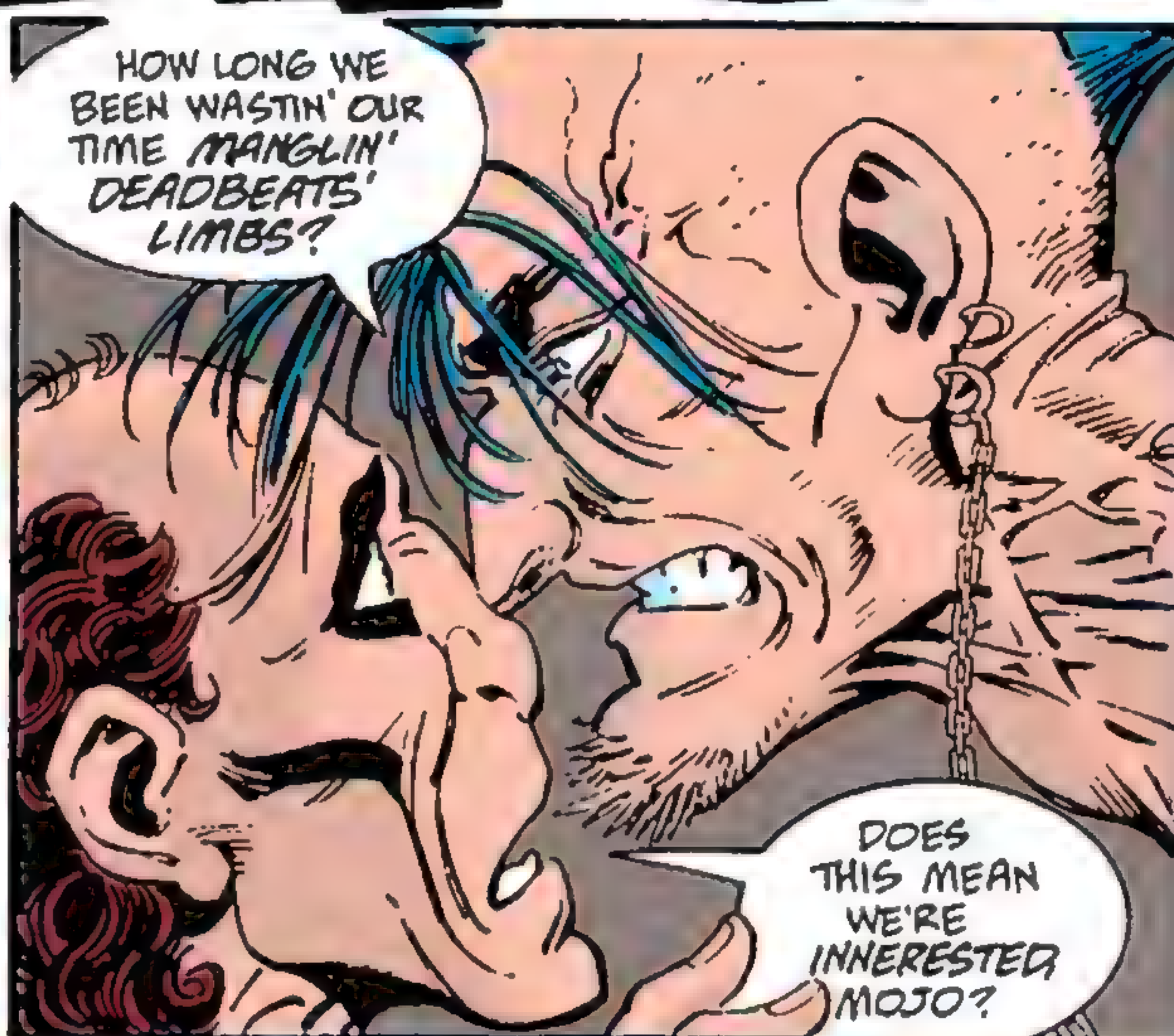
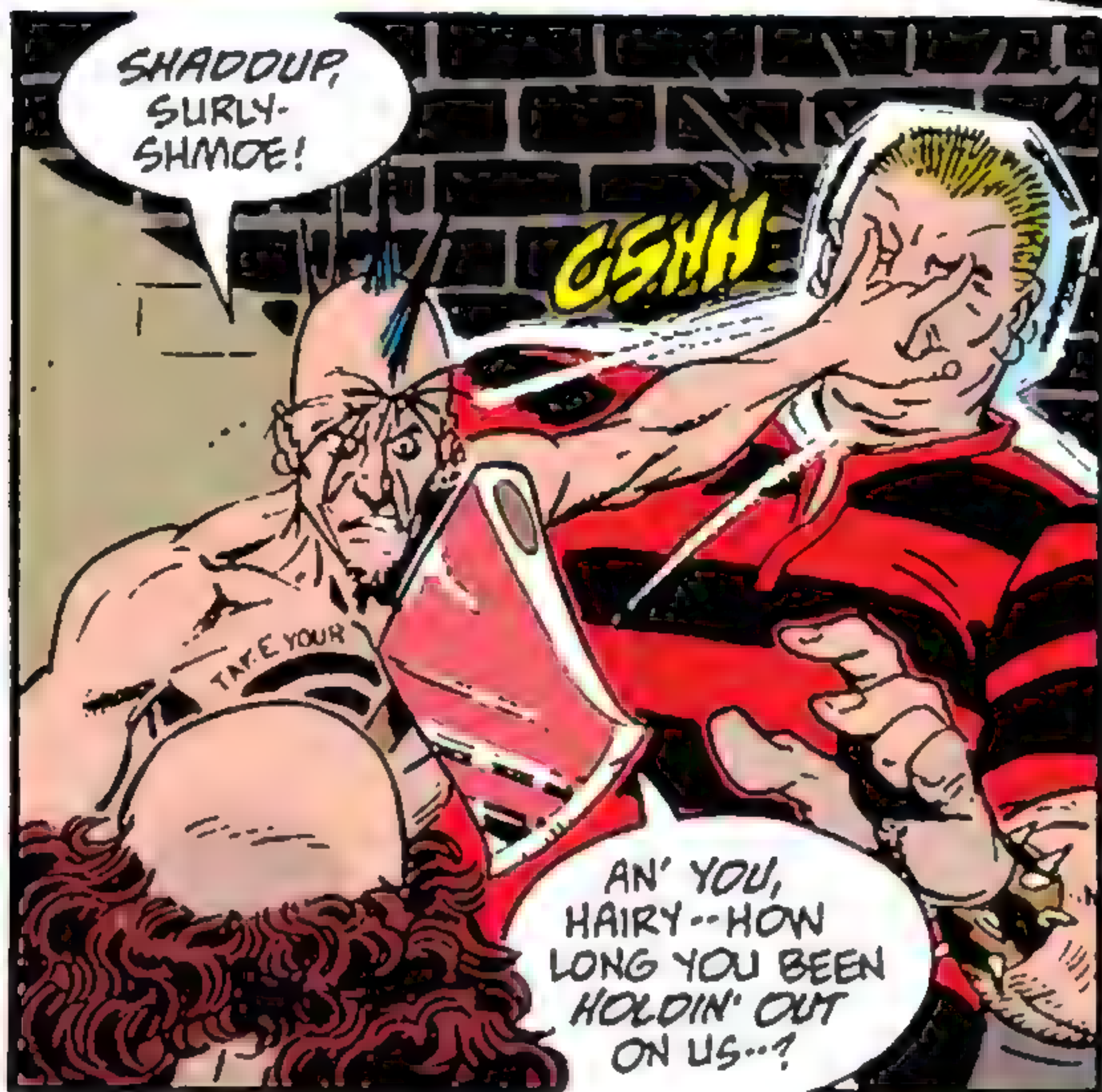
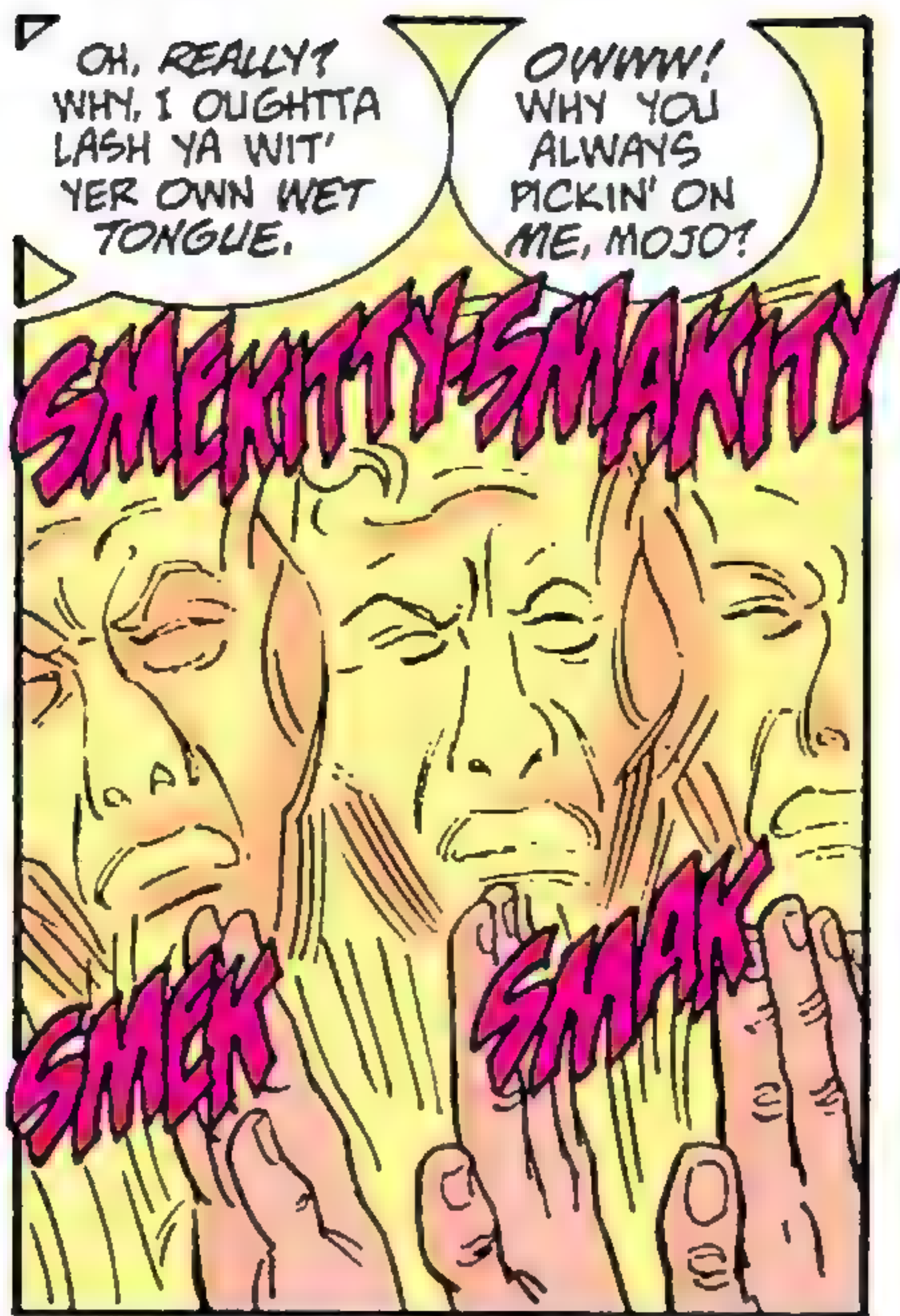
I'M SERIOUS, MOJO.

AND I'M THE MILKY WAY CLUSTER! SO WHO IS THIS "ABATTOIR"...

--AND HOW MIGHT WE HARVEST HIS HUNDRED-K SCALP?



I DUNNO, MOJO, BUT I DO KNOW A GUY WHO'S GOT THE NAMES OF THREE OR FOUR OTHER GUYS WHO SUPPOSEDLY HELPED ABATTOIR BUST OUTTA ARKHAM ONE TIME...





HIS ROUNDS COMPLETED,
KELVIN MAOD QUITS
THE STREETS...



...TRUDGES THROUGH
MELTED SNOW AND
MUCH WORSE...



ALL FREE--
RENT, ELECTRICITY
PHONE...EVERYTHING
EXCEPT FOOD--AND
THEREIN LIES THE
RUB.

OFF THE
FORCE AND OFF
THE PAYROLL, BUT
STILL A COP IN MY
GUT...EXCEPT MY
GUT'S GOTTA
EAT.

NOT MUCH
FUN BEING A
SUPER VIGILANTE
IF YOU'RE
STARVING.

...AND RETURNS TO
THE ABANDONED
SUBWAY TERMINUS
NOW CALLED HOME.



STILL
HARD TO BELIEVE
WHAT HAPPENED
TO ME...



"...THE WAY THAT MONSTER BIT ME... INJECTED SOMETHING INTO MY SPINE... LEFT ME FOR DEAD..."

...BUT INSTEAD I WOKE UP ALMOST INVULNERABLE... MY SKIN TURNED TO "ARMOR"... STRENGTH AND SPEED INCREASED... SENSES ENHANCED.



FEELS GREAT, BUT NO WAY I CAN CONTINUE BEING KELVIN MAO THE COP LOOKING LIKE THIS--AND BESIDES, I'M OFFICIALLY DEAD.



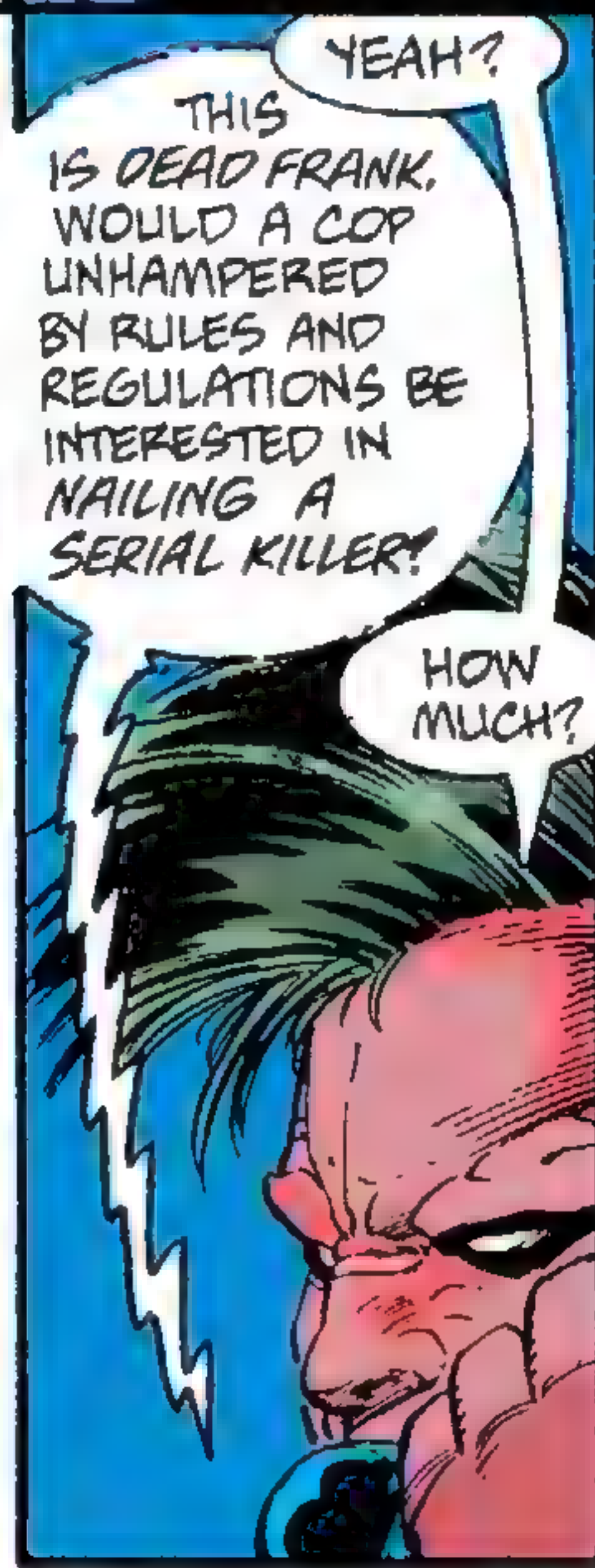
SO, TO EAT, I'VE GOTTA BE MORE MERCENARY THAN VIGILANTE... BUT STILL, A MERCENARY WHO ONLY ACCEPTS JOBS THAT NEED TO BE DONE.



POK
POK
POK

DEET DEET
DEET DEET

WONDER HOW THE BATMAN SCORES HIS BREAD...



YEAH?

THIS IS DEAD FRANK. WOULD A COP UNHAMPERED BY RULES AND REGULATIONS BE INTERESTED IN NAILING A SERIAL KILLER?

HOW MUCH?

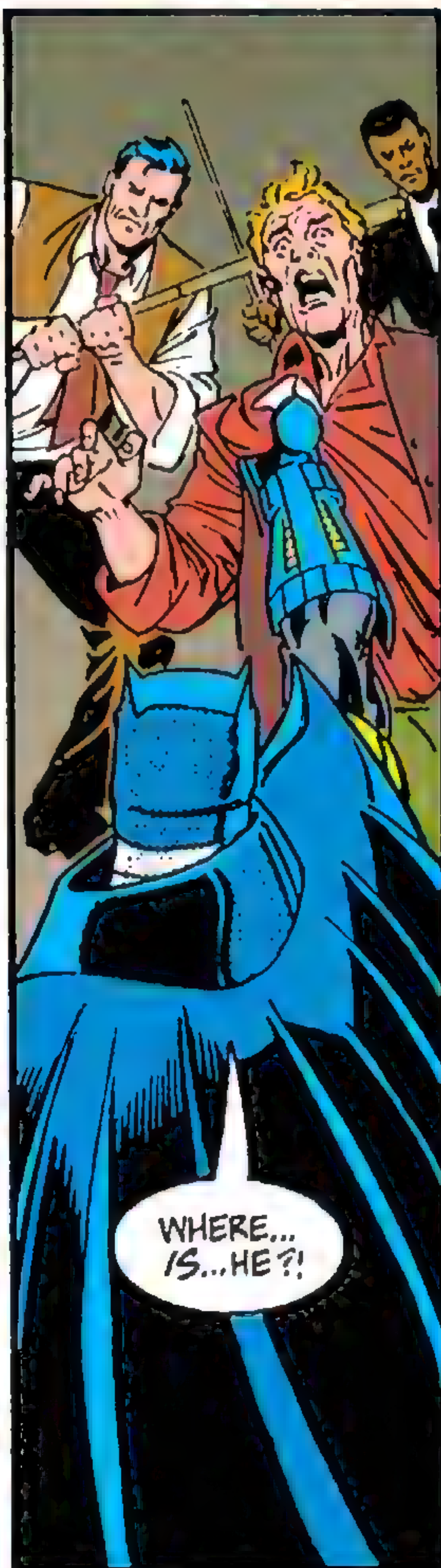
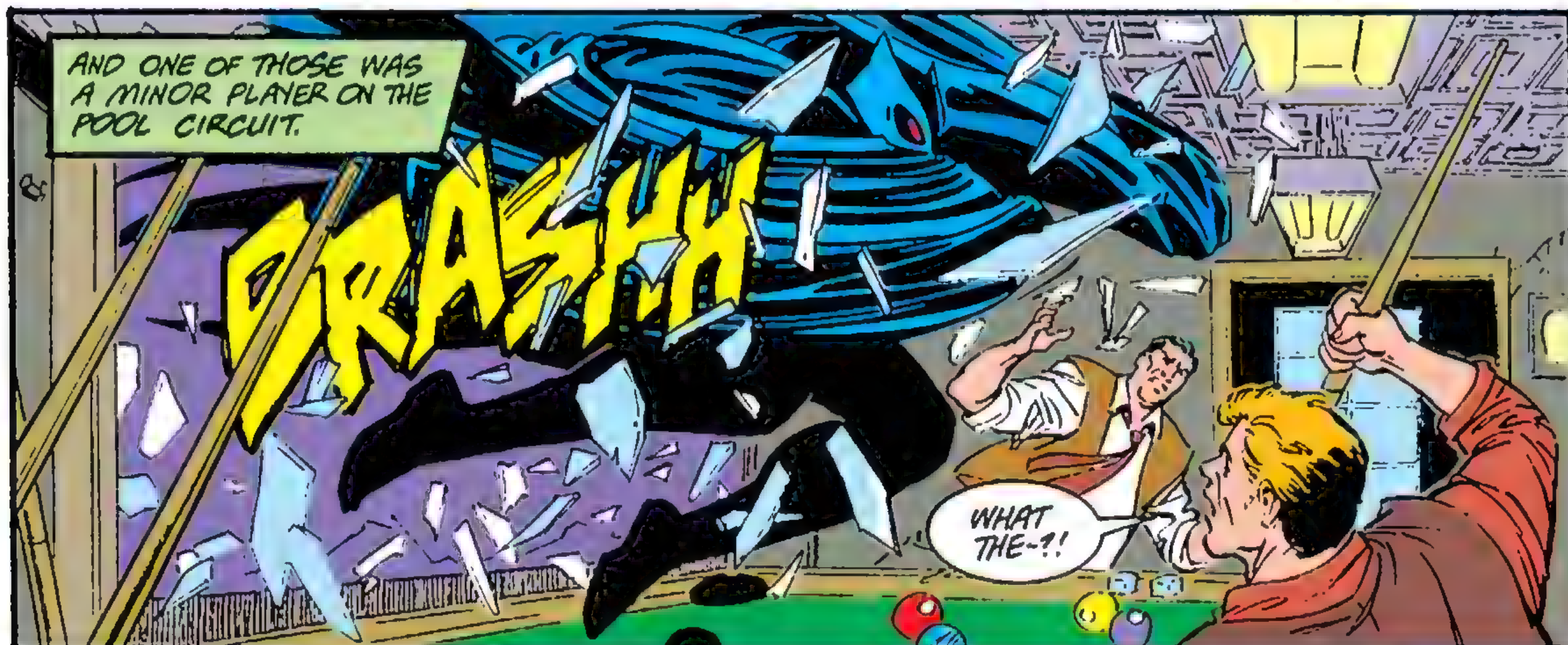


FIFTY-K.

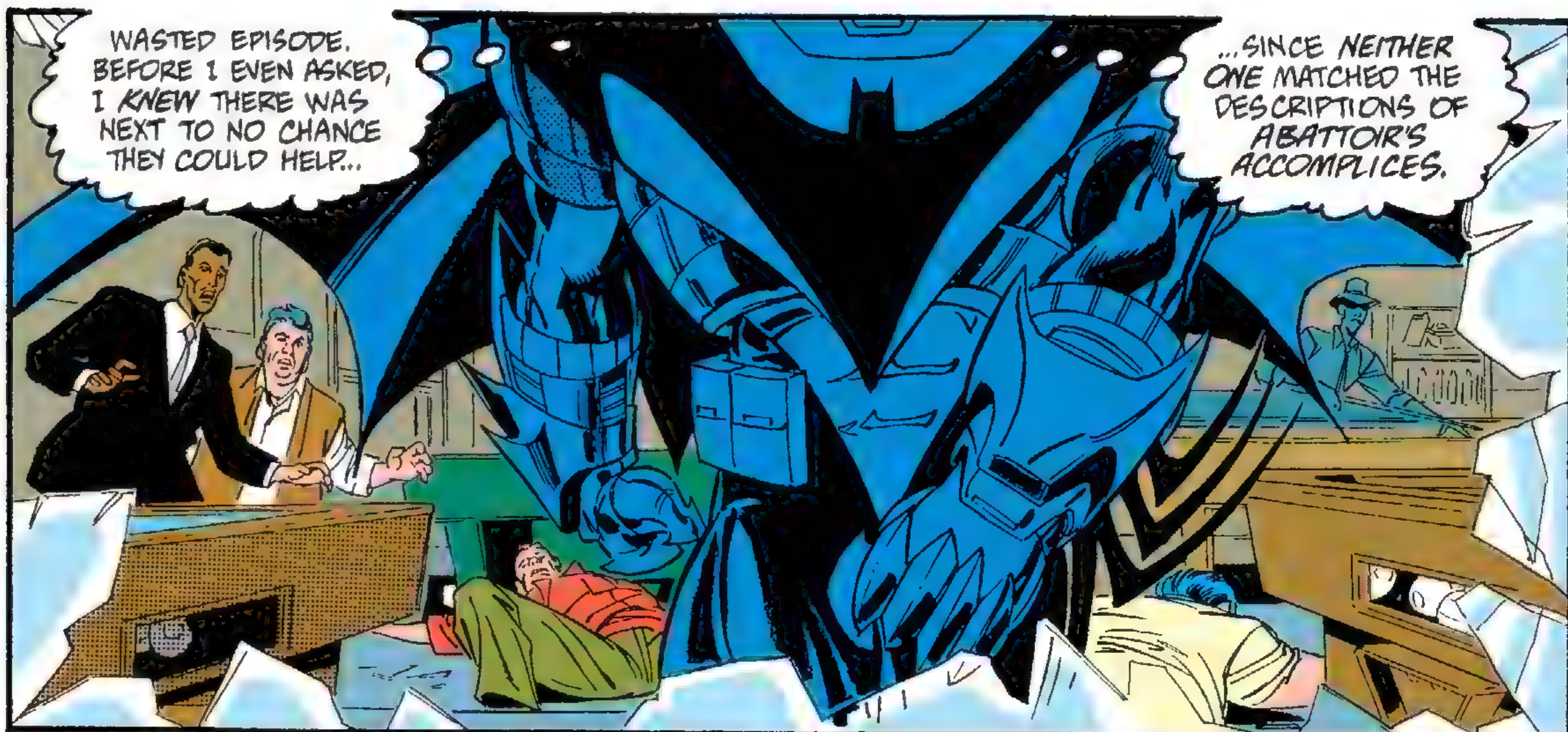
AND HOW MUCH, DEAD FRANK, BEFORE YOUR COMMISSION?

OKAY, SEVENTY-FIVE-K-- BUT MY TEN-PERCENT COMES OUTTA THAT.

WHO'S THE SERIAL KILLER, AND HOW DO I START HAMMERING?

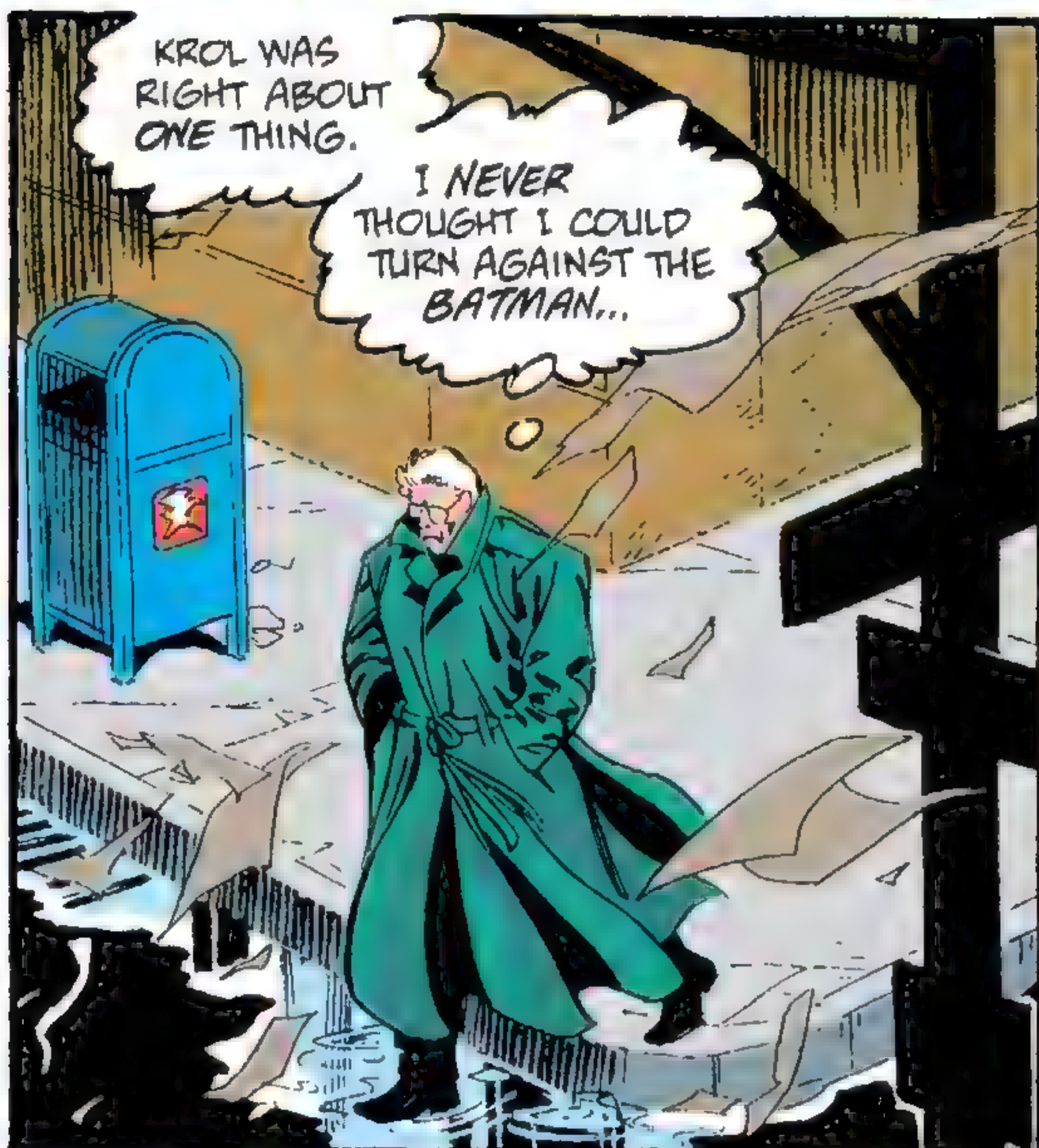






WASTED EPISODE.
BEFORE I EVEN ASKED,
I KNEW THERE WAS
NEXT TO NO CHANCE
THEY COULD HELP...

...SINCE NEITHER
ONE MATCHED THE
DESCRIPTIONS OF
ABATTOR'S
ACCOMPLICES.



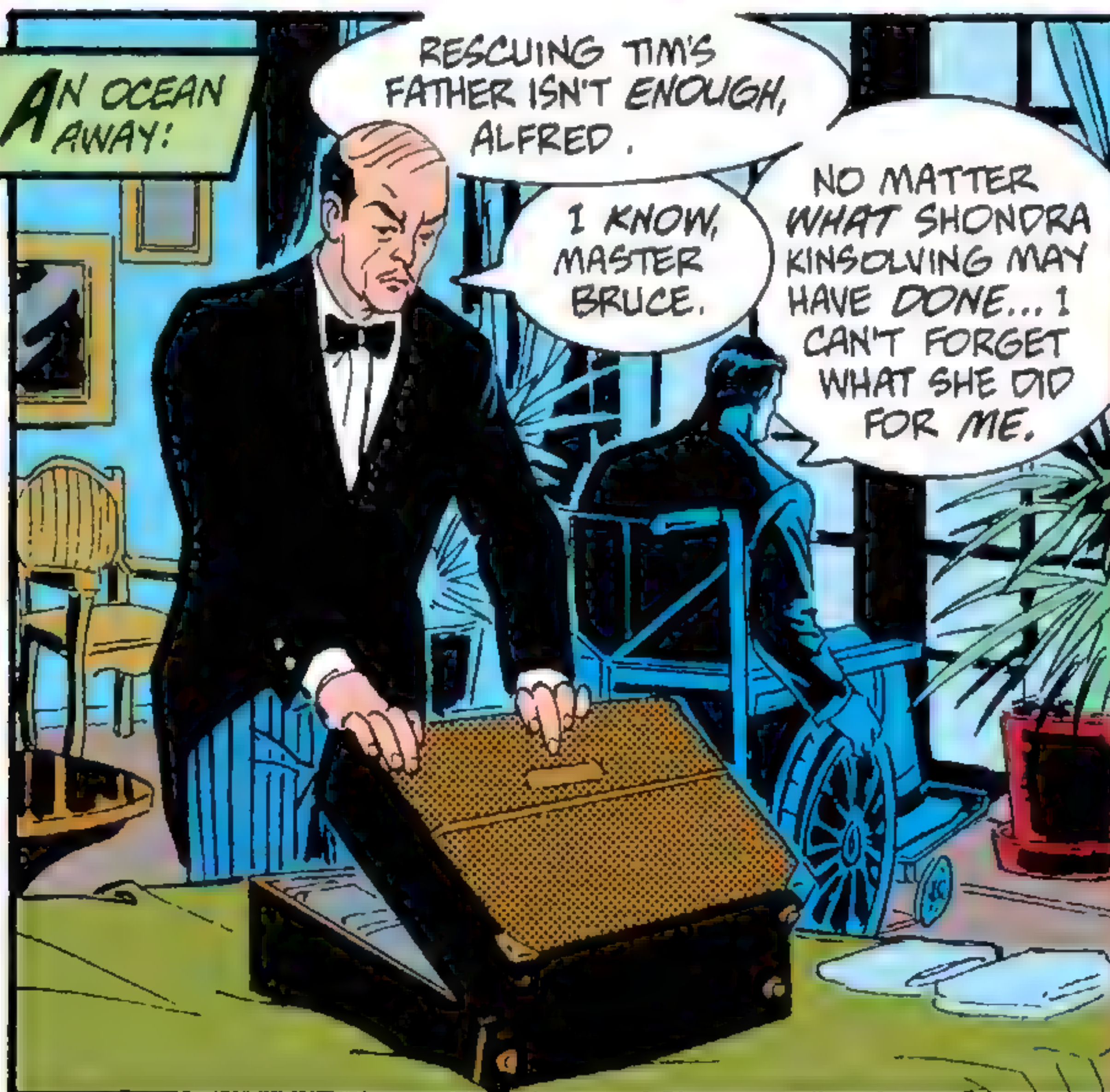
KROL WAS
RIGHT ABOUT
ONE THING.

I NEVER
THOUGHT I COULD
TURN AGAINST THE
BATMAN...



BUT HE'S CHANGED...
NOT THE SAME MAN
I KNEW.

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIM?



AN OCEAN
AWAY!

RESCUING TIM'S
FATHER ISN'T ENOUGH,
ALFRED.

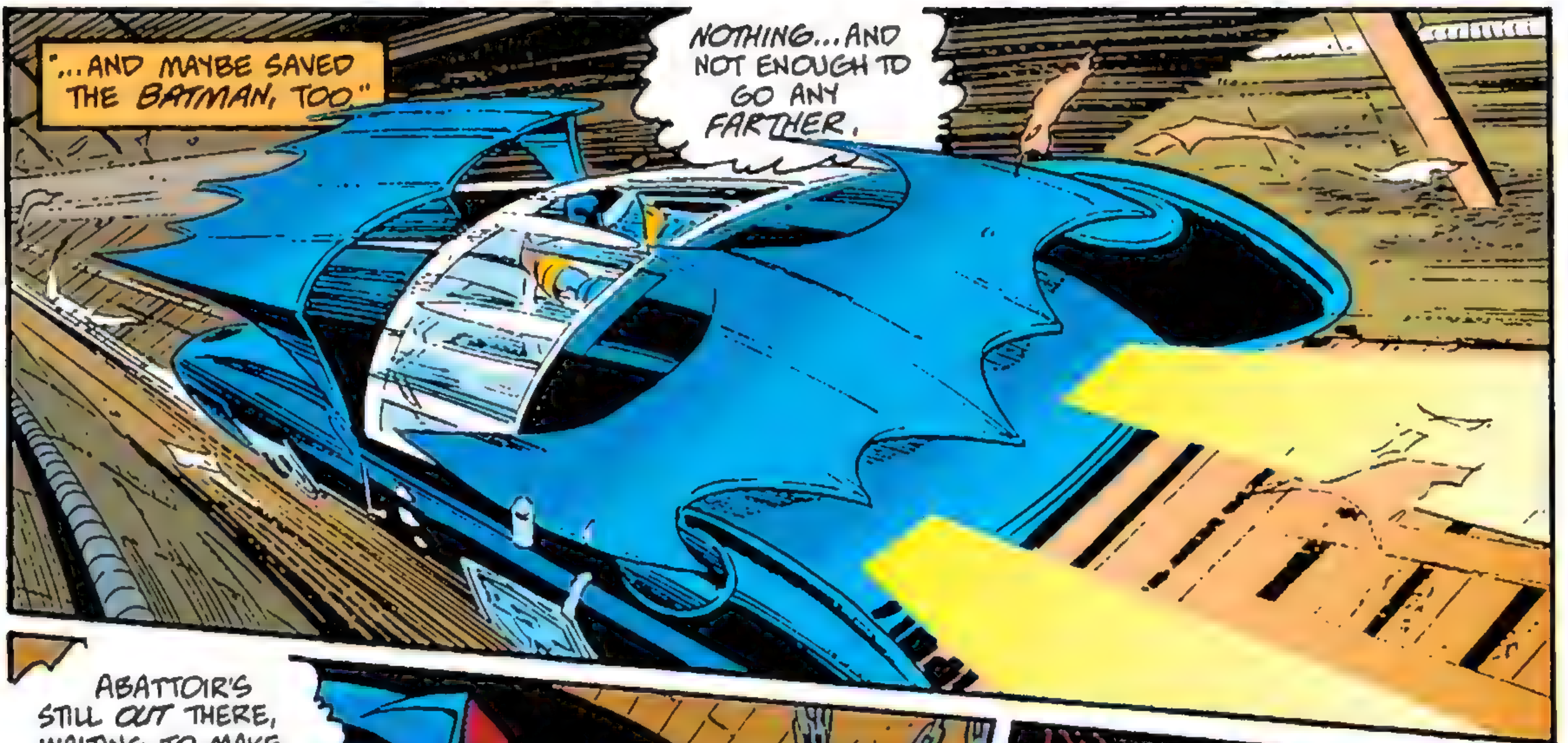
I KNOW,
MASTER
BRUCE.

NO MATTER
WHAT SHONDRA
KINSOLVING MAY
HAVE DONE... I
CAN'T FORGET
WHAT SHE DID
FOR ME.



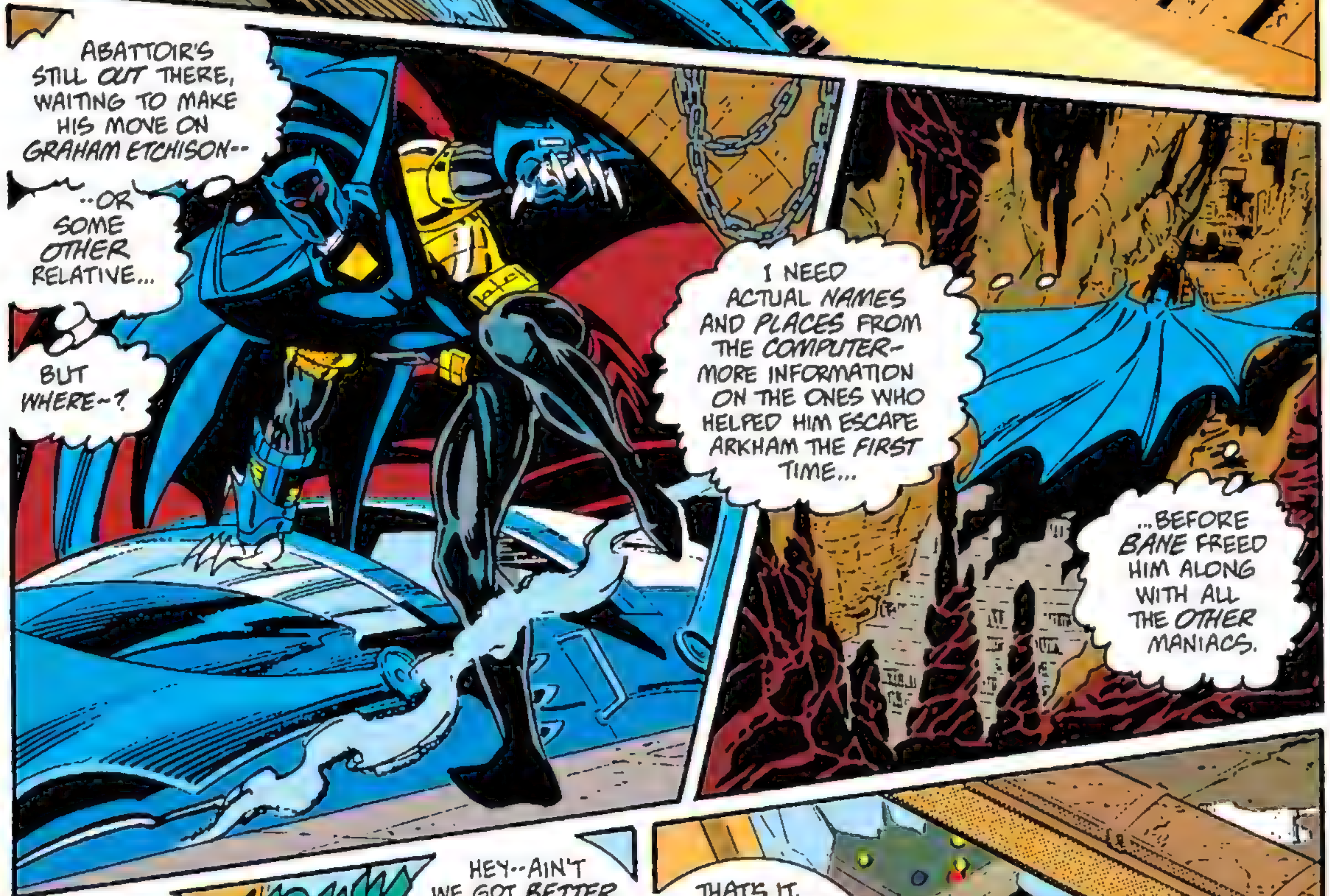
WHEN I
NEEDED HELP
THE MOST...
SHE WAS
THERE.

SHE
SAVED
ME,
ALFRED...



"...AND MAYBE SAVED THE BATMAN, TOO."

NOTHING...AND NOT ENOUGH TO GO ANY FARTHER.



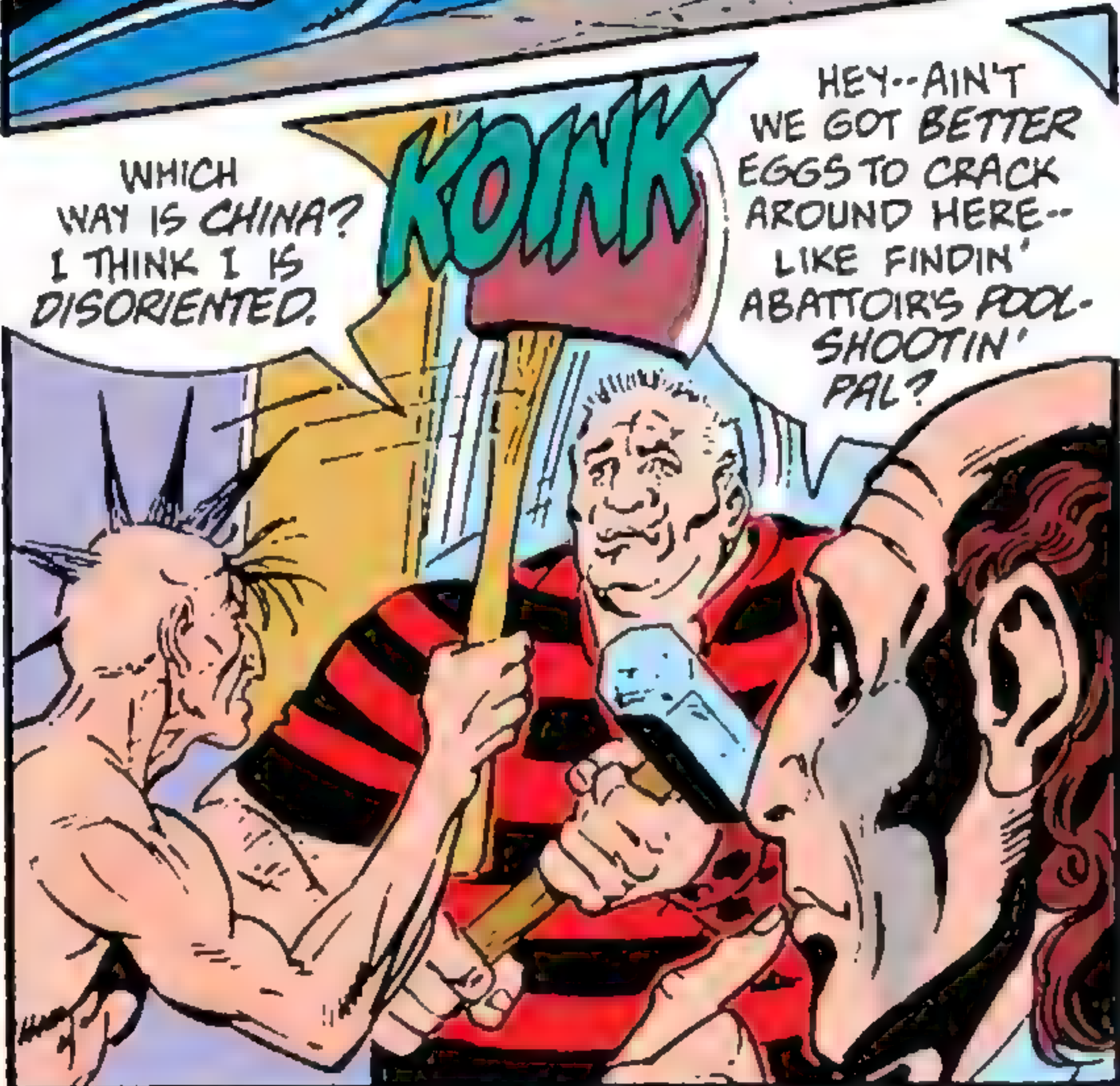
ABATTOIR'S STILL OUT THERE, WAITING TO MAKE HIS MOVE ON GRAHAM ETCHISON--

--OR SOME OTHER RELATIVE...

BUT WHERE--?

I NEED ACTUAL NAMES AND PLACES FROM THE COMPUTER--MORE INFORMATION ON THE ONES WHO HELPED HIM ESCAPE ARKHAM THE FIRST TIME...

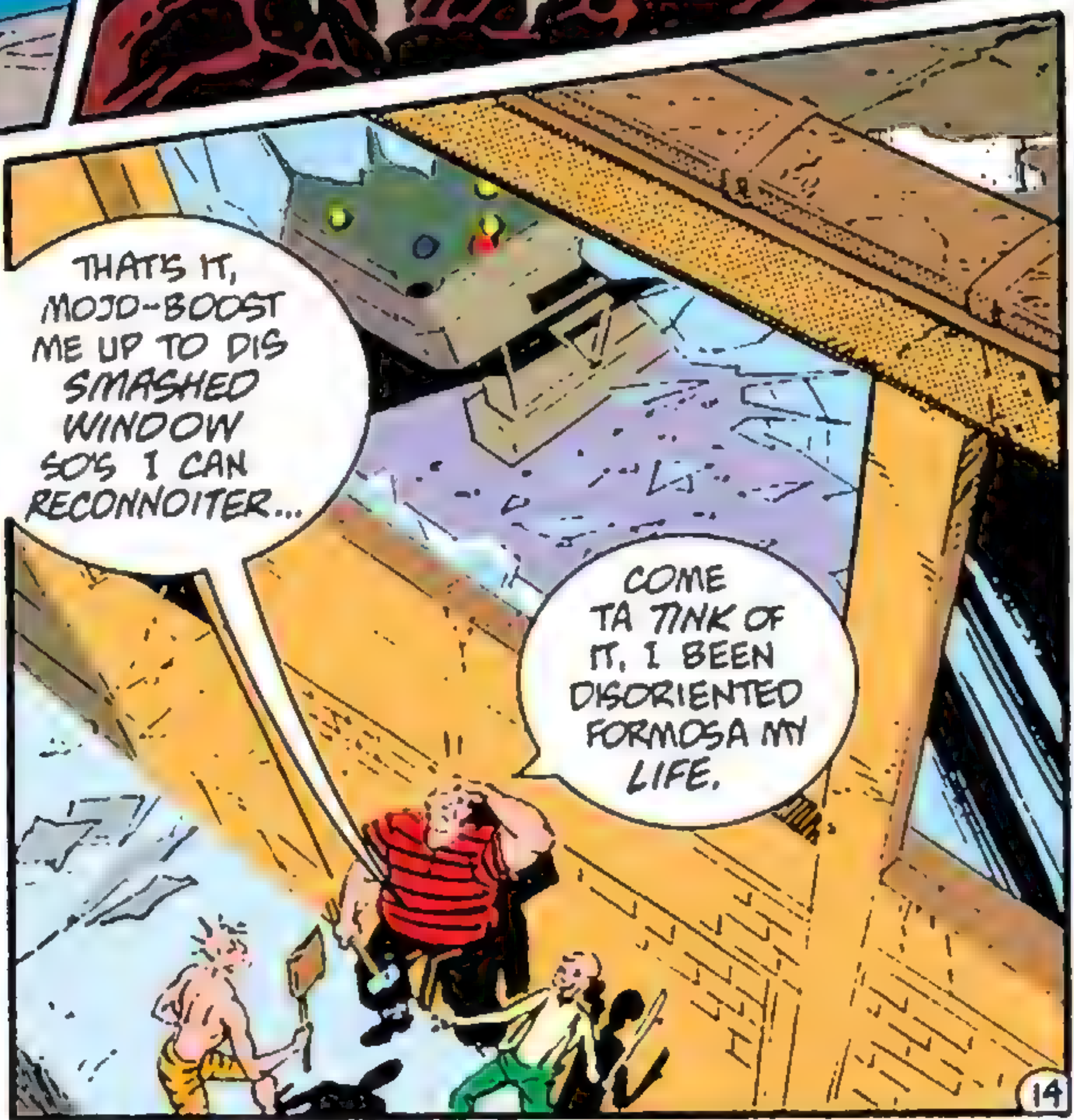
...BEFORE BANE FREED HIM ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER MANIACS.



WHICH WAY IS CHINA? I THINK I IS DISORIENTED.

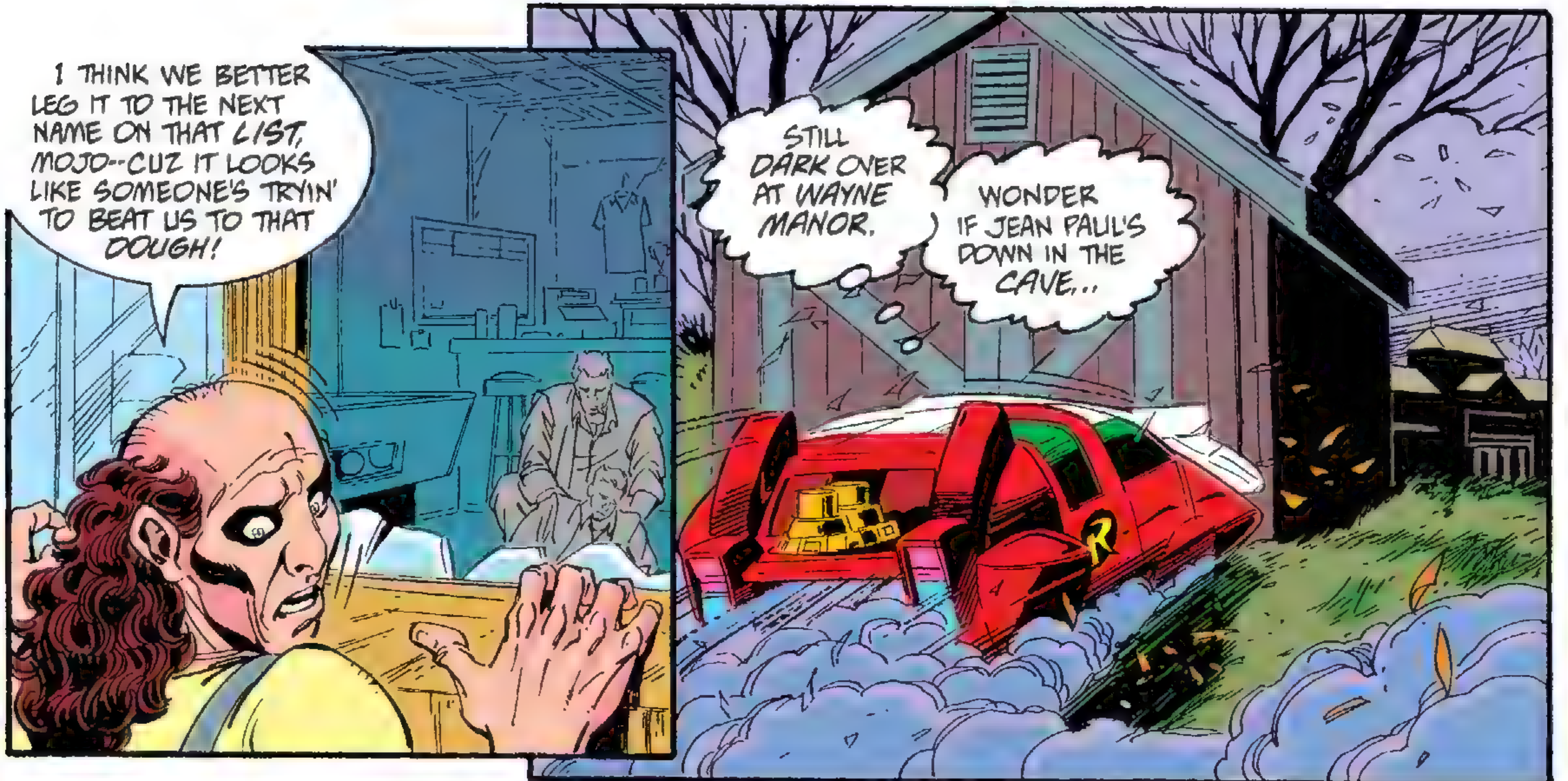
KOINK

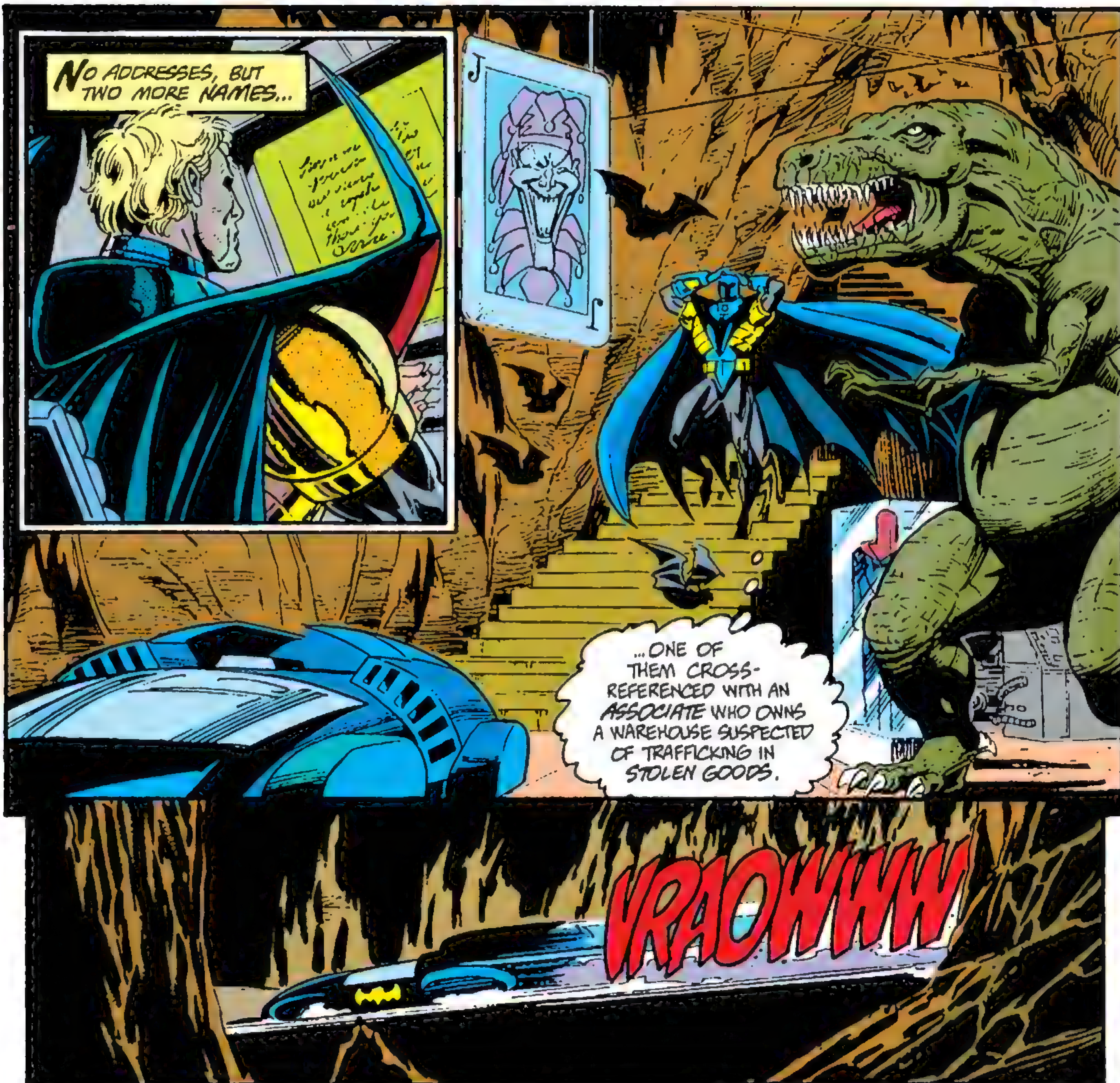
HEY--AIN'T WE GOT BETTER EGGS TO CRACK AROUND HERE-- LIKE FINDIN' ABATTOIR'S POOL-SHOOTIN' PAL?

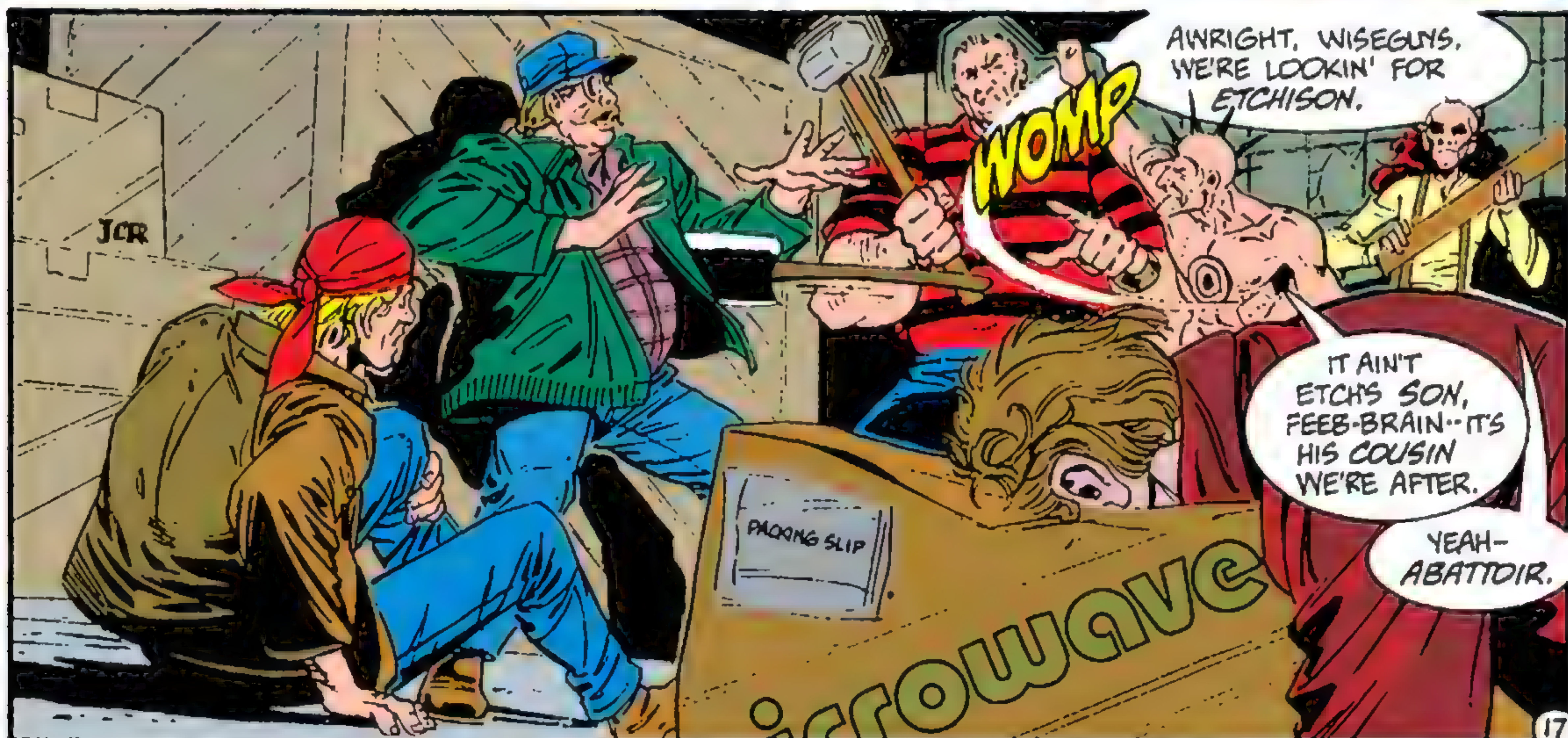
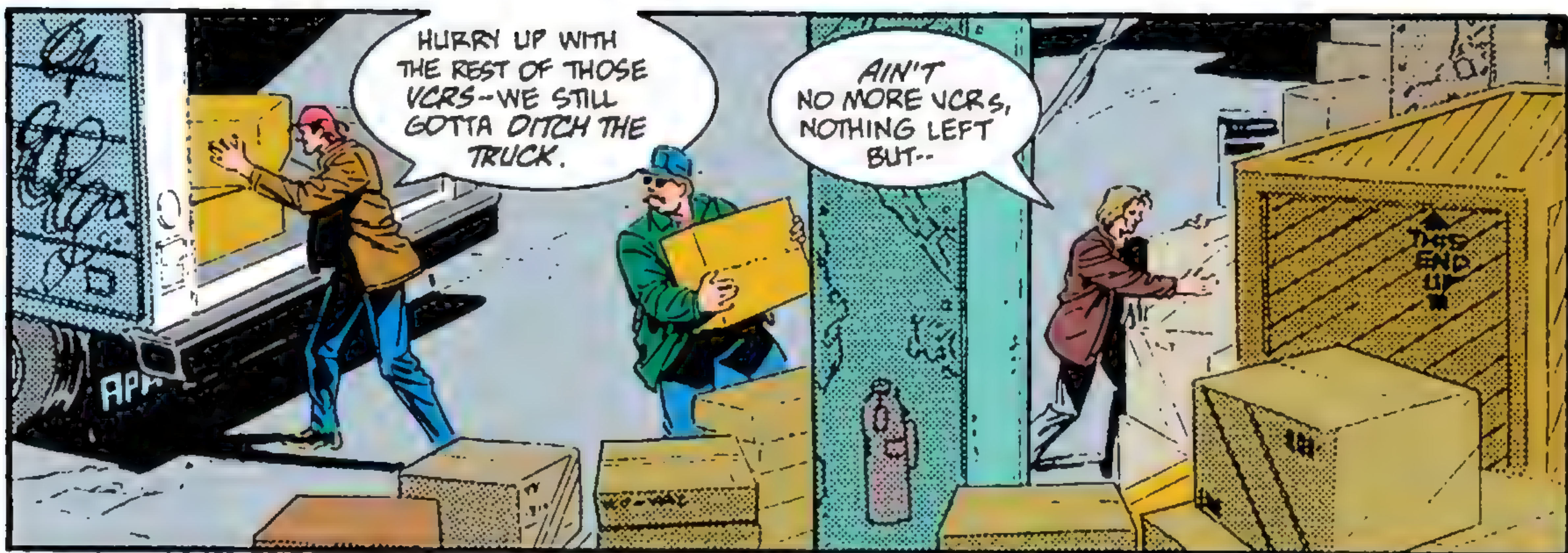


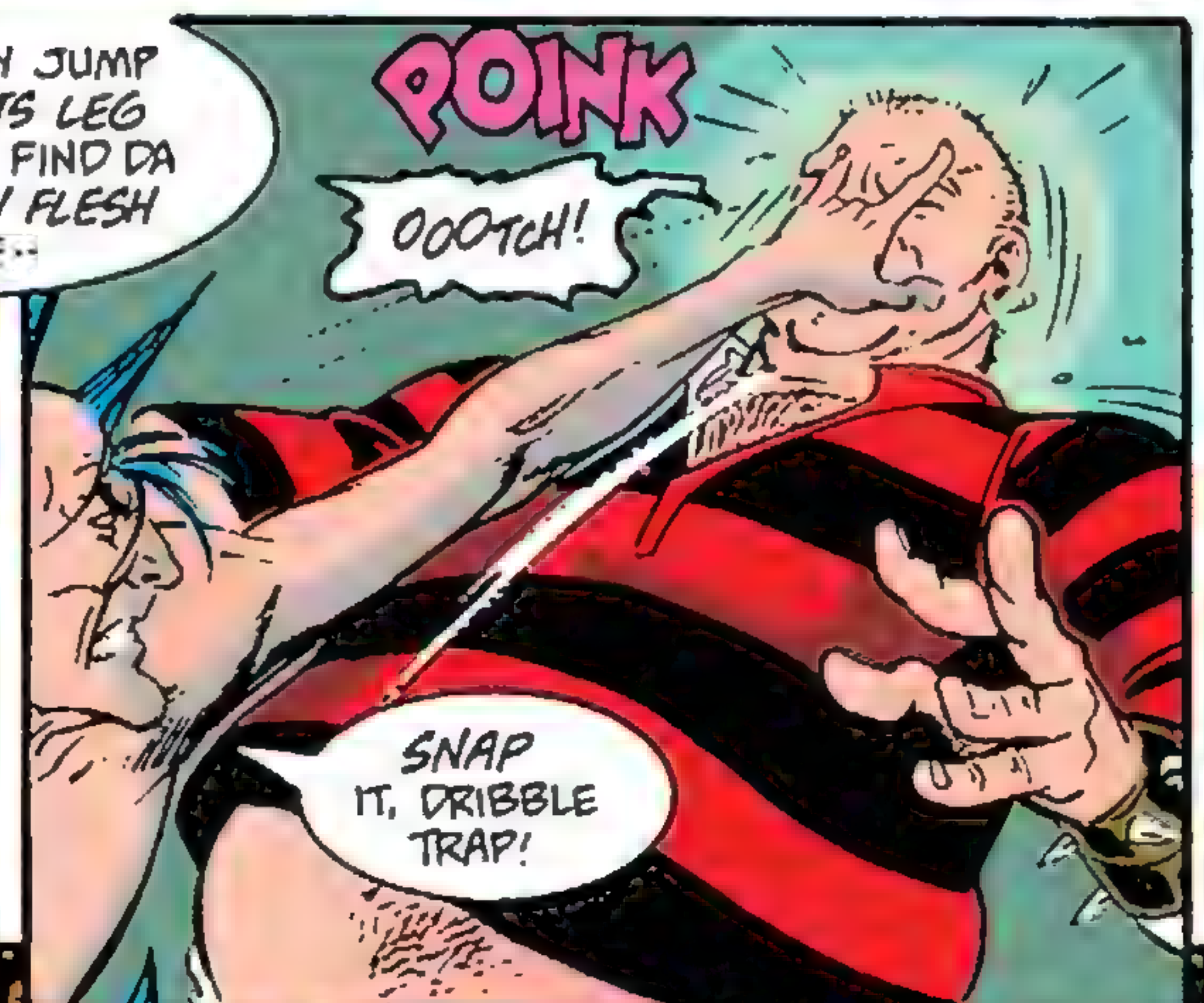
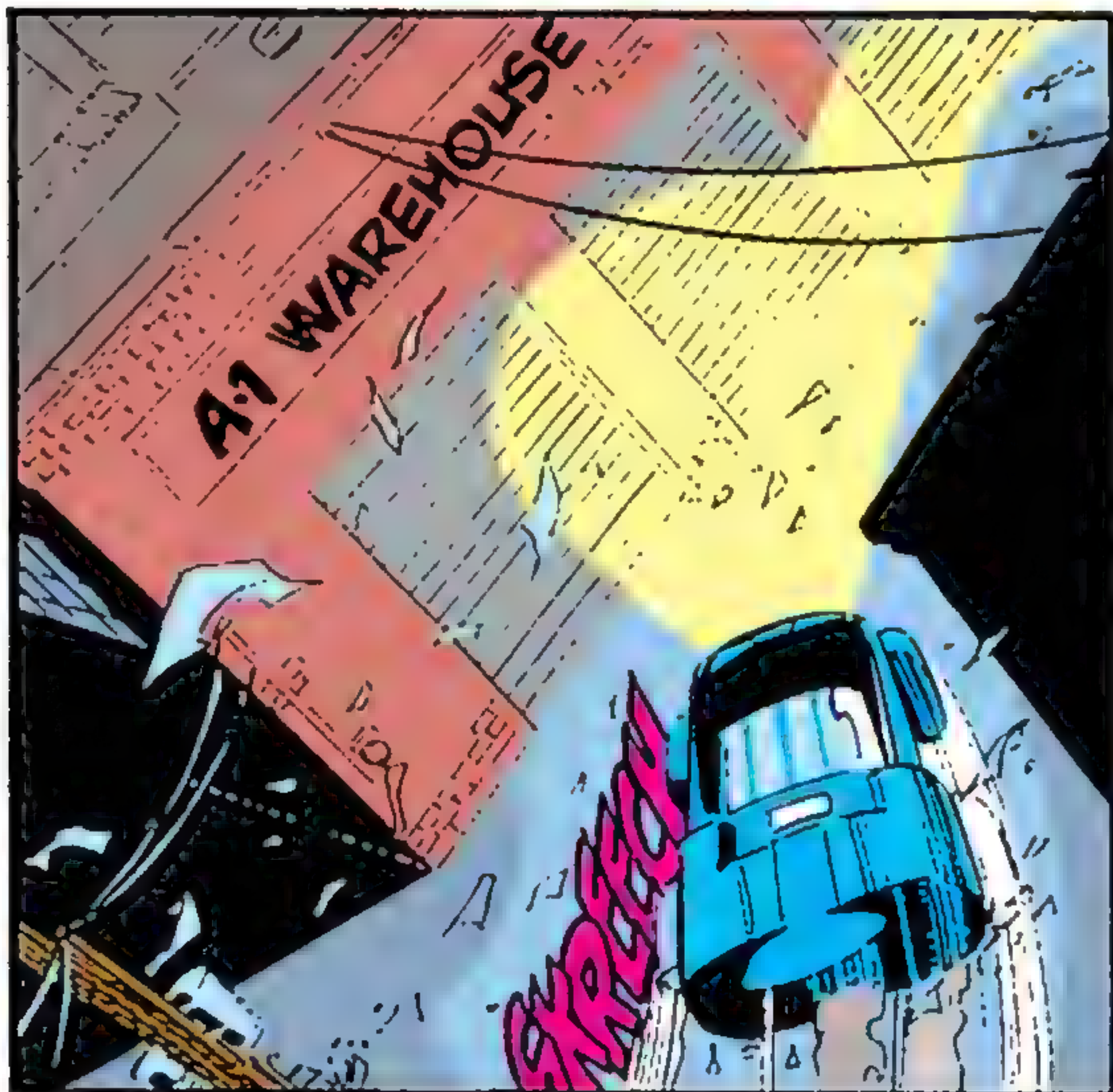
THAT'S IT, MOJO-BOOST ME UP TO DIS SMASHED WINDOW SO'S I CAN RECONNOITER...

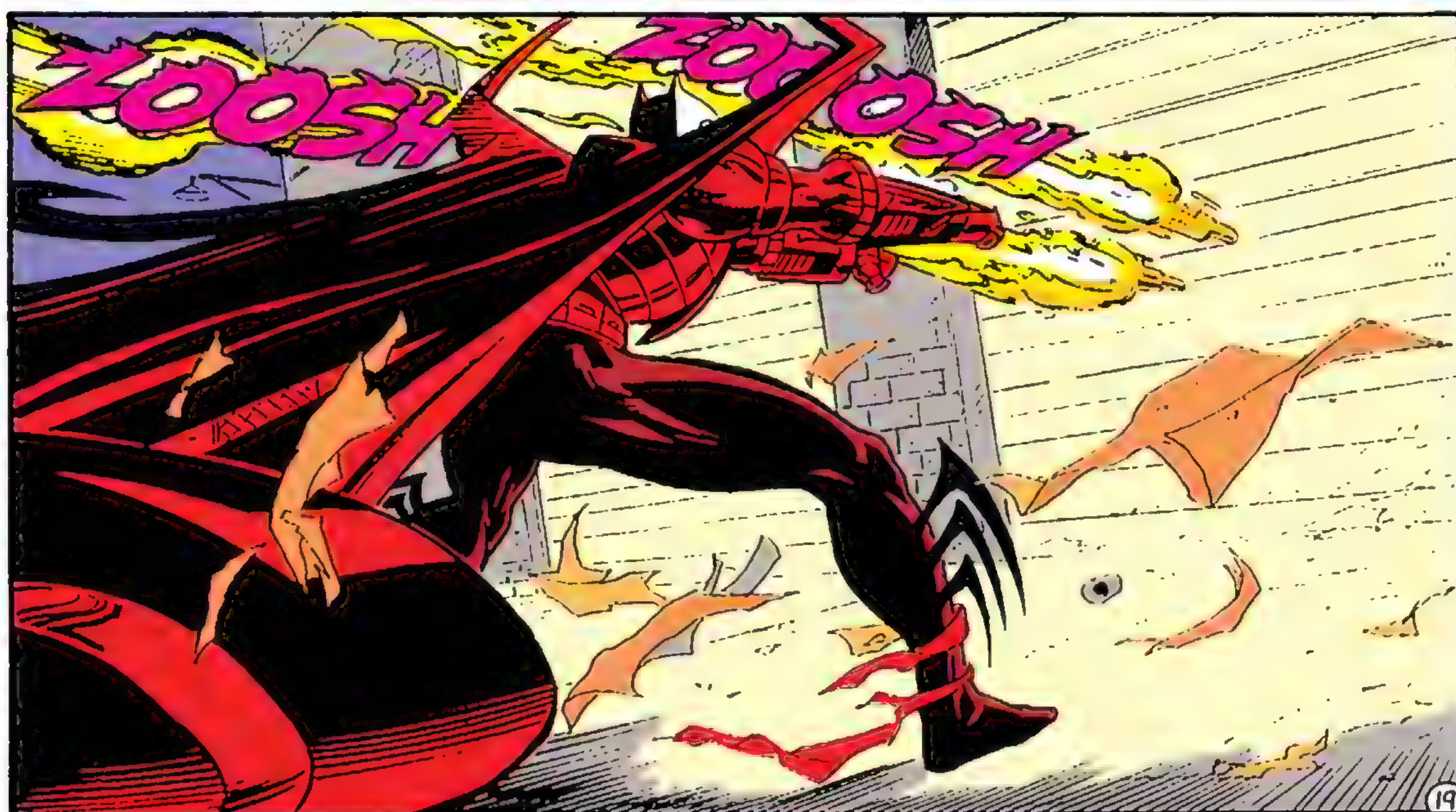
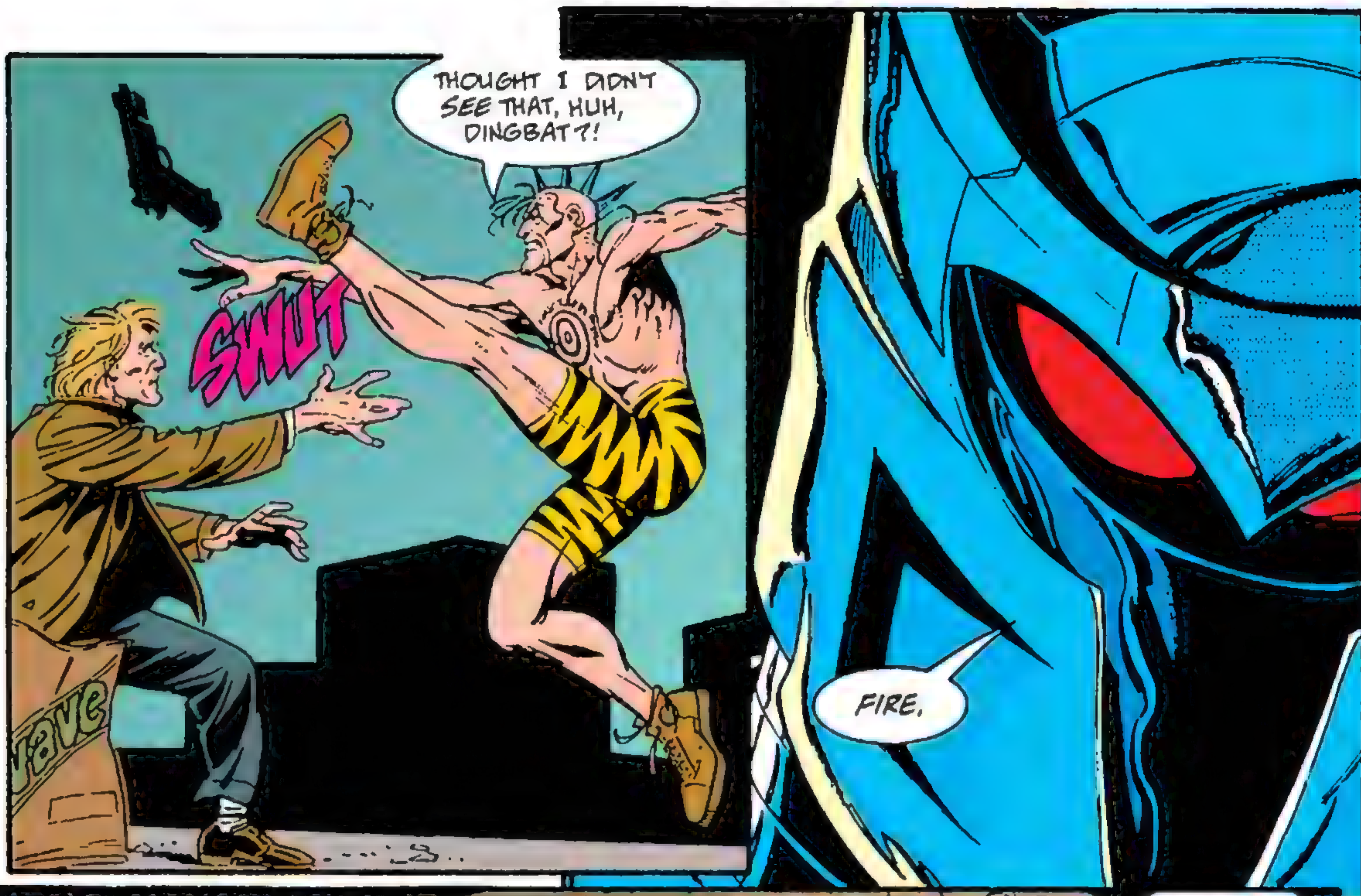
COME TA TINK OF IT, I BEEN DISORIENTED FORMOSA MY LIFE.

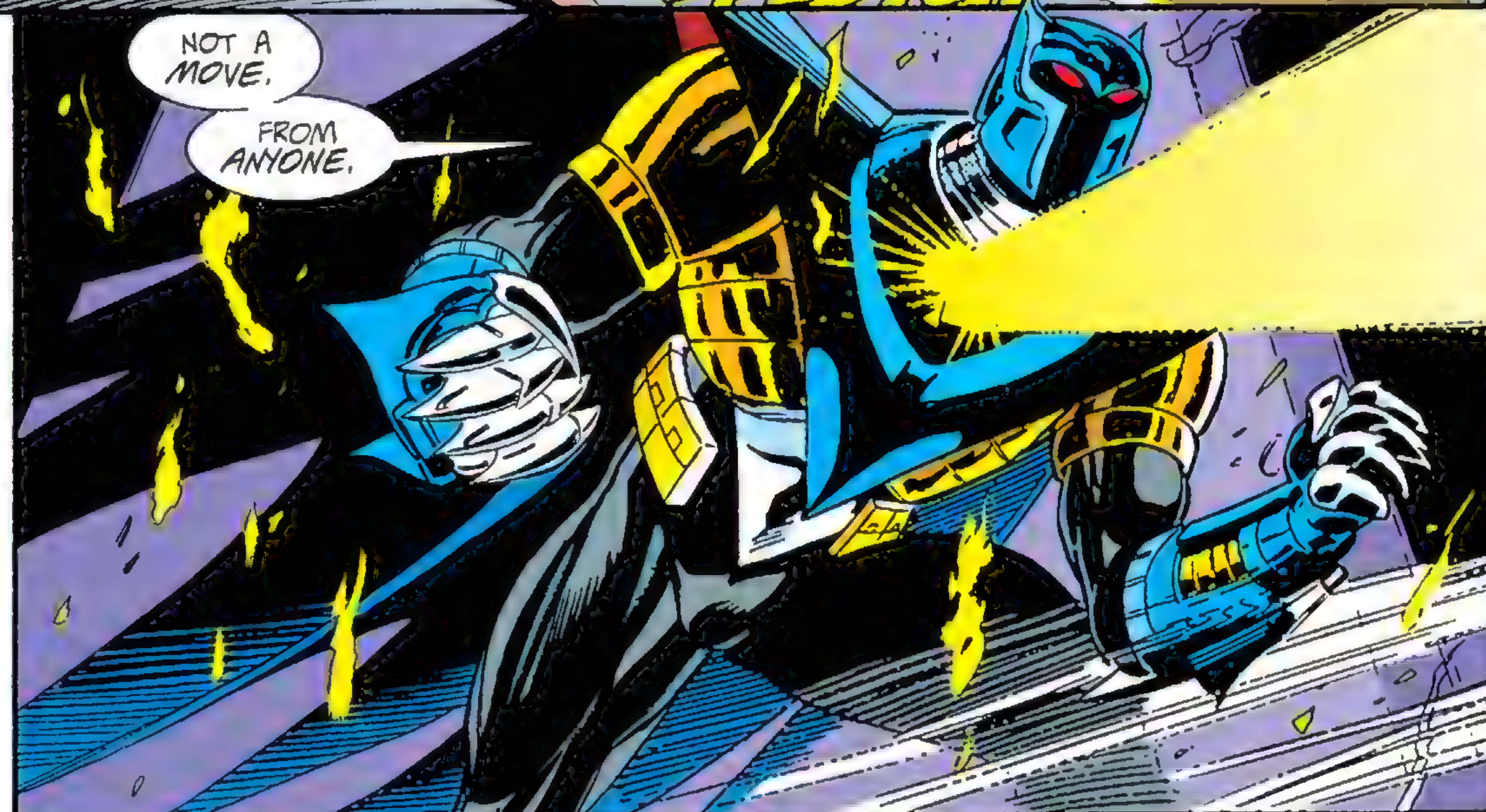






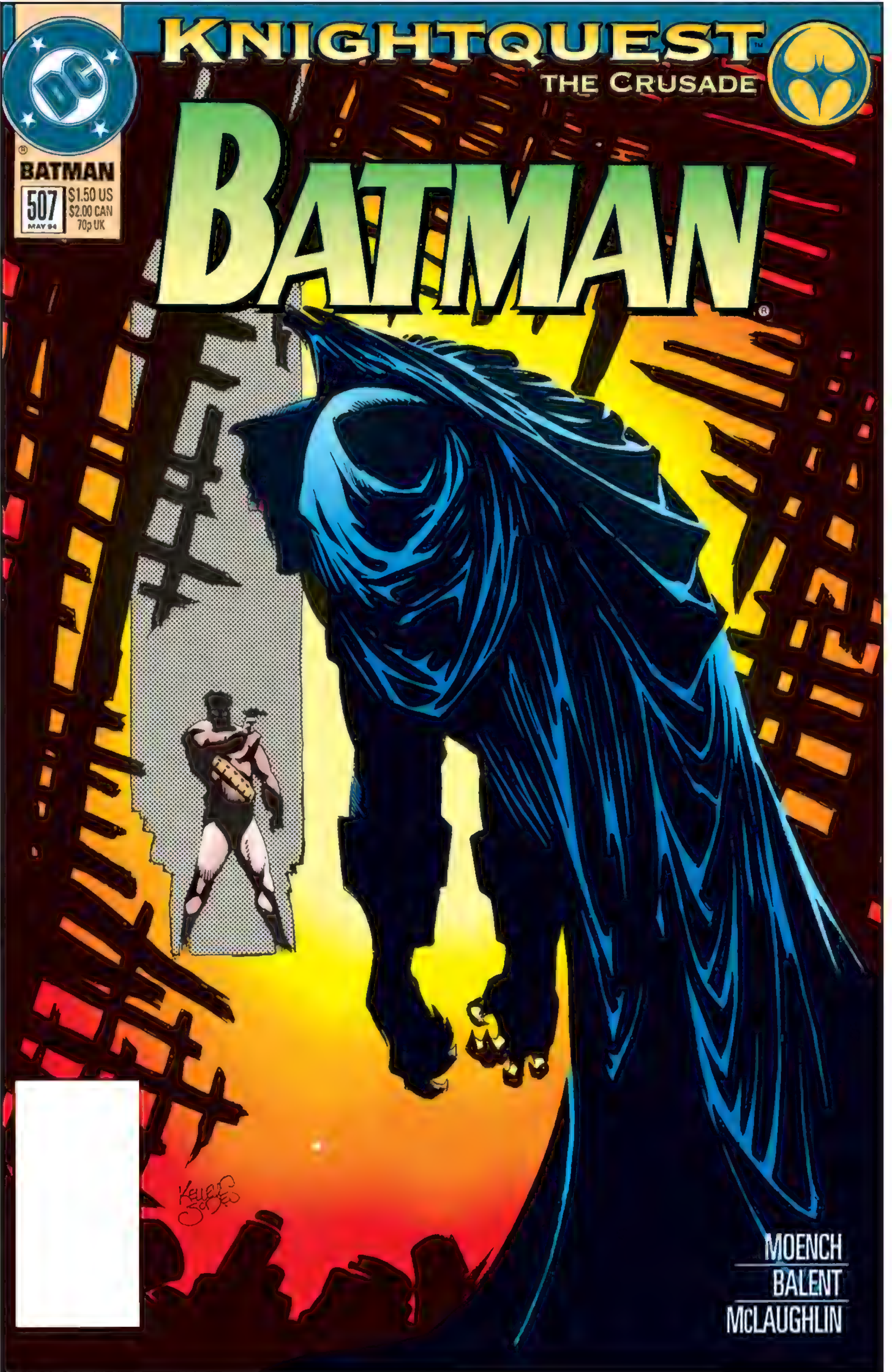








Cover art by KELLEY JONES




BATMAN
507 \$1.50 US
MAY 94 \$2.00 CAN
70p UK

KNIGHTQUEST™
THE CRUSADE



BATMAN®

MOENCH
BALENT
MCLAUGHLIN

Kelley Jones

Ballistic

BACK ON THE NIGHT OF THE BLIZZARD, WHETHER BY HIS OWN VOLITION OR THE DICTATES OF THE SYSTEM PLANTED IN HIS MIND, HE CHOSE SAVING A BUSFUL OF KIDS OVER STOPPING A SERIAL KILLER.

NOW, HE HAS CRASHED THIS WAREHOUSE SEEKING A LINE ON ESCAPED ABATTOIR-- BUT HAS FOUND, INSTEAD, THREE THUGS, THREE MANIACS, AND ONE ARMED-TO-THE-TEETH FREAK.

THE NAME'S BALLISTIC IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN...

...AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BOTH HUNTING THE SAME GAME.

DOUG MOENCH--writer JIM BALENT--penciller
FRANK McLAUGHLIN--inker
ADRIENNE ROY--colorist WILLIE SCHUBERT--letterer
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL--assist. editor DENNIS O'NEIL--editor
Batman created by BOB KANE
Ballistic created by MOENCH & MAHLEY



THE THUGS ARE ALREADY
NEUTRALIZED, LEAVING
MANIACS AND FREAKS.

FAR AS I'M CONCERNED,
WE CAN COVER EACH OTHER'S
BACKS AGAIN, LIKE WE
DID BEFORE--

--BUT
JUST FOR THE
RECORD...



ONCE
ABATTOIR SUCKS
DUST...

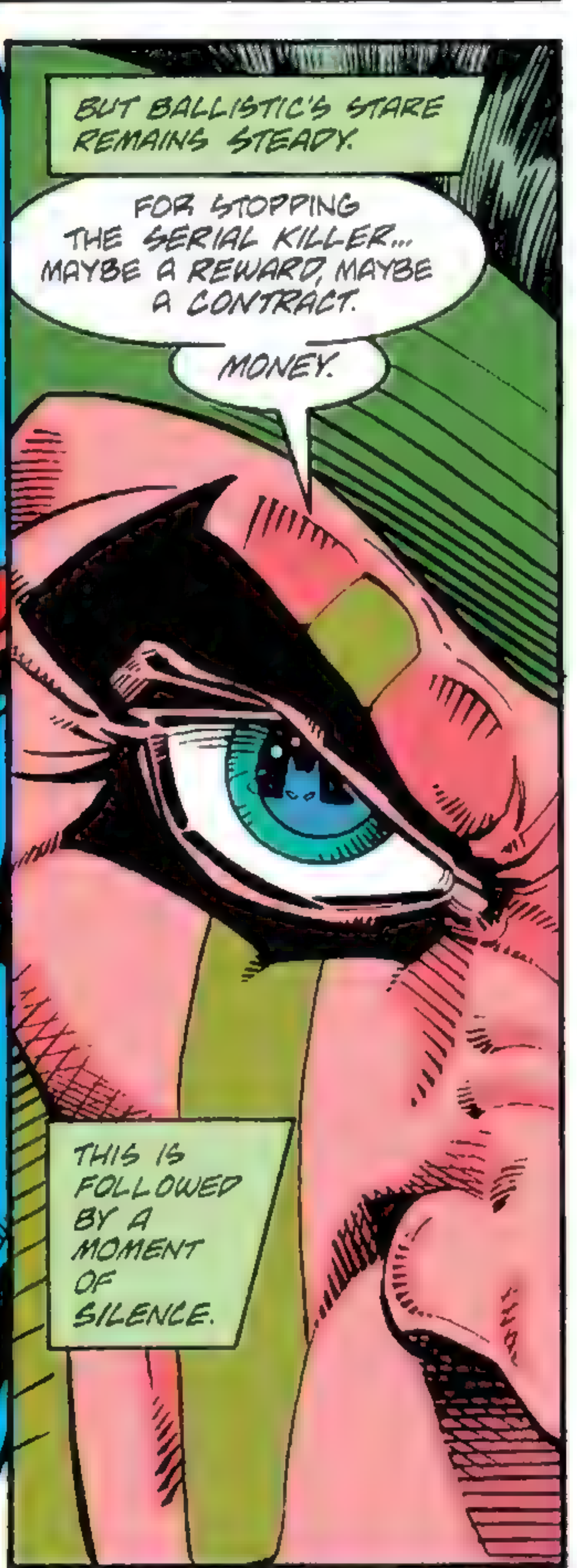
...THE
MONEY'S
MINE.



THIS IS NEW
TO HIM.

MONEY.

HE BLINKS ONCE
BEHIND THE MASK
OF THE BAT.

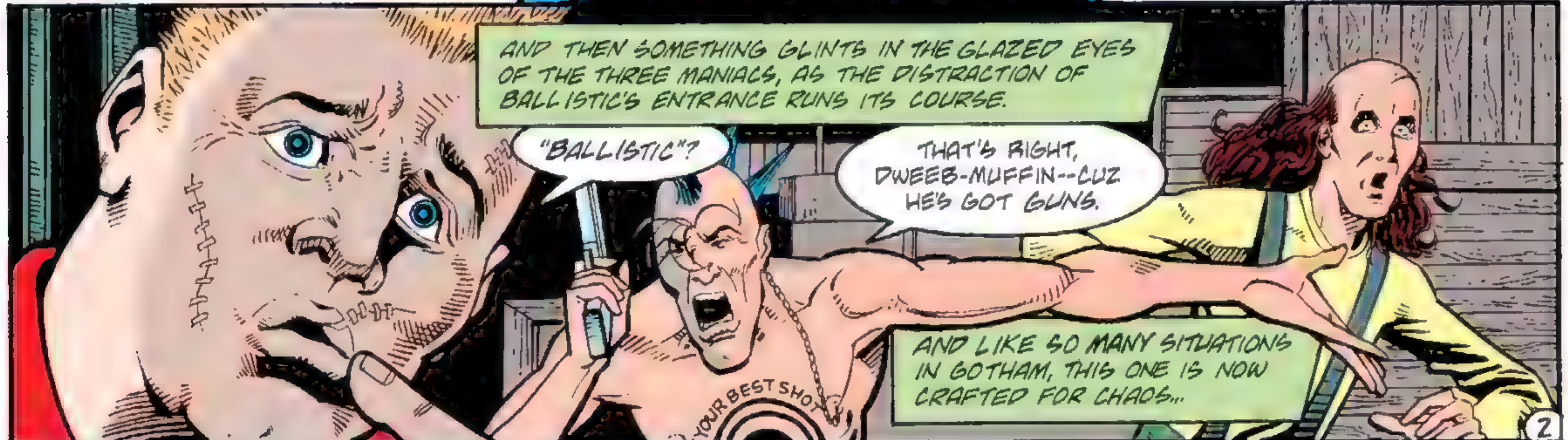


BUT BALLISTIC'S STARE
REMAINS STEADY.

FOR STOPPING
THE SERIAL KILLER...
MAYBE A REWARD, MAYBE
A CONTRACT.

MONEY.

THIS IS
FOLLOWED
BY A
MOMENT
OF
SILENCE.



AND THEN SOMETHING GLINTS IN THE GLAZED EYES
OF THE THREE MANIACS, AS THE DISTRACTION OF
BALLISTIC'S ENTRANCE RUNS ITS COURSE.

"BALLISTIC"?

THAT'S RIGHT,
DWEEB-MUFFIN--LUZ
HE'S GOT GUNS.

AND LIKE SO MANY SITUATIONS
IN GOTHAM, THIS ONE IS NOW
CRAFTED FOR CHAOS.

CLAD IN HIS NEW COSTUME--
ARMOR BECOME WEAPON--
HE CROUCHES, READY TO
CONFRONT IT.

BUT IT DOES NOT
COME HIS WAY.

NOW GET
OUT THERE AN'
STOP HIS
BULLETS!

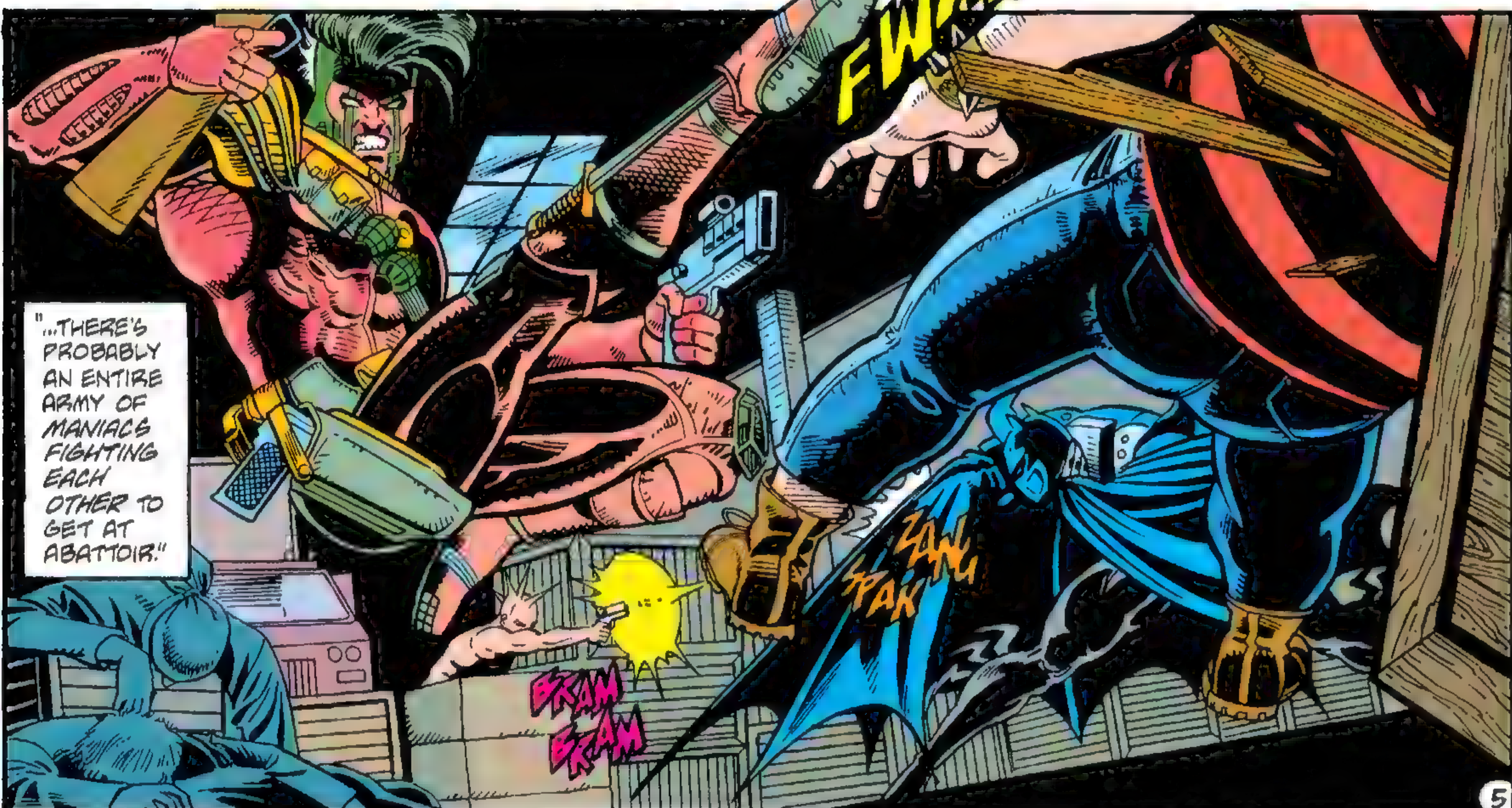
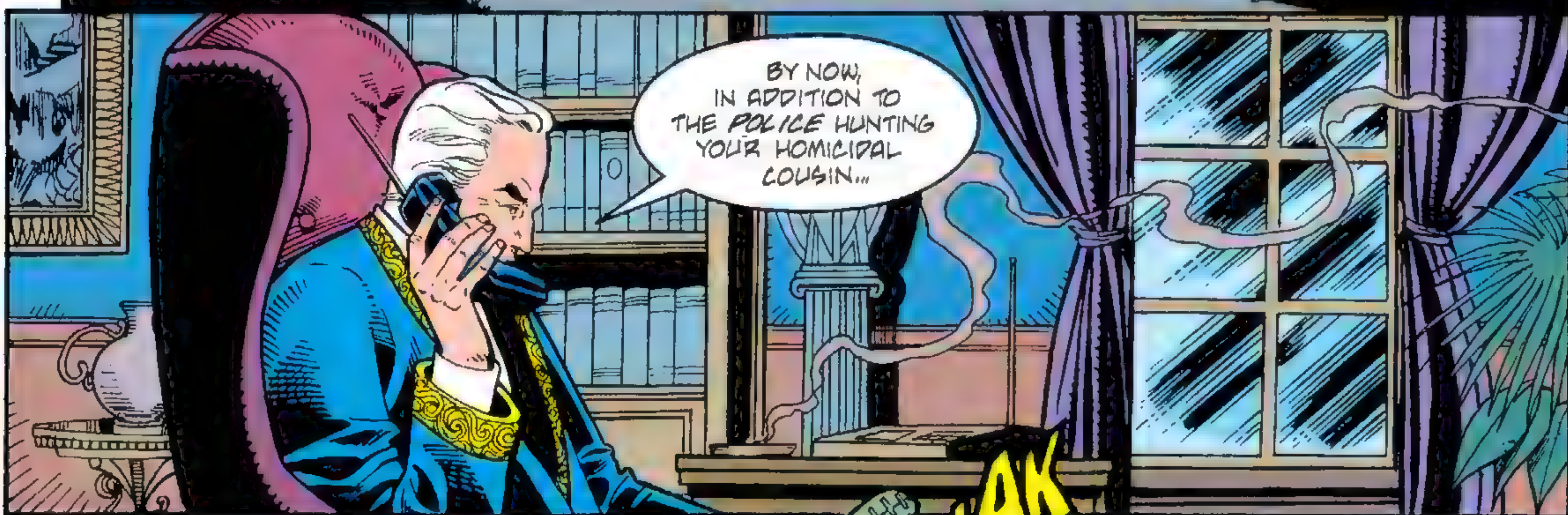
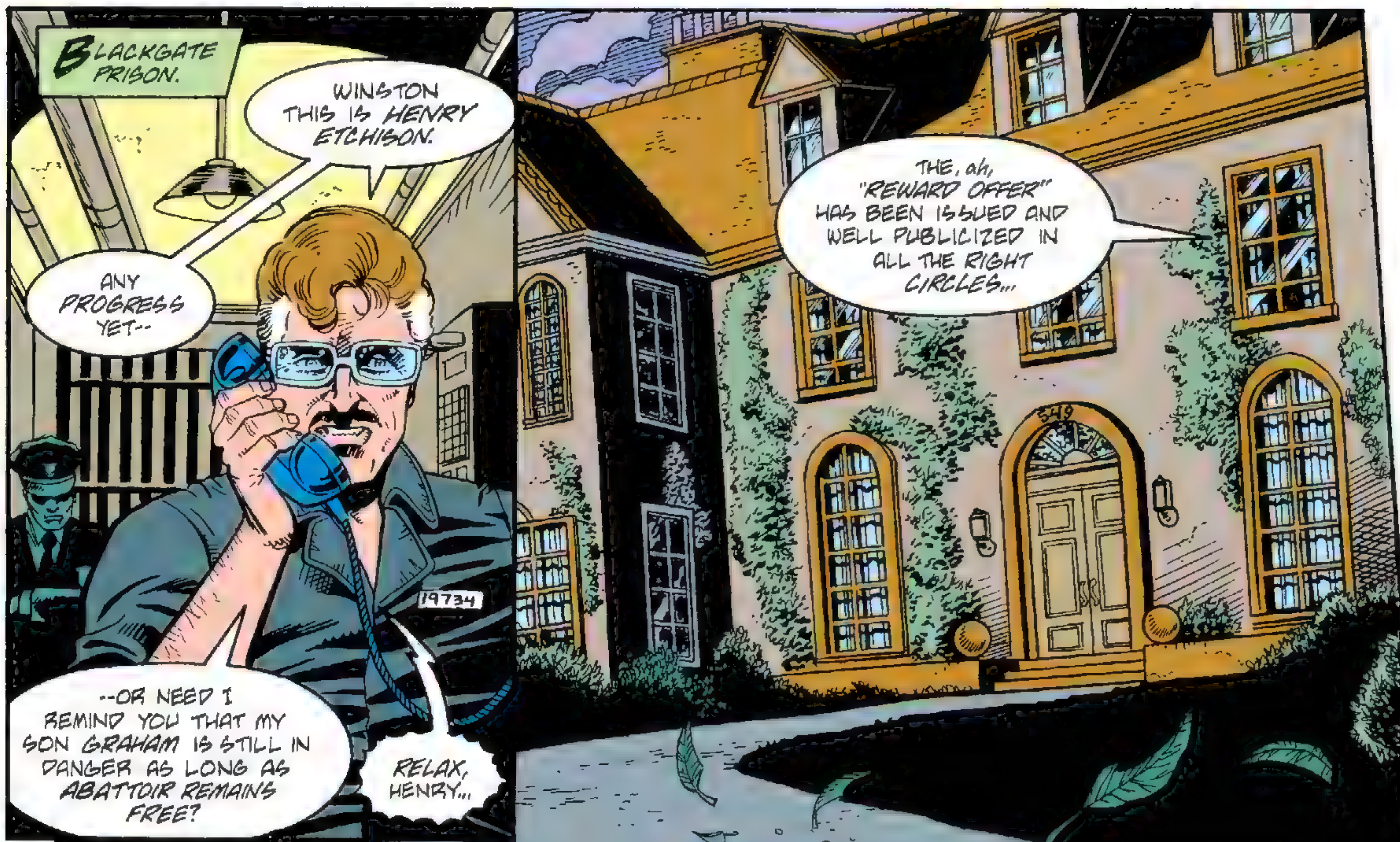
AND THE
TROUBLE WITH
GUNS LIES
IN THEIR
FINALITY...

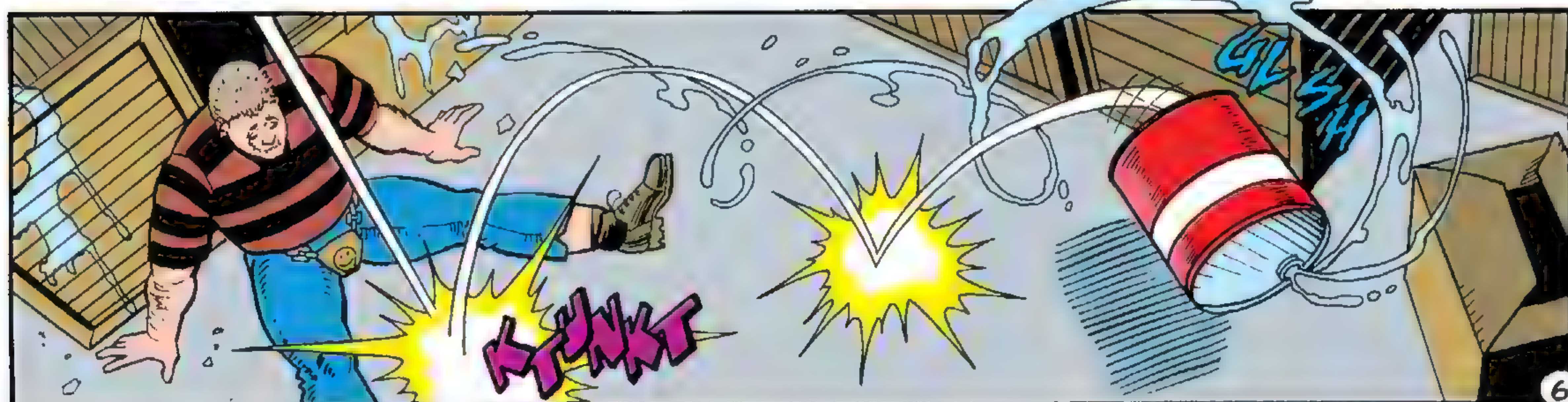
...THE IRREVERSIBILITY
OF THEIR IMPACT.

IF THE GOAL IS
INFORMATION,
GUNS ONLY
WORK WHEN
NOT USED.

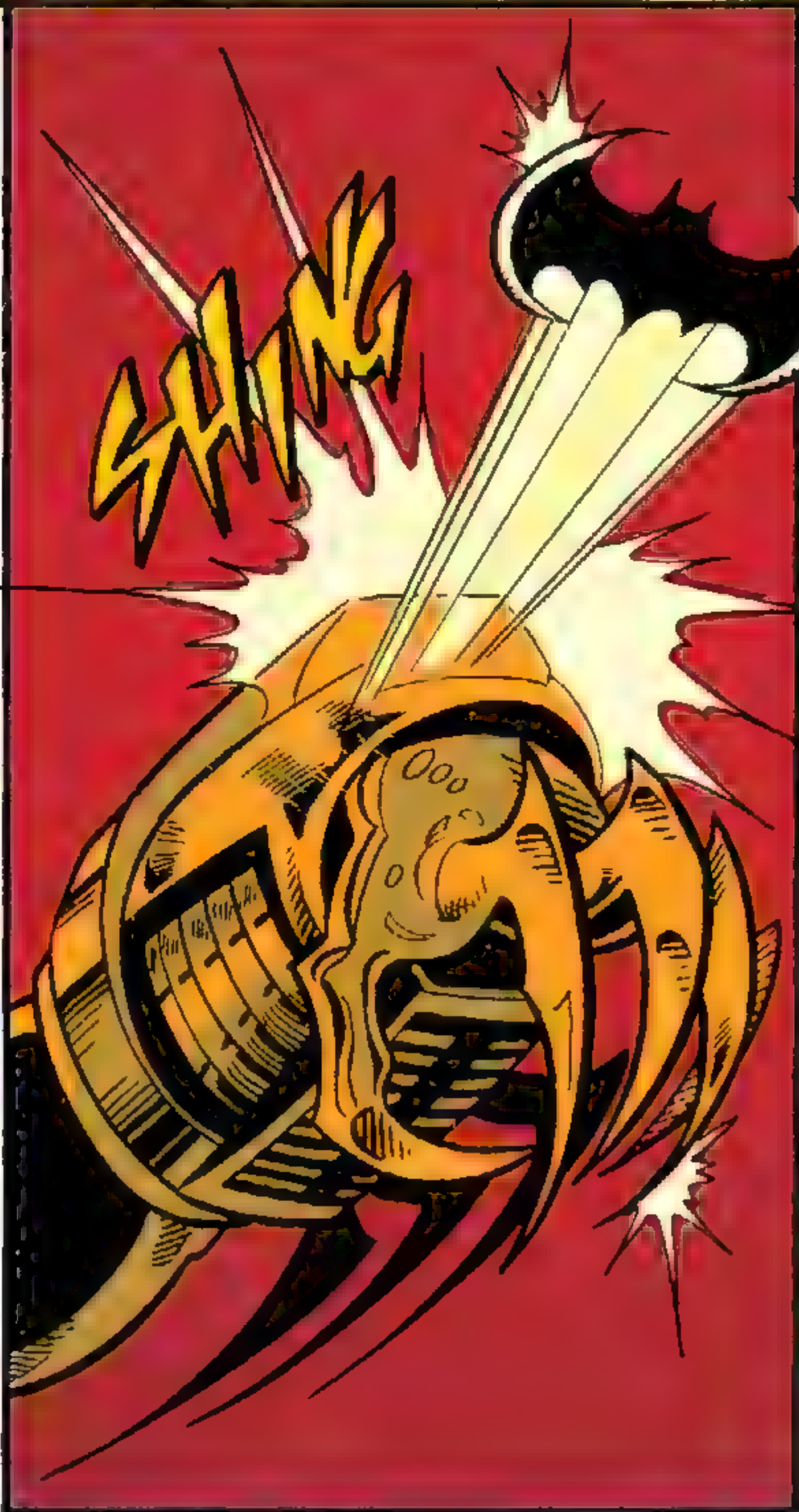
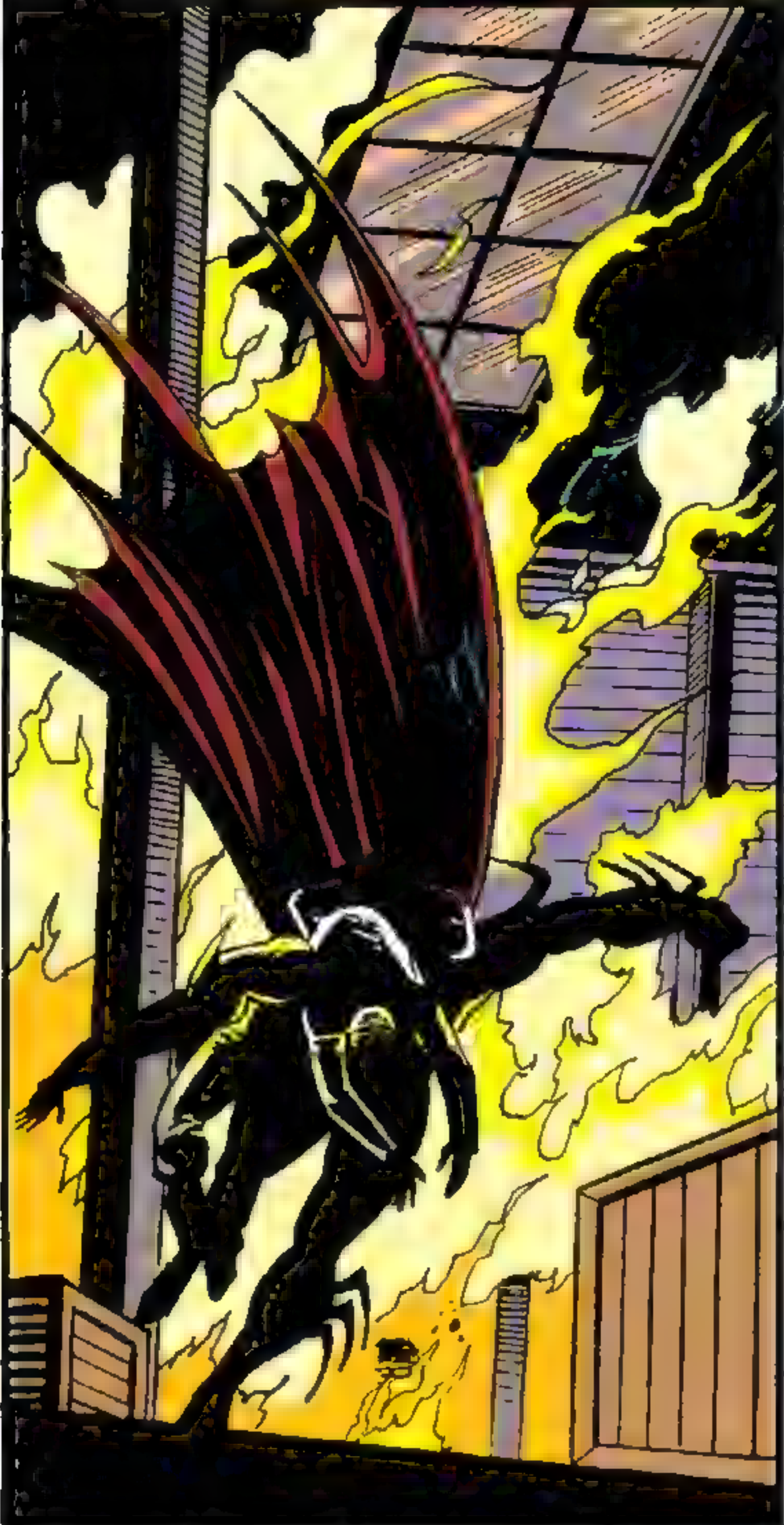
BUT IF THE INTIMIDATION OF A
STEEL-BORED BARREL FAILS,
BLOOD INFORMS NOTHING--

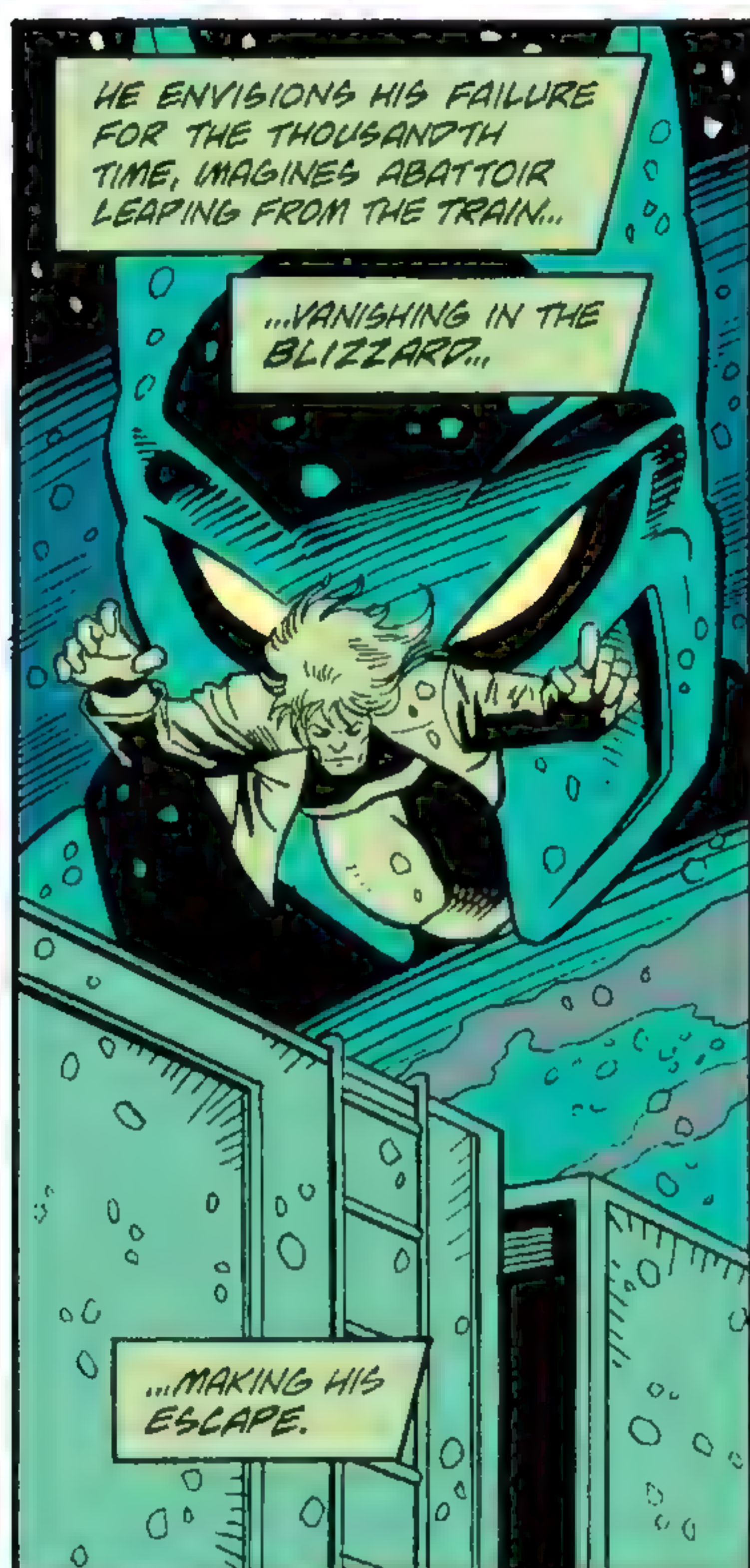
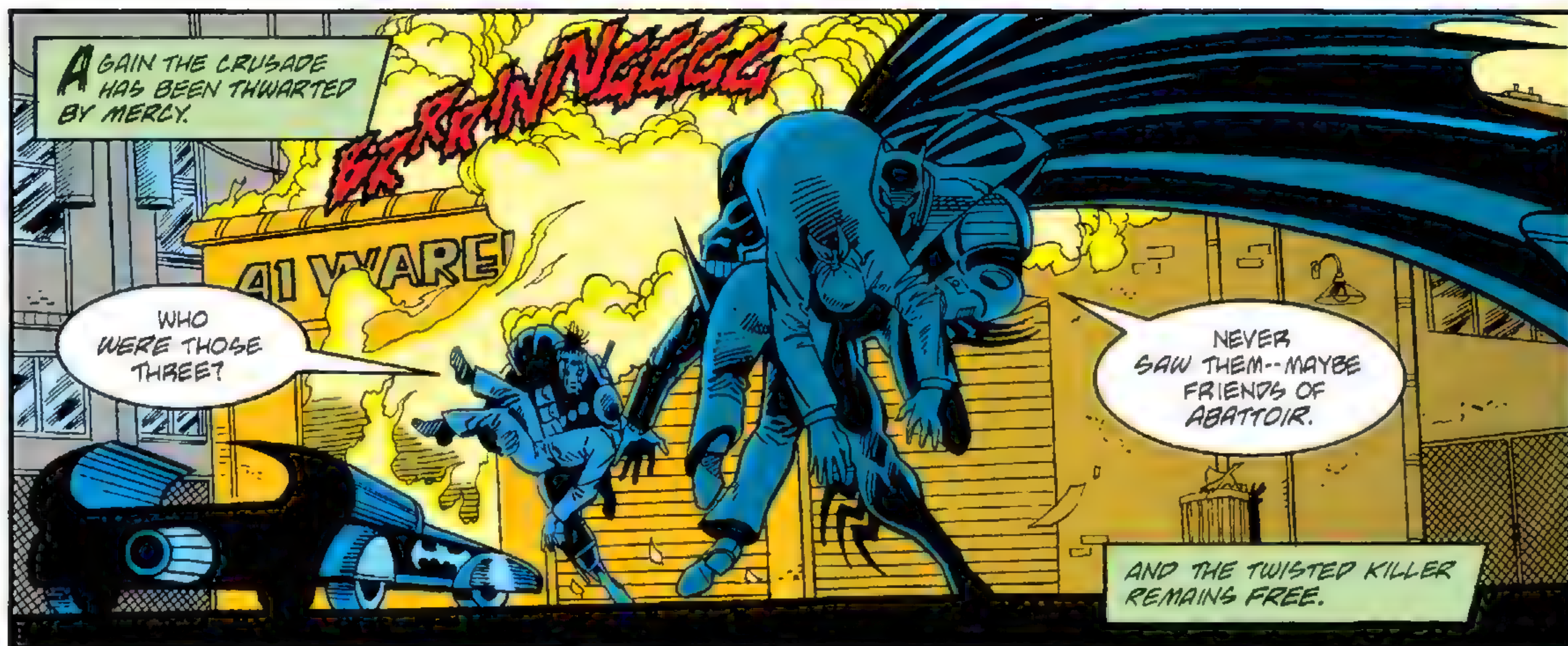
--AND KILLING
BECOMES
OVERKILL.













SO WHO'S
THE OTHER
NAME?

RAF
LUXOR--

--AND HE'D
BETTER KNOW SOME-
THING, BECAUSE THIS IS
THE LAST NAME
I'VE GOT.

WHAT'S
HIS CONNECTION TO
ABATTOIR?

SAME
AS THE ONE
SLEEPING
OUTSIDE THAT
BURNING
WAREHOUSE--

--HE
ONCE
HELPED
ABATTOIR
ESCAPE
ARKHAM.

AND WHAT DOES
HE DO FOR KICKS
THESE DAYS?

RUNS A
NIGHTCLUB NEAR
TRICORNERS.

DO TELL.
WITH ANY LUCK
WE CAN CATCH
THE FLOOR
SHOW.

QUEEN OF
DENIAL

CLEO'S
PLACE,
huh?

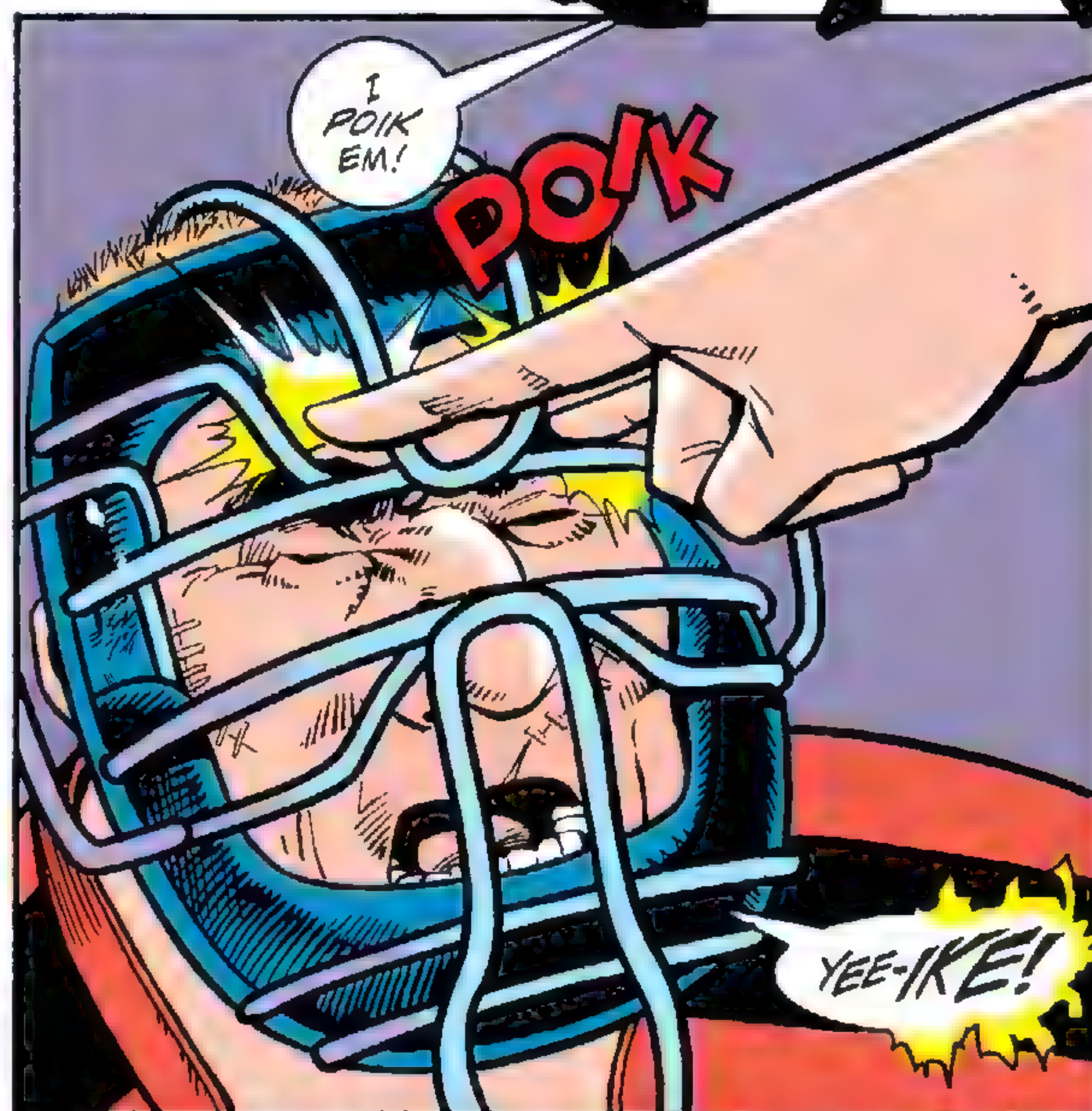
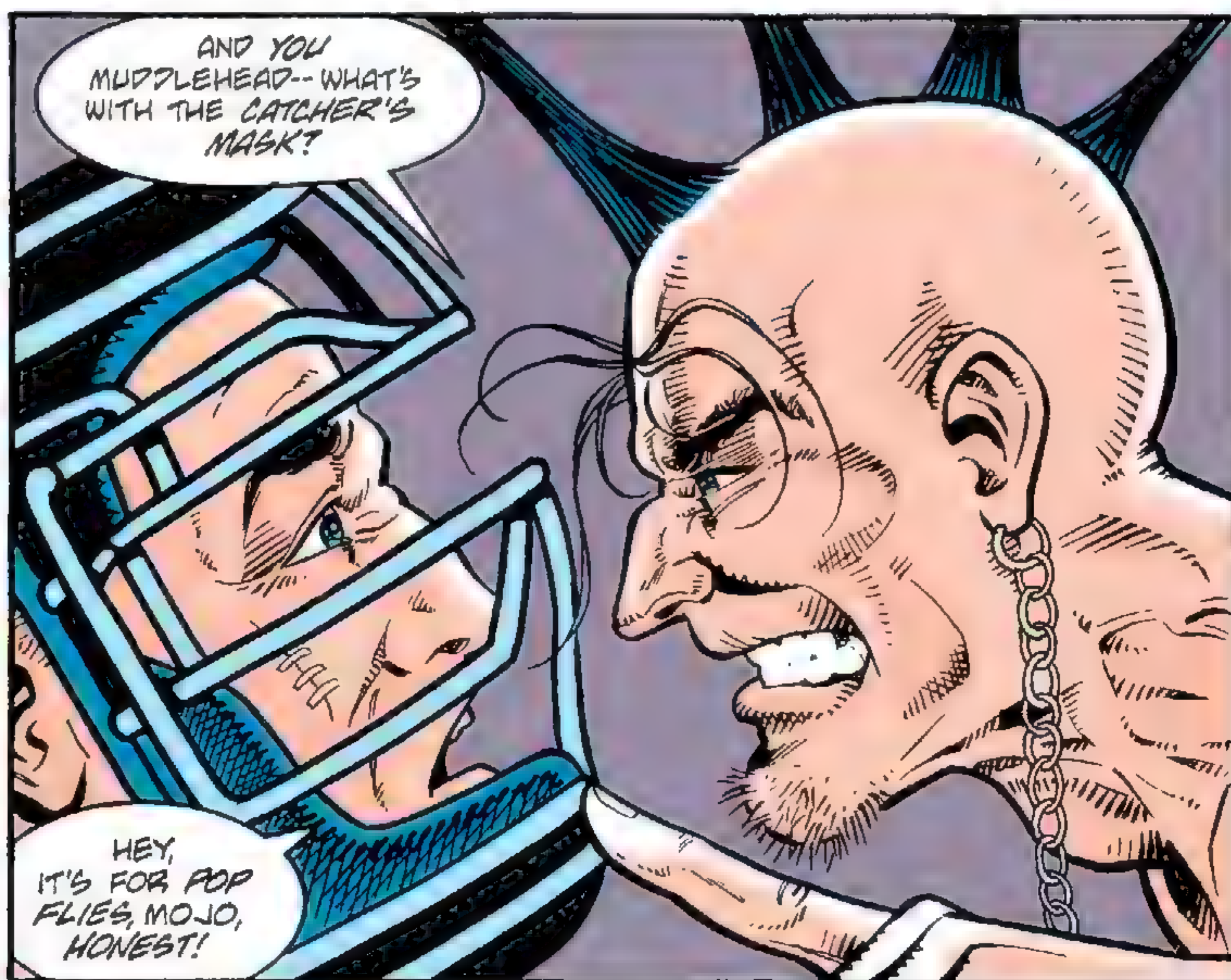
HEY, THE
GUY OFFERIN' THE
CONTRACT SAYS SOME
LUXOR SHMIB CAN
MAYBE GIVE US A
LINE ON
ABATTOIR.

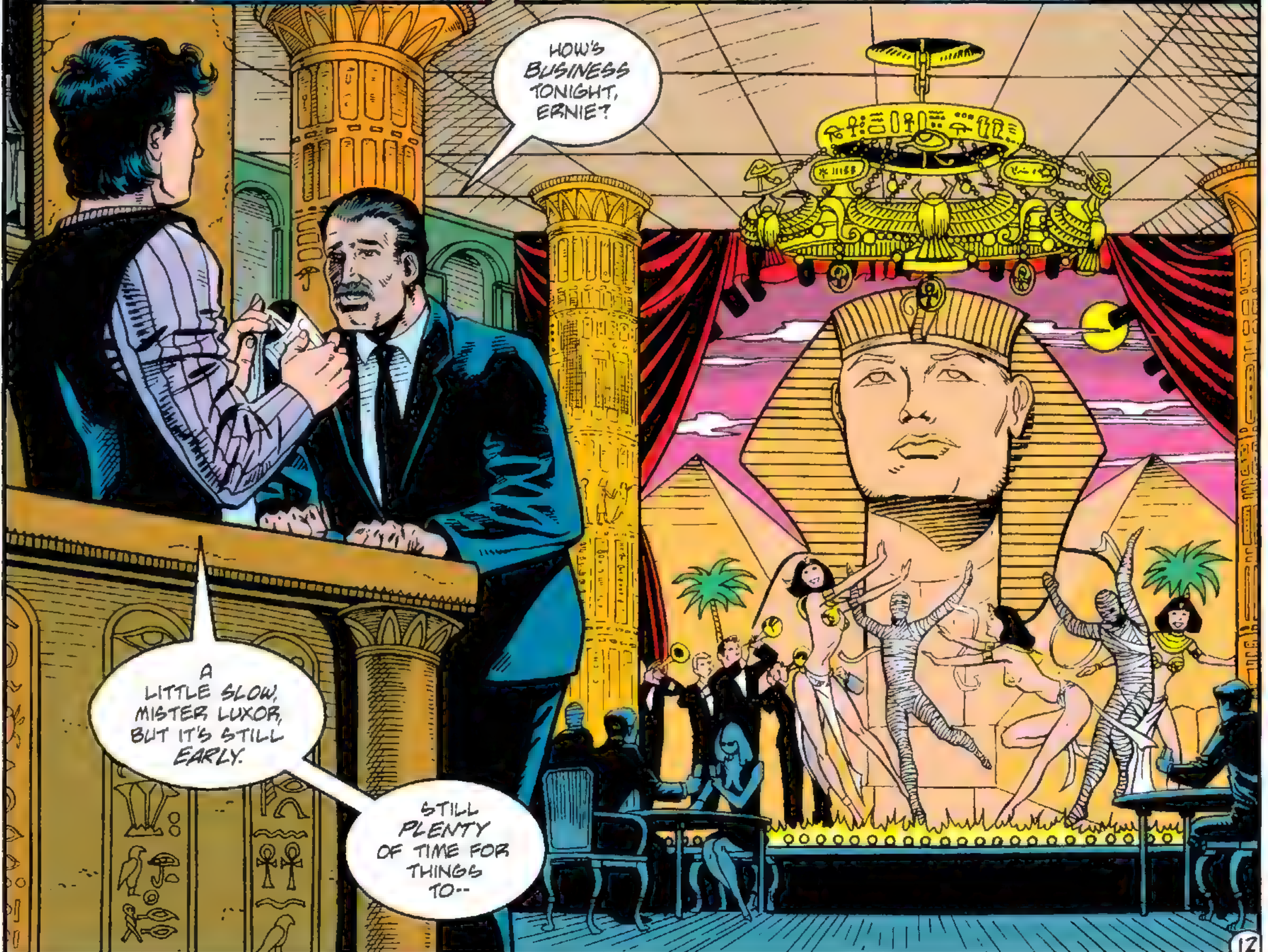
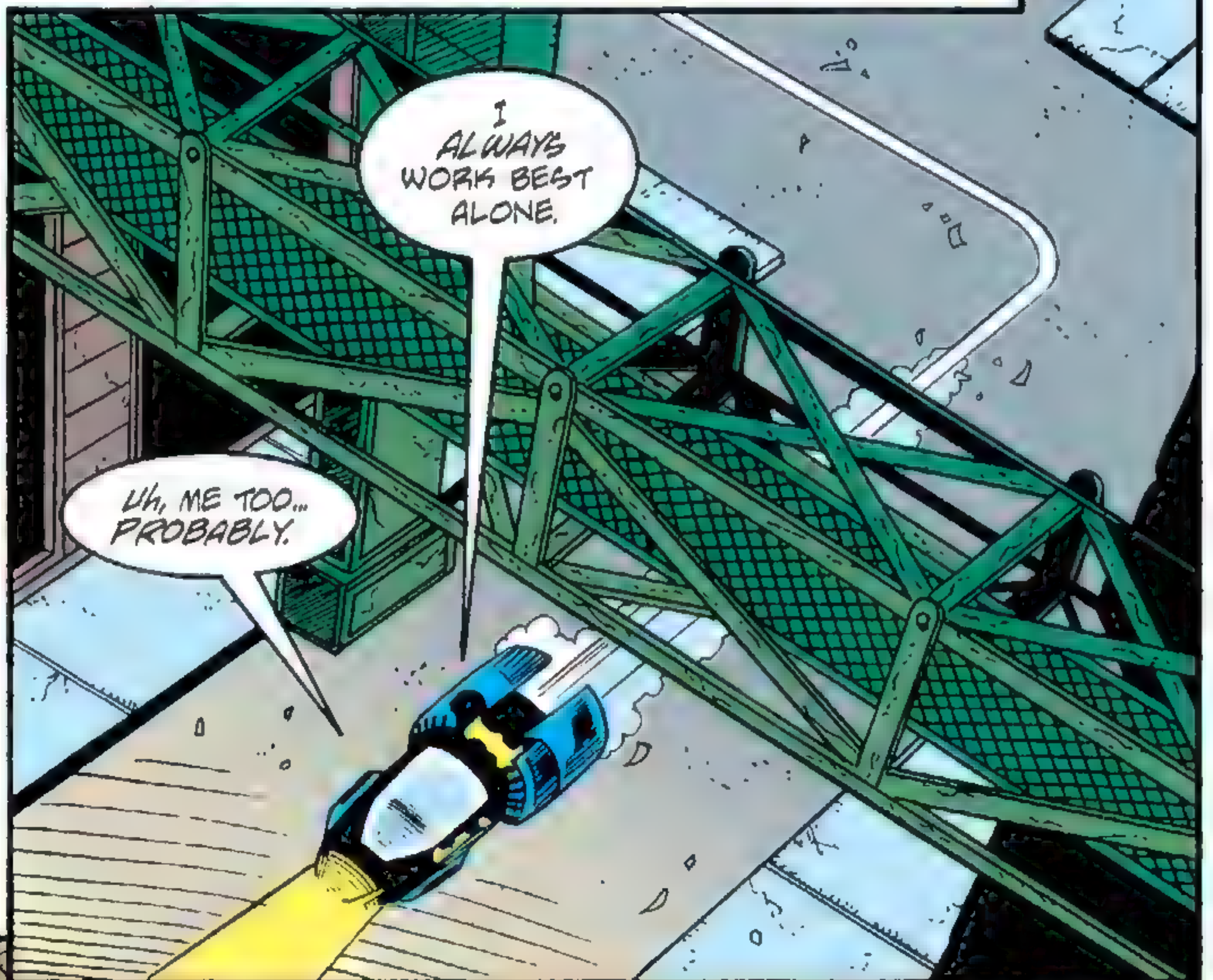
YEAH? AN' I'LL
GIVE HIM A LINE--AROUND
HIS THROAT--IF HE'S
LYIN'.

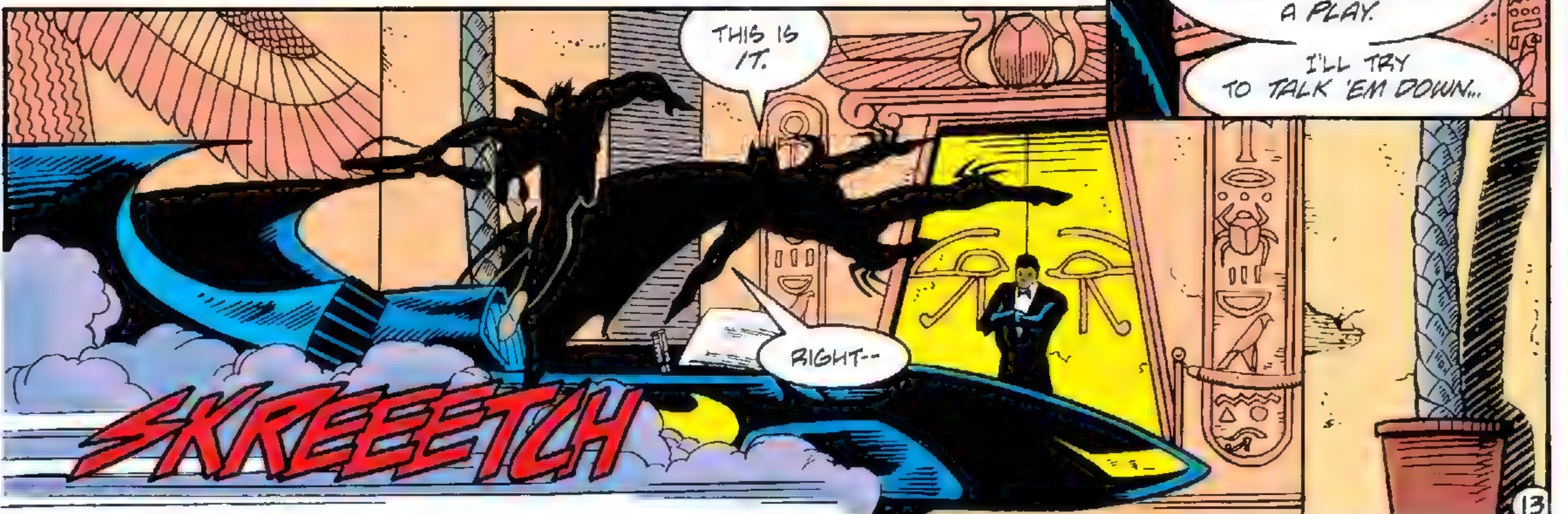
AW, WHY
WOULD HE BE LYIN',
MOJO, WHEN HE'S A
STAND-UP KINDA
GUY?

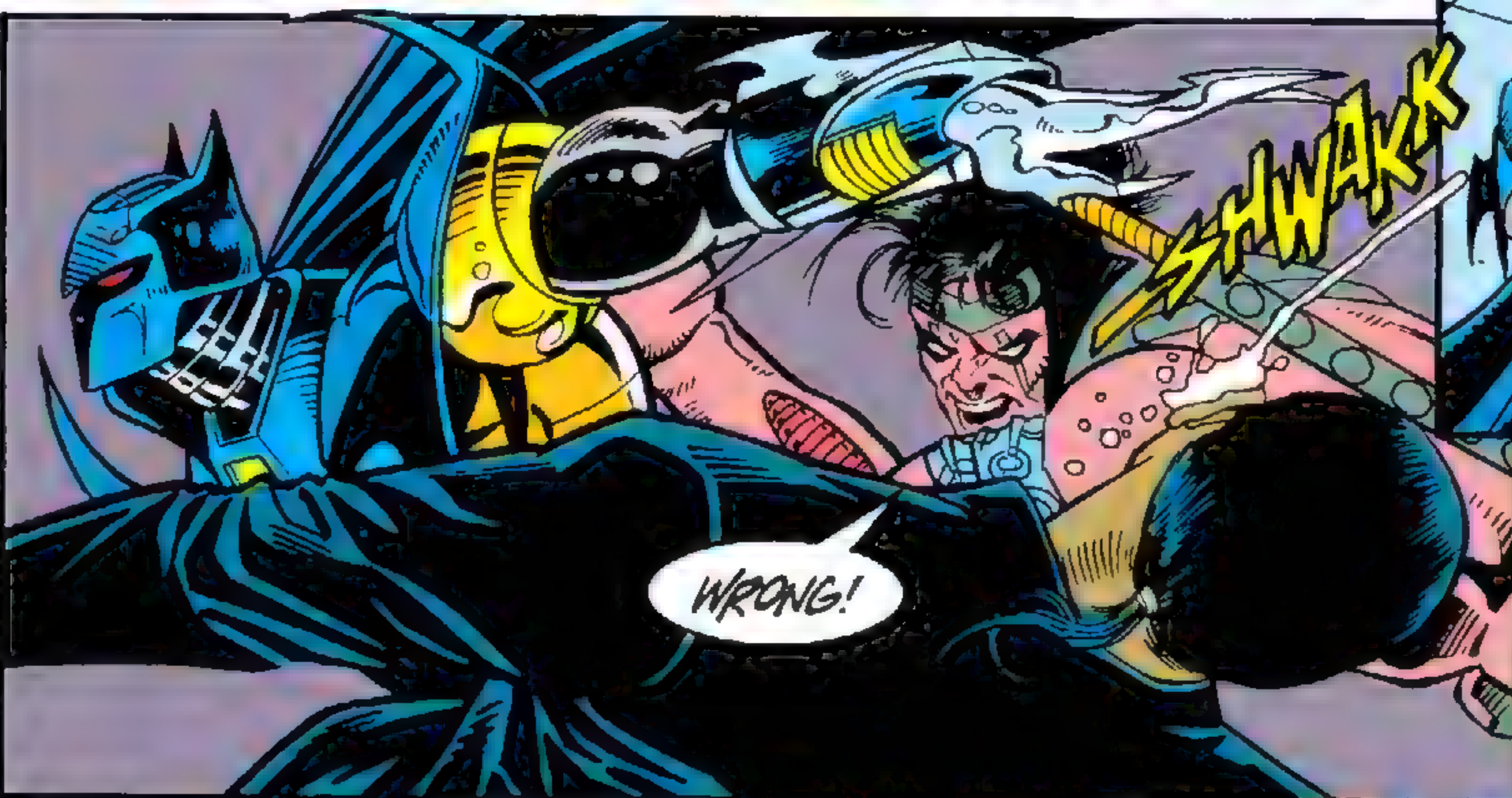
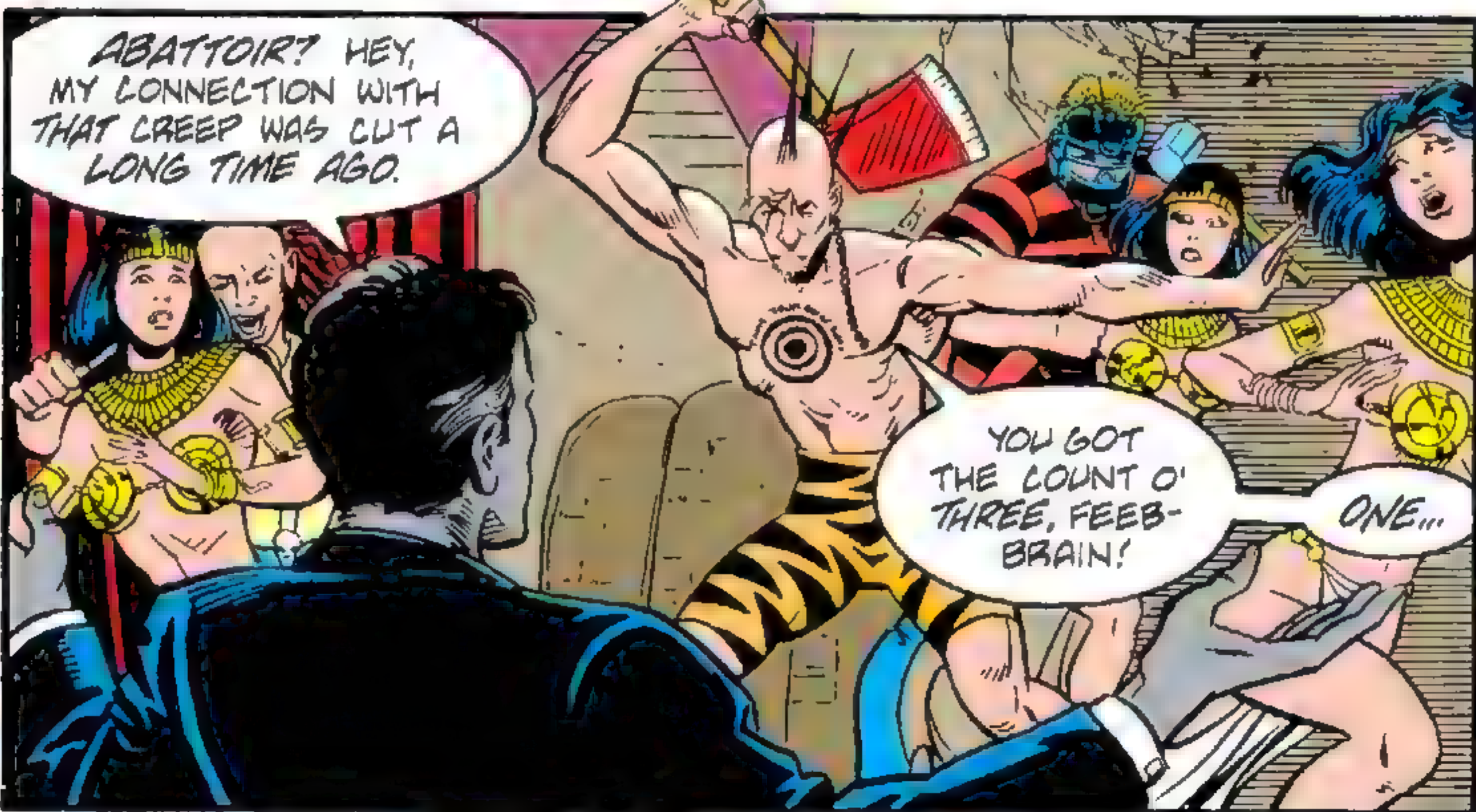
QUEEN OF
DENIAL
SERVICE
ENTRANCE

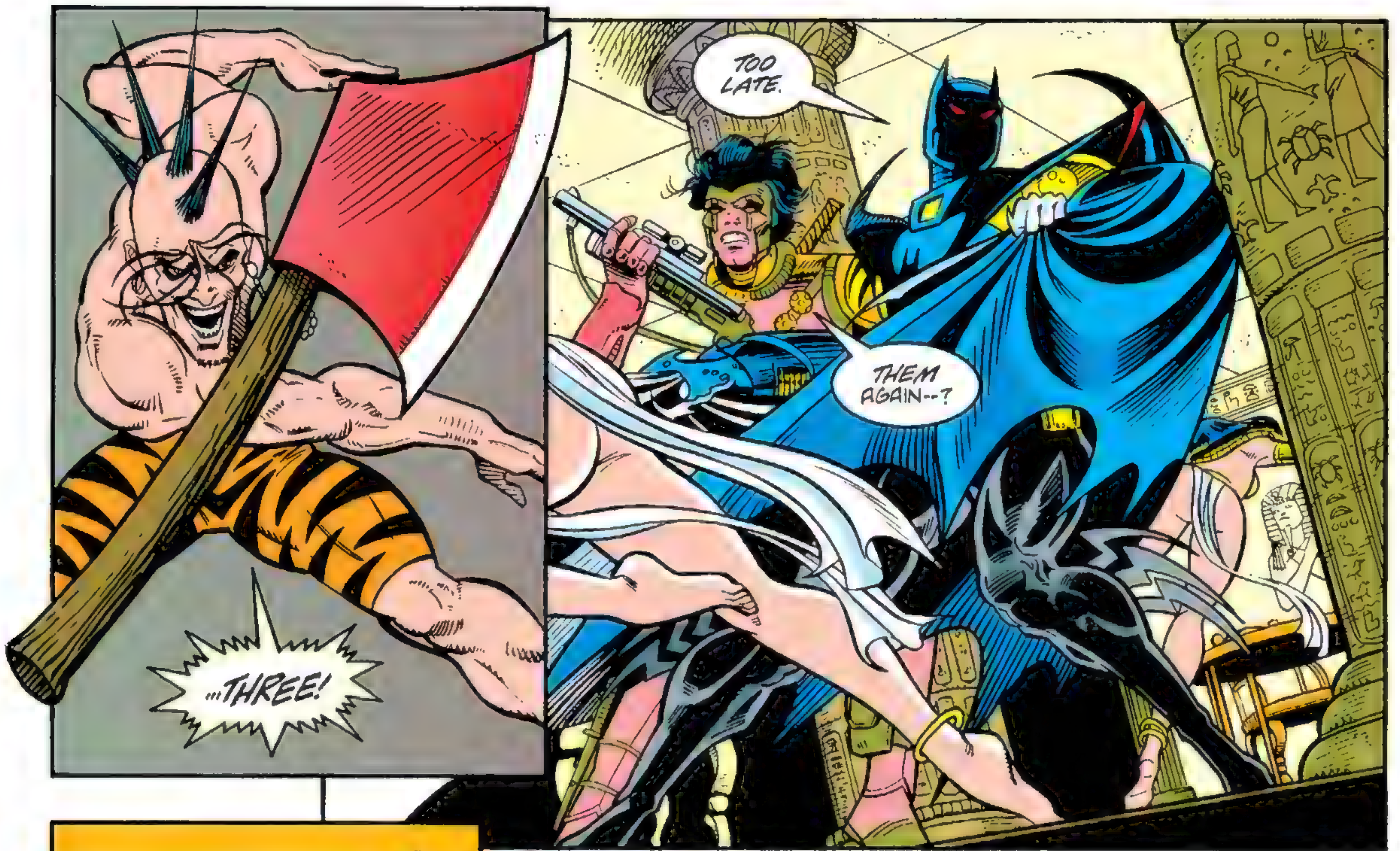
SHADDAP,
MIDGET-MIND!

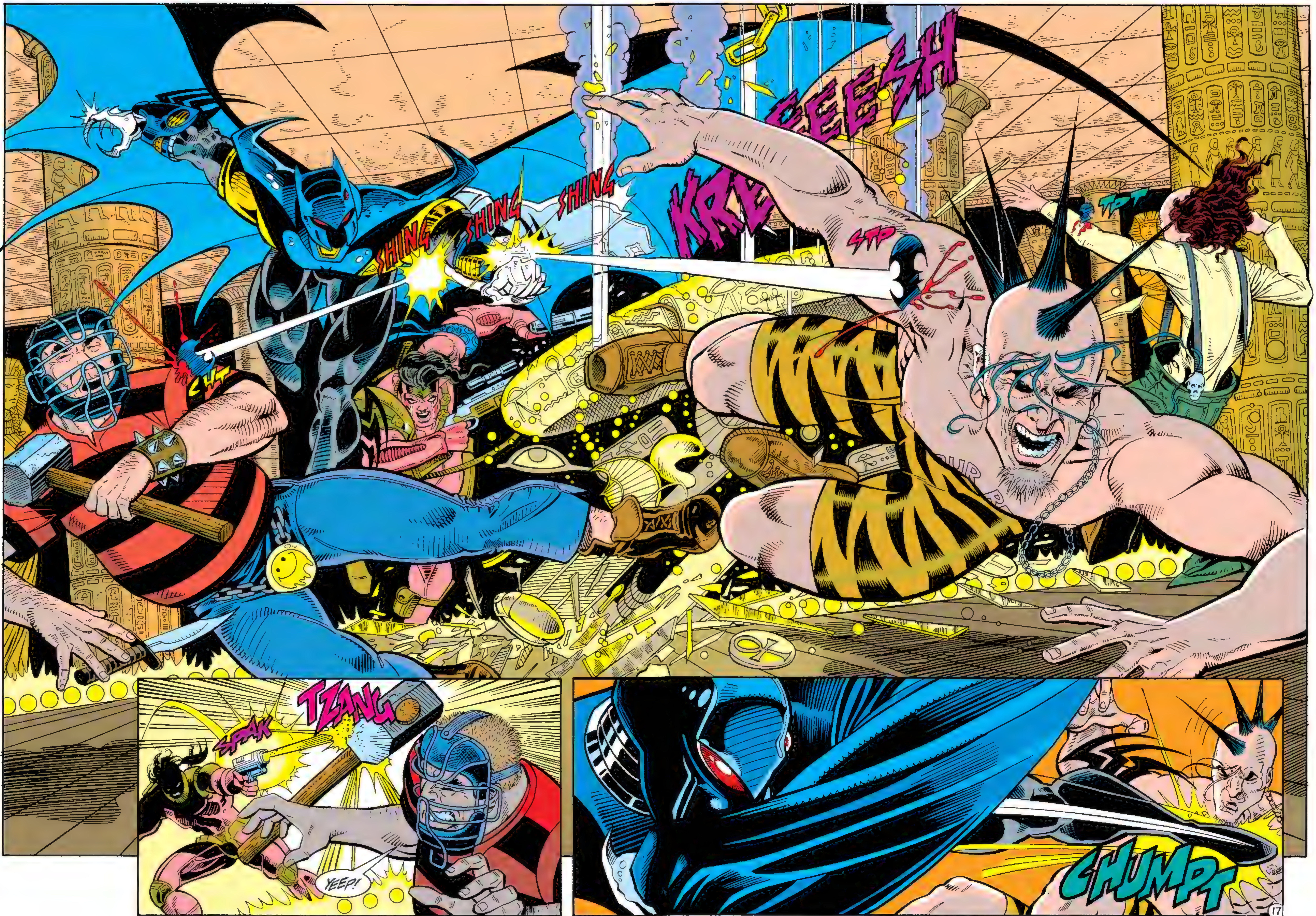


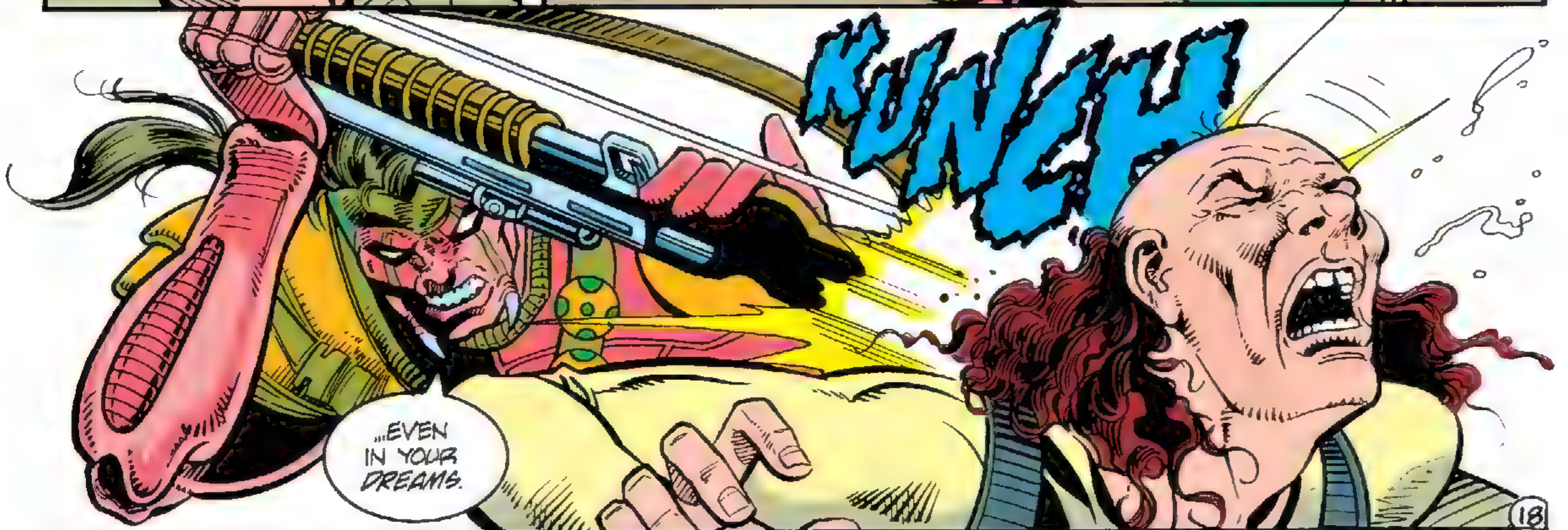
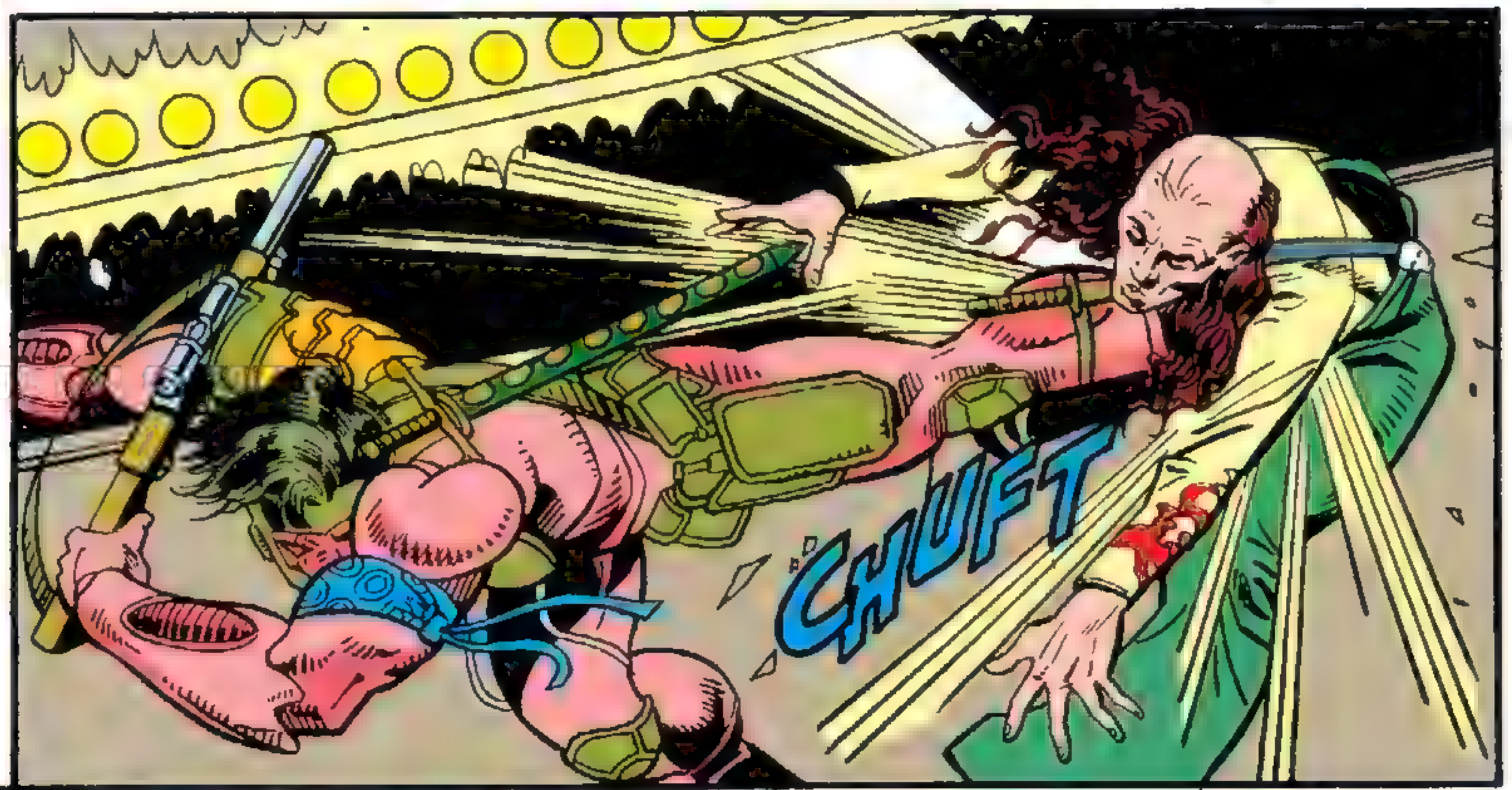
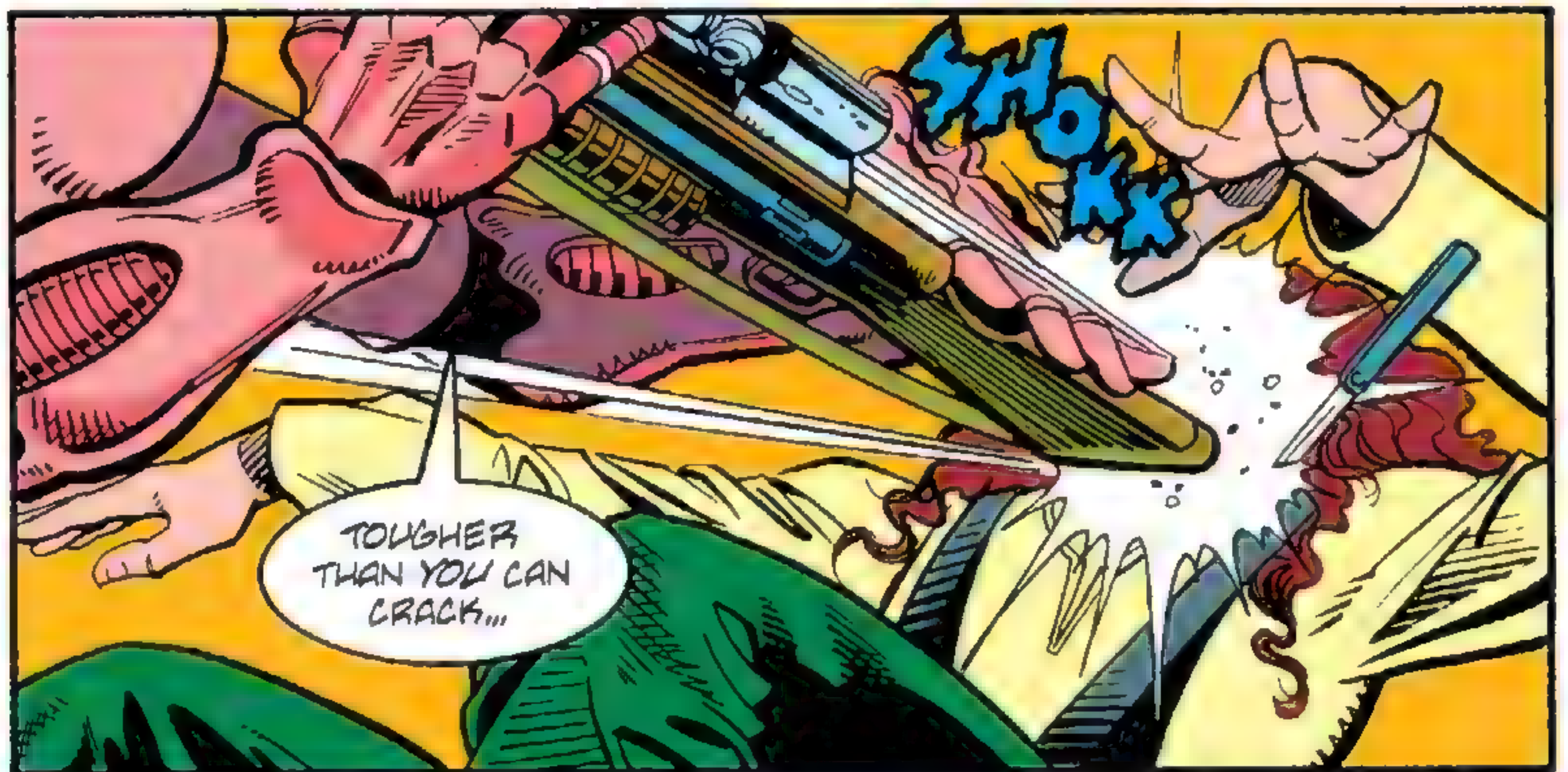


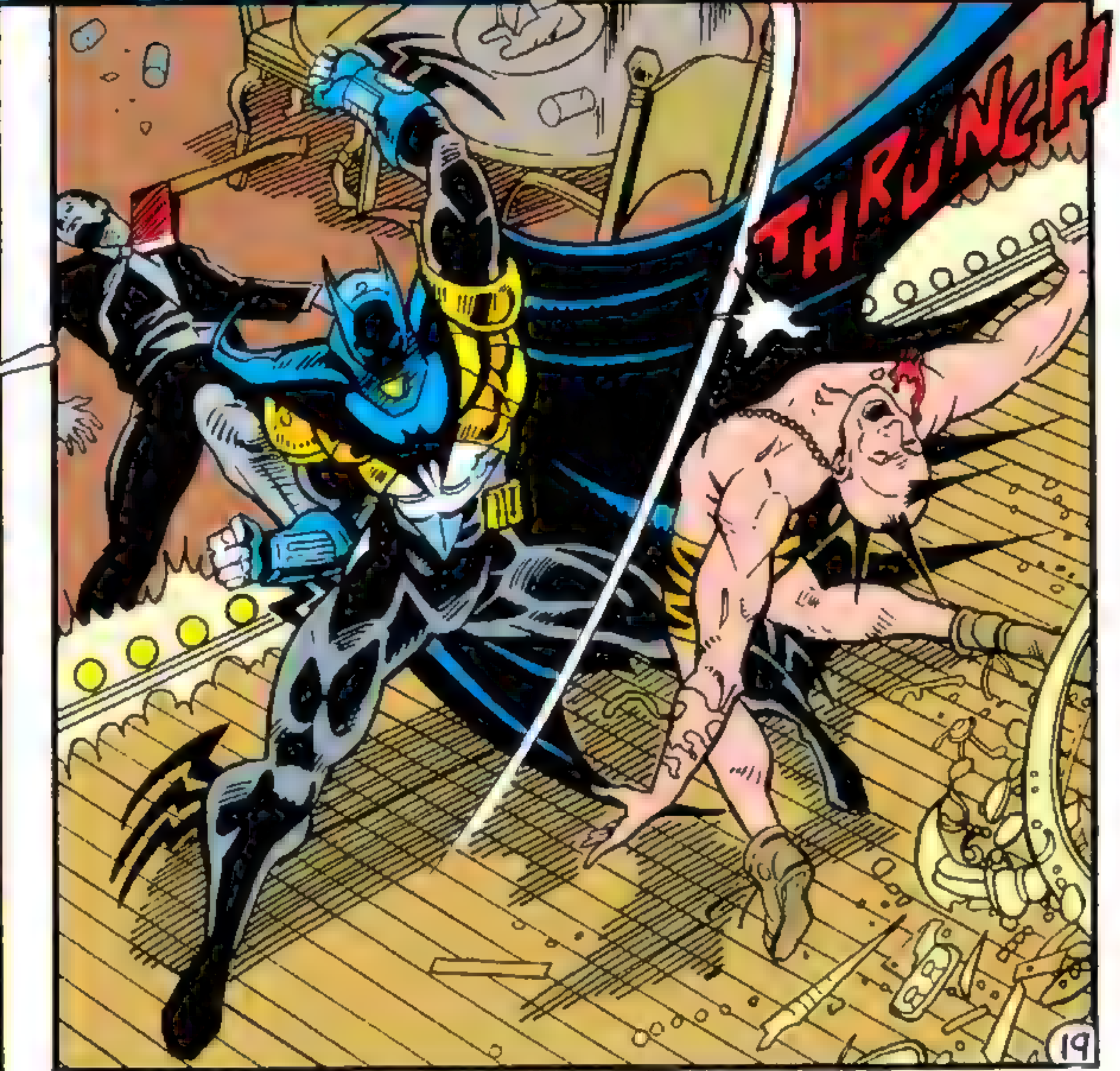
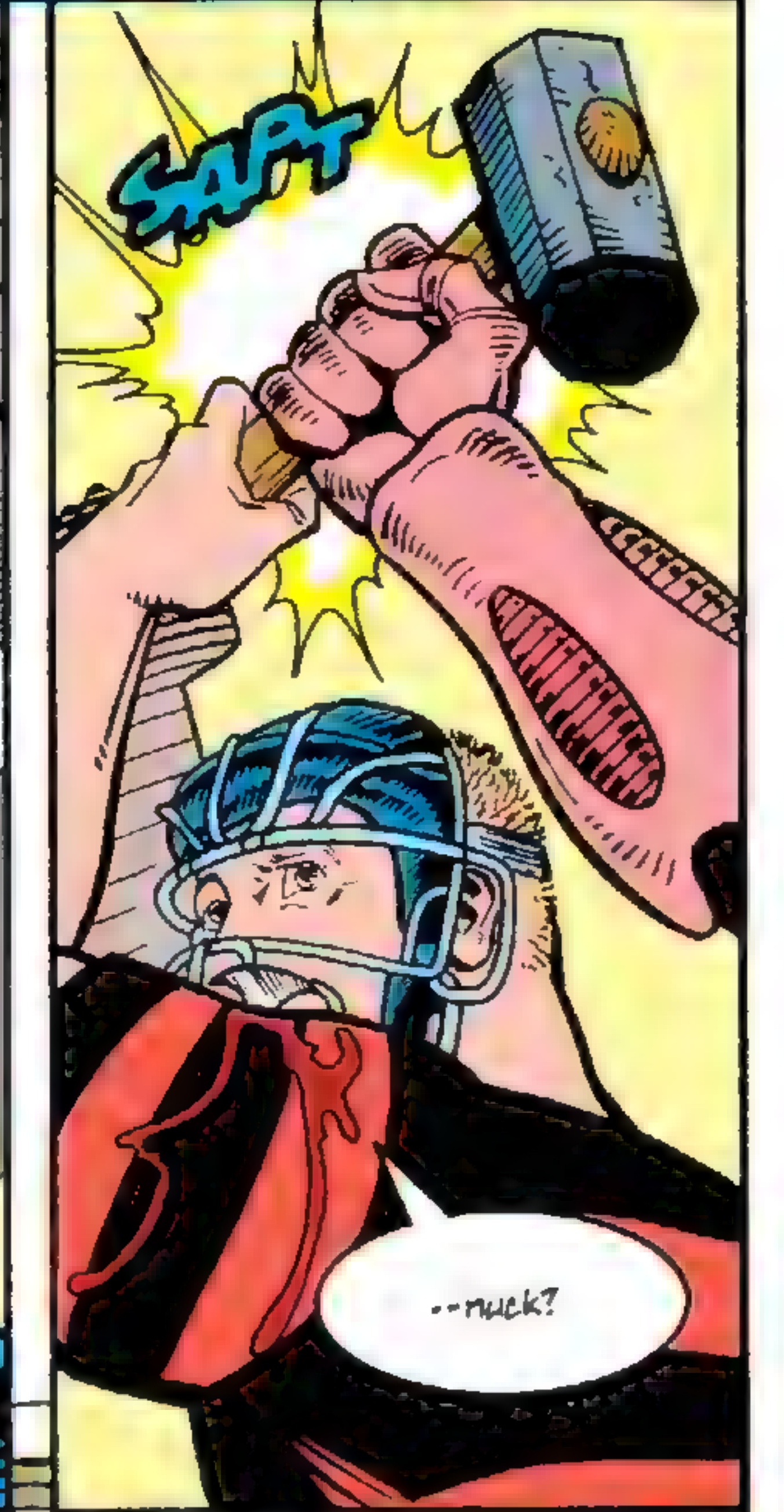
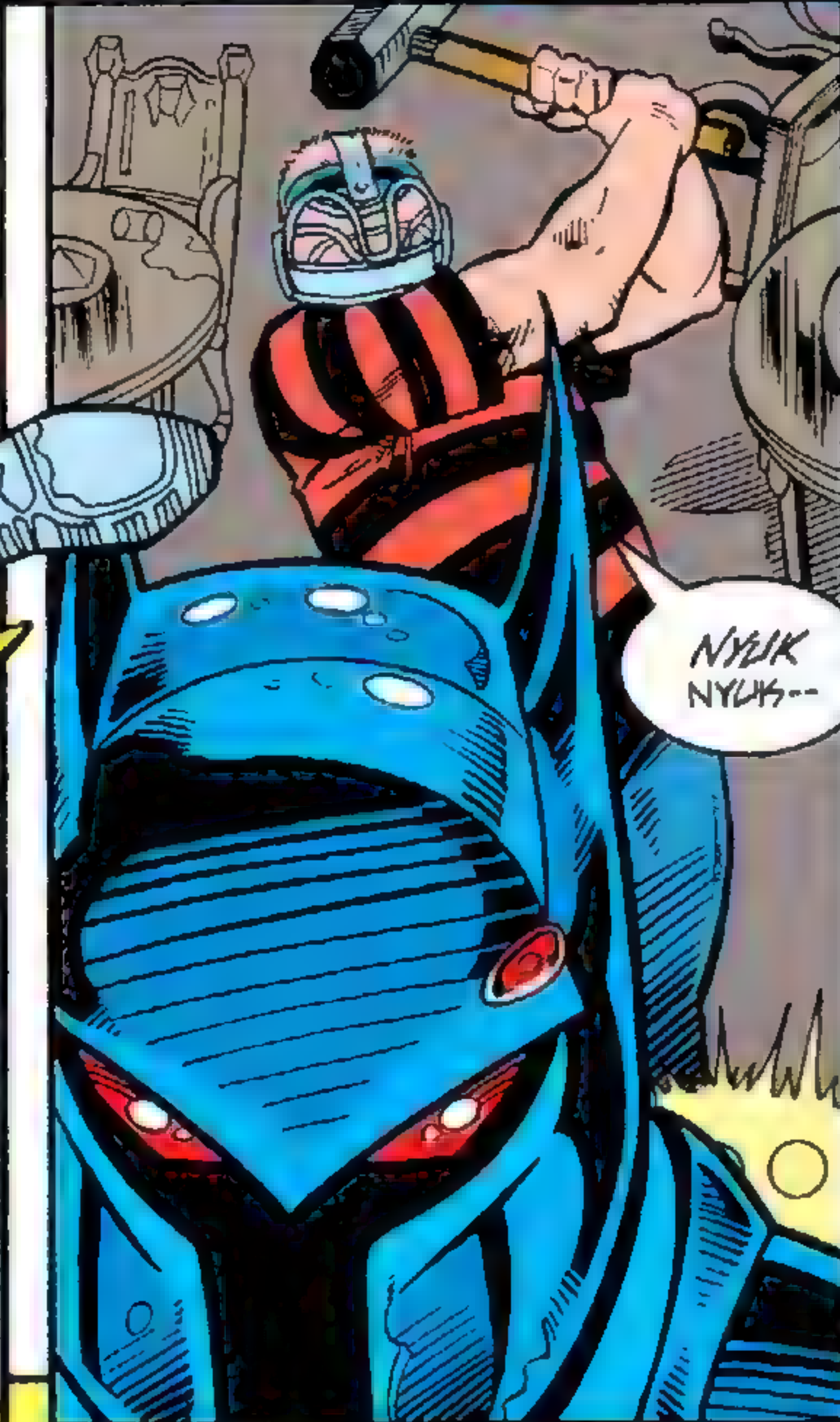
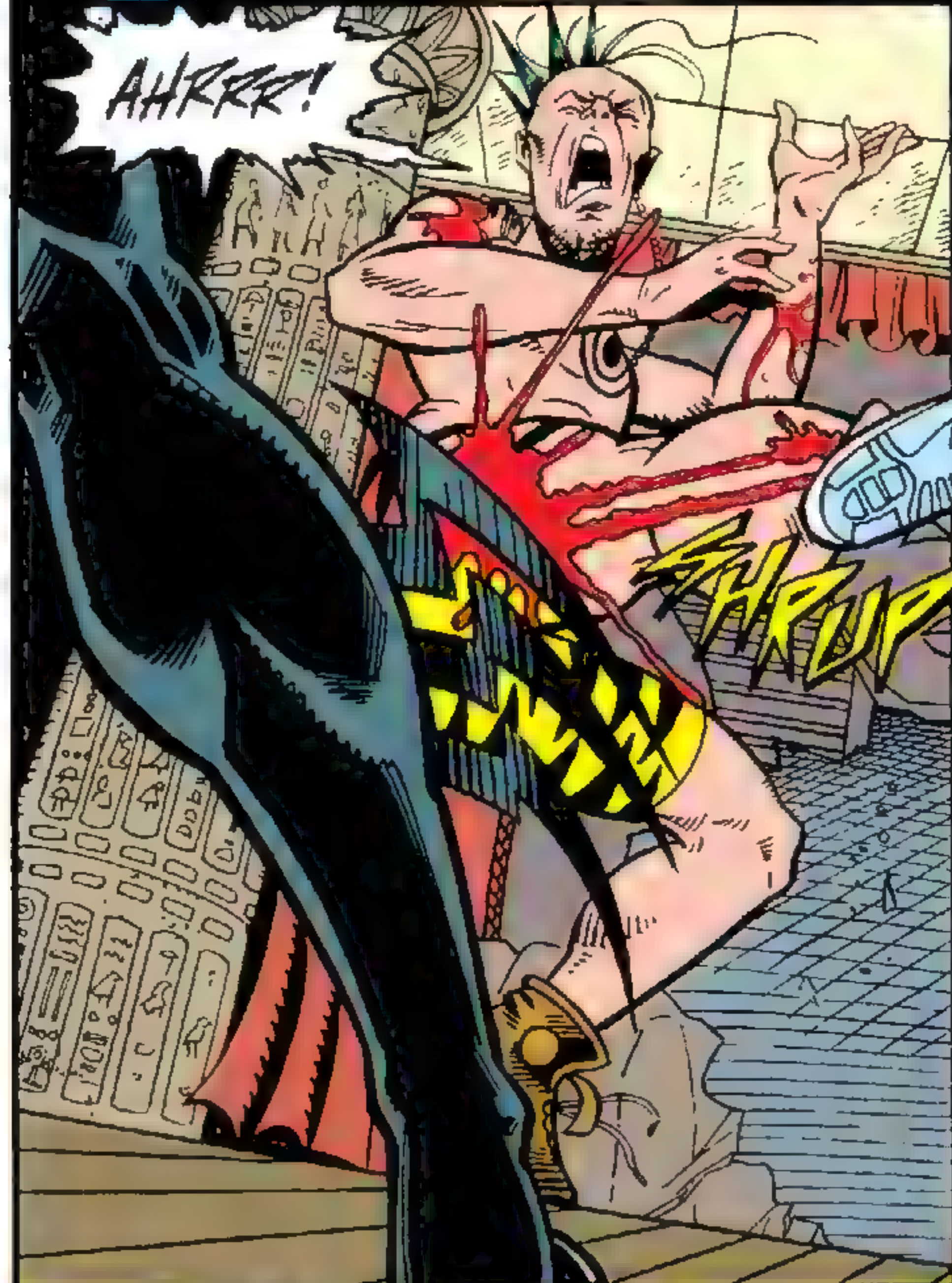
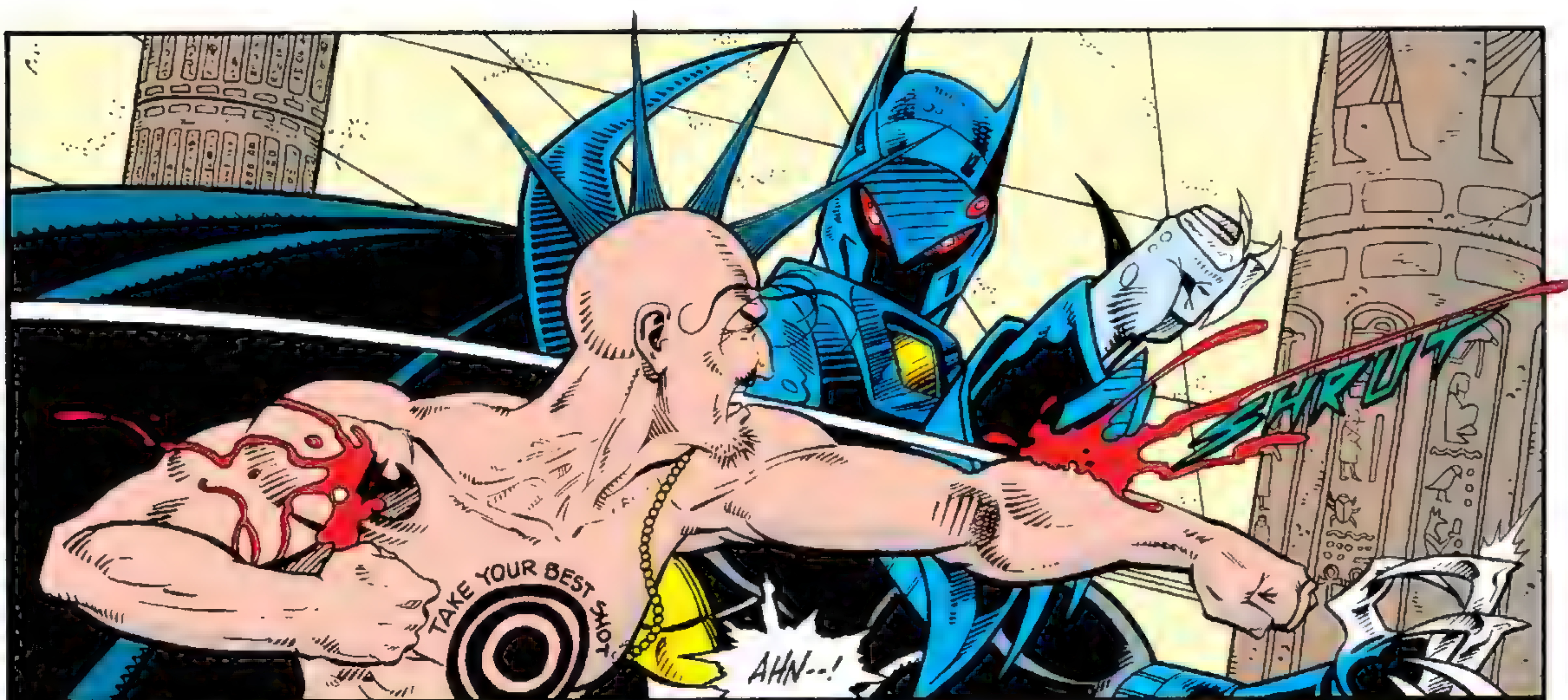


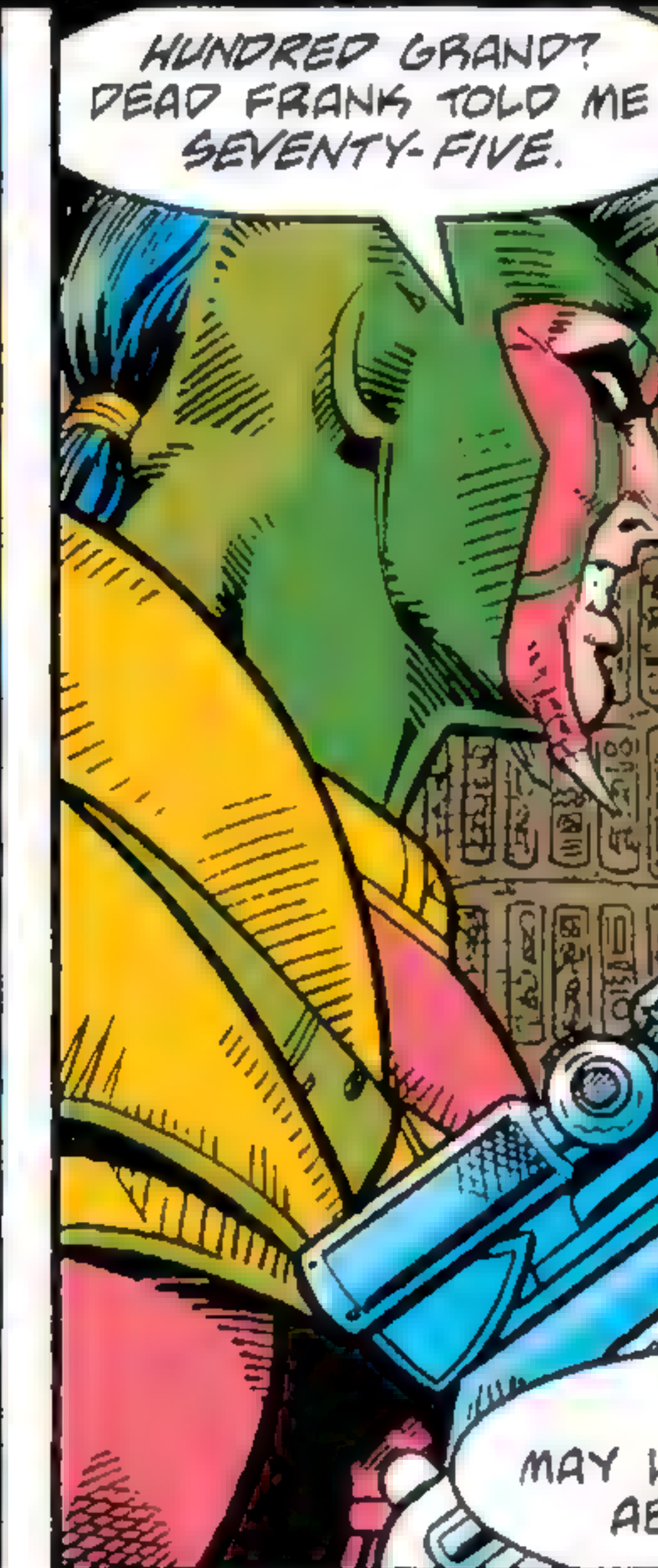
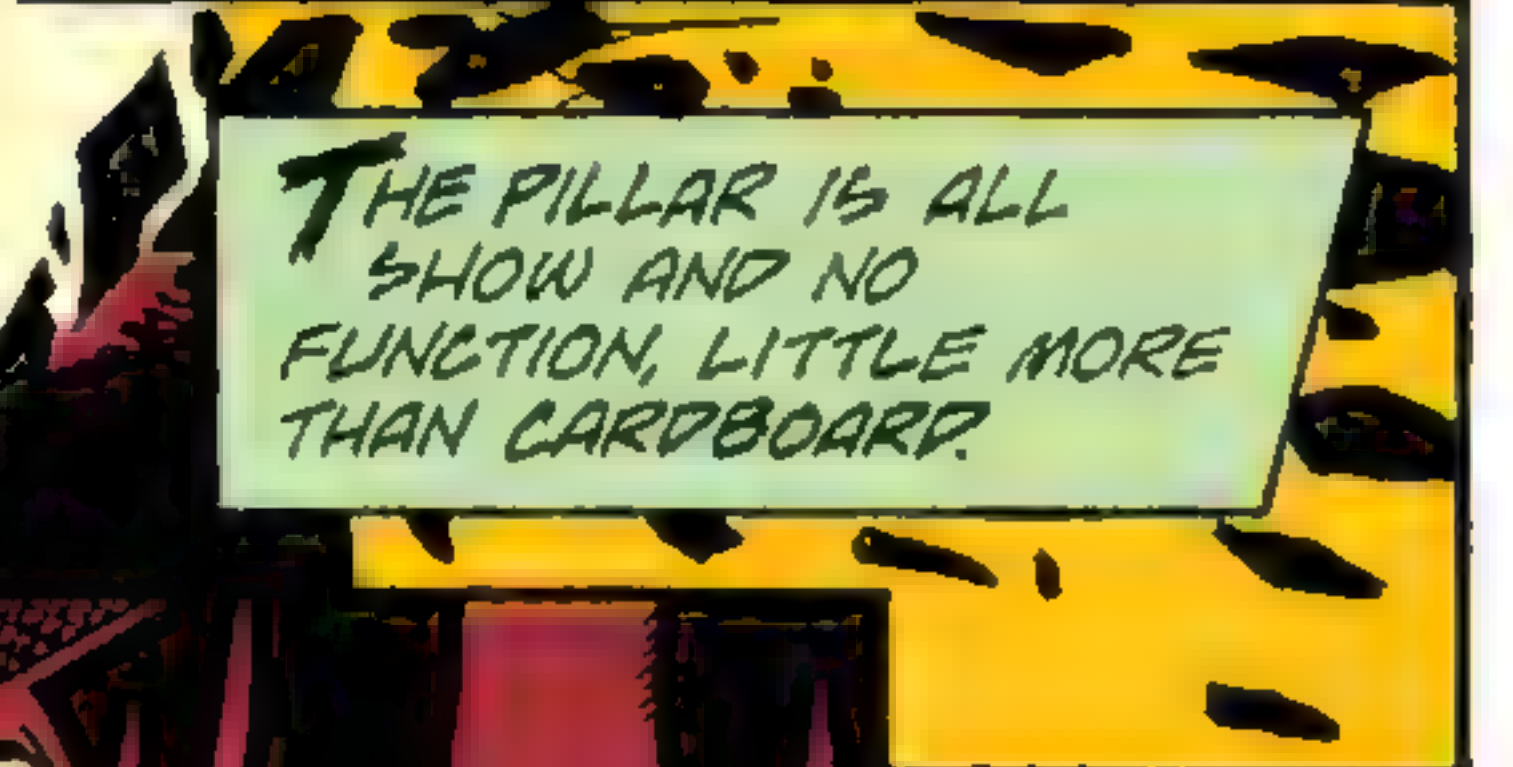
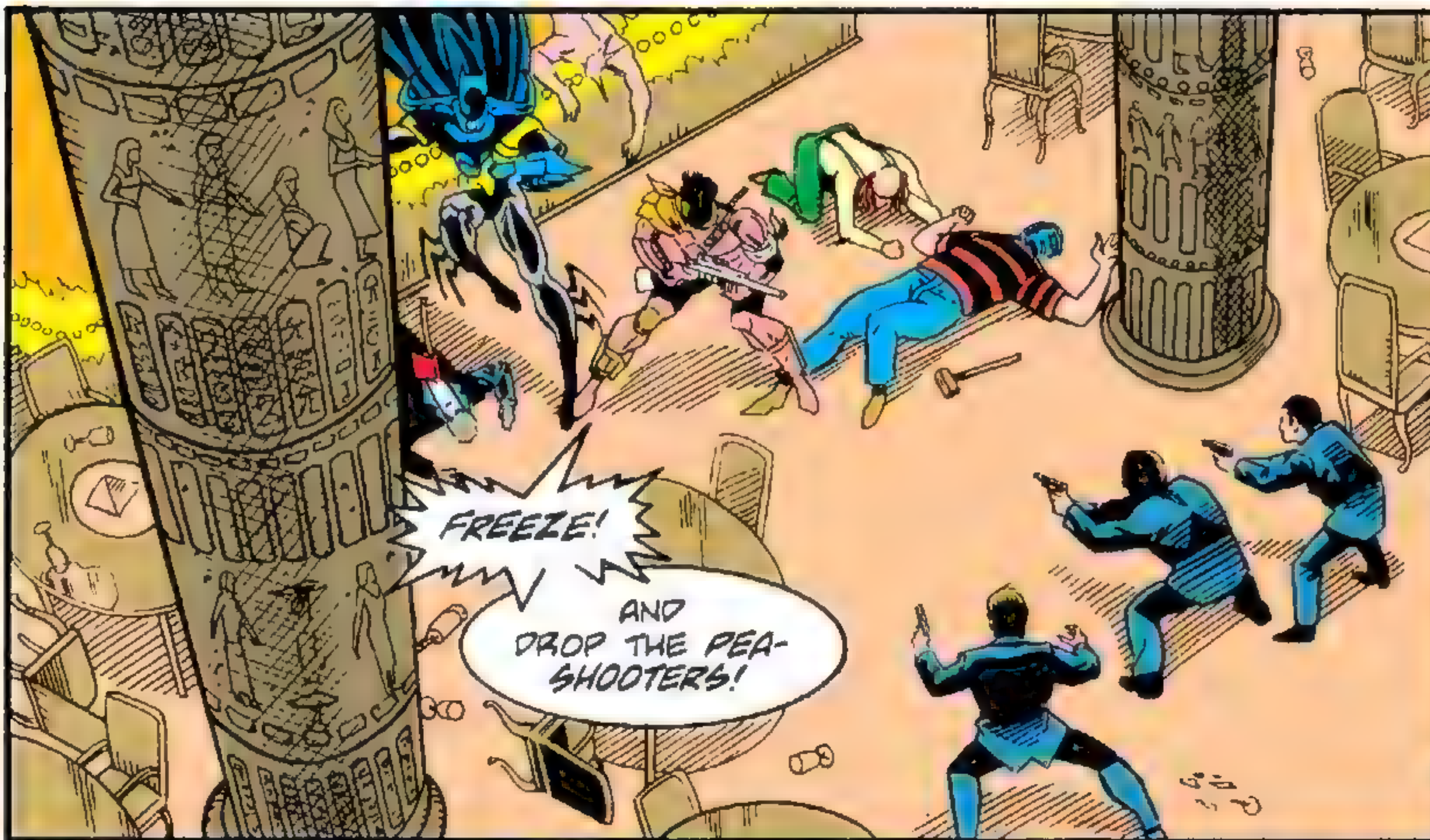


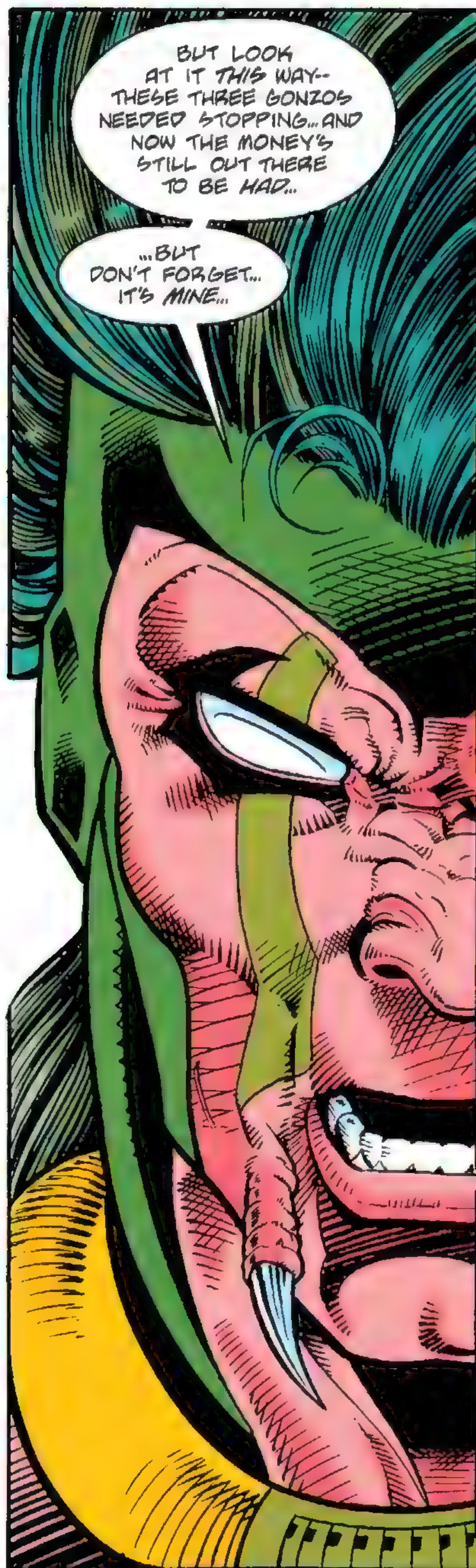










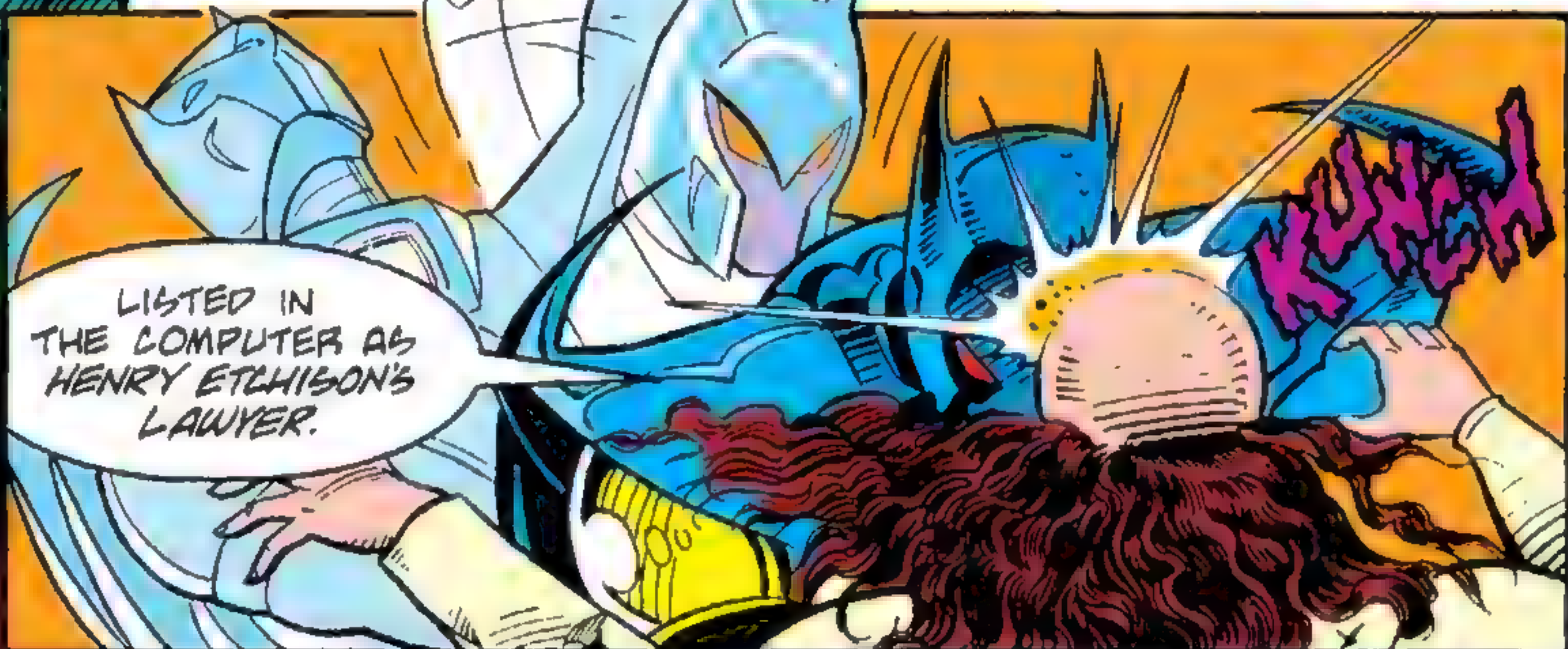


BUT LOOK AT IT THIS WAY-- THESE THREE GONZOS NEEDED STOPPING... AND NOW THE MONEY'S STILL OUT THERE TO BE HAD...

"BUT DON'T FORGET... IT'S MINE..."

IF YOU HAD NAILED ABATTOIR... HOW WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO COLLECT?

FR- FROM... A GUY NAMED... WINSTON BROCK...



LISTED IN THE COMPUTER AS HENRY ETCHISON'S LAWYER.



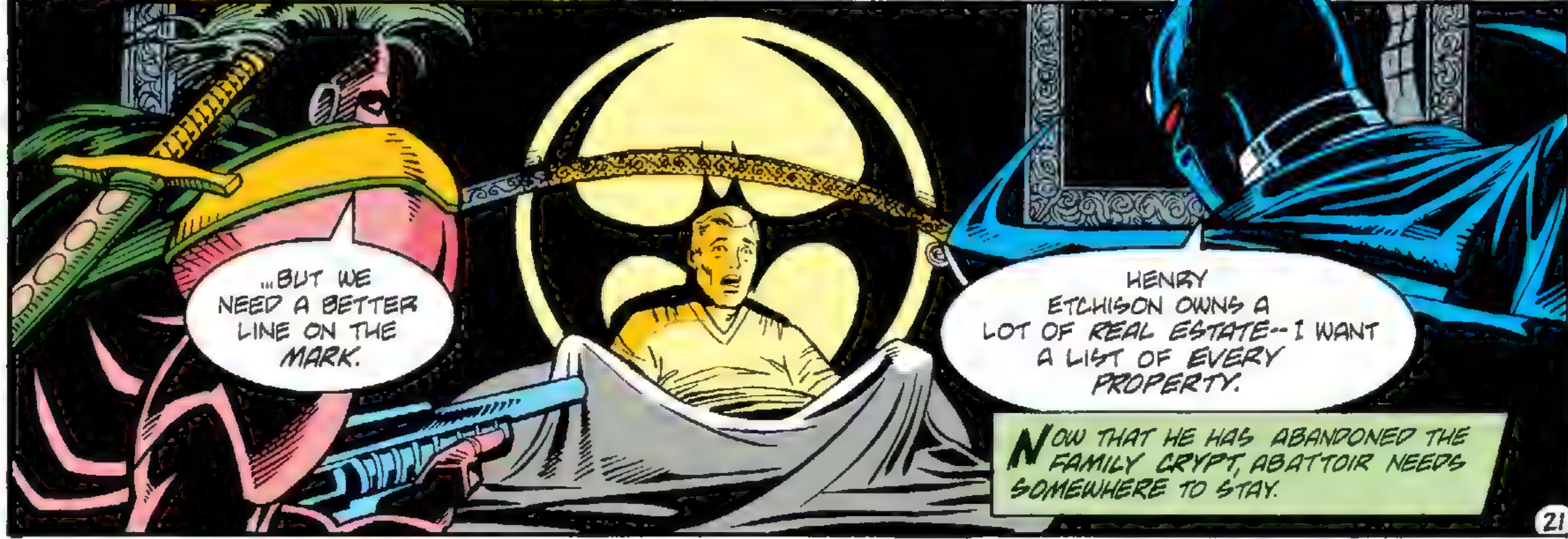
CALL THE POLICE-- BEFORE THEY WAKE UP.

HELPFUL HINT: MUMMY GAUZE BINDS TIGHT.



WH-WHO--? WH-WHAT IN THE--?

WE'RE HERE TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT, MISTER BROCK...



"BUT WE NEED A BETTER LINE ON THE MARK.

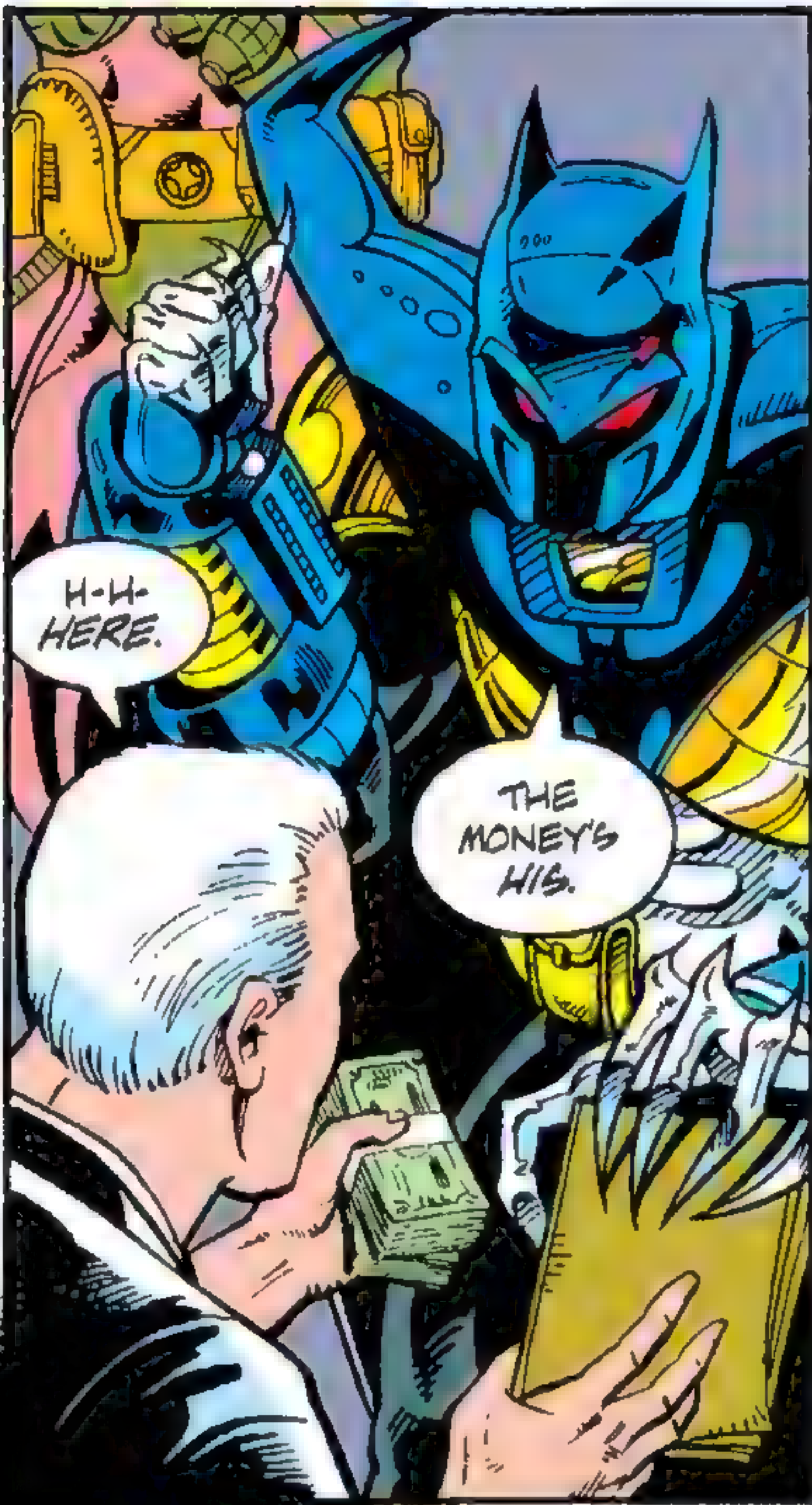
HENRY ETCHISON OWNS A LOT OF REAL ESTATE-- I WANT A LIST OF EVERY PROPERTY.

NOW THAT HE HAS ABANDONED THE FAMILY CRYPT, ABATTOIR NEEDS SOMEWHERE TO STAY.



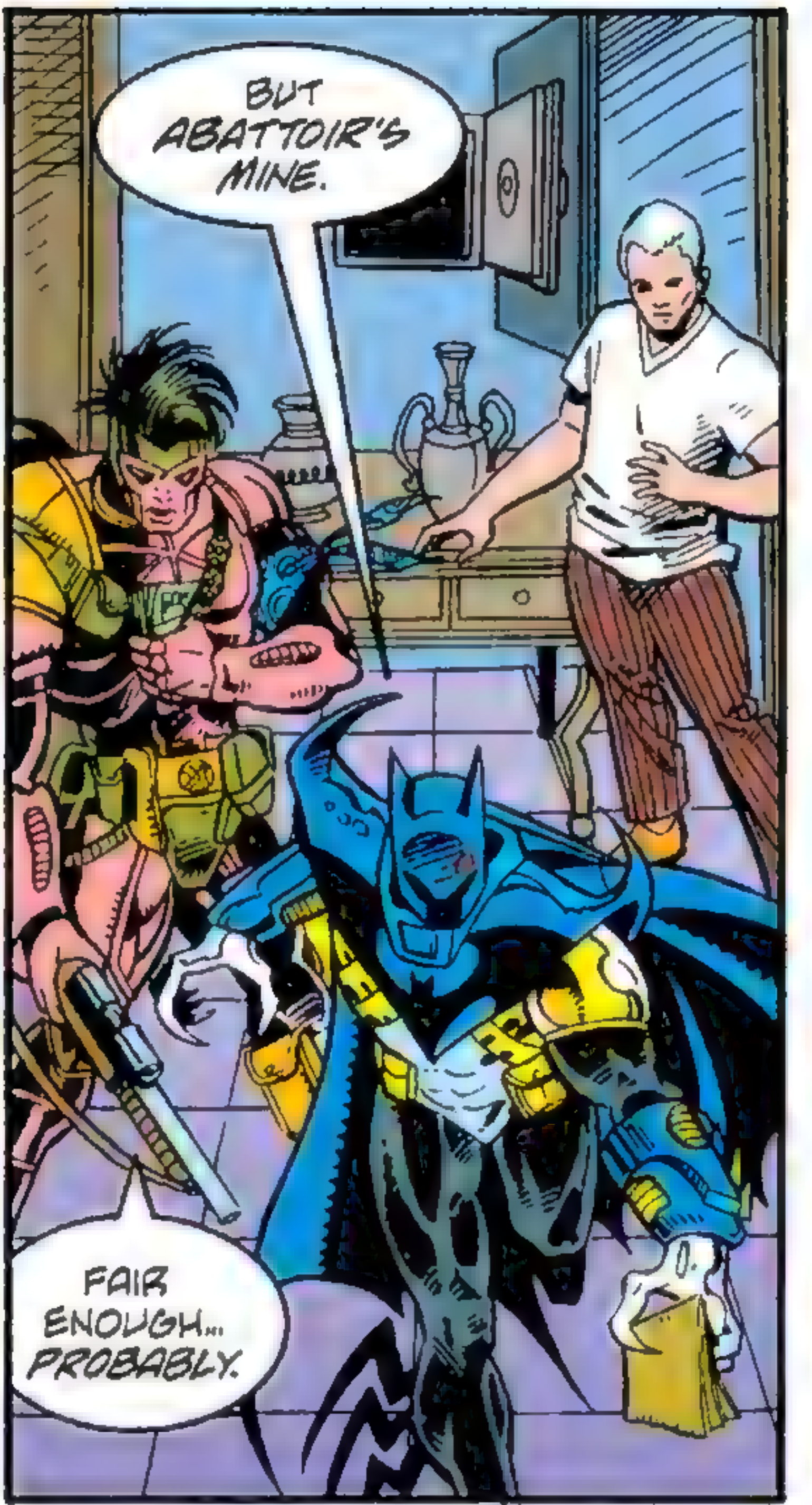
WE'LL
ALSO TAKE THE
PAYMENT IN
ADVANCE.

IT...IT'S
RIGHT H-HERE...
IN C-CASH...WITH
THE TAX RECORDS
FOR HENRY'S P-
PROPERTIES...



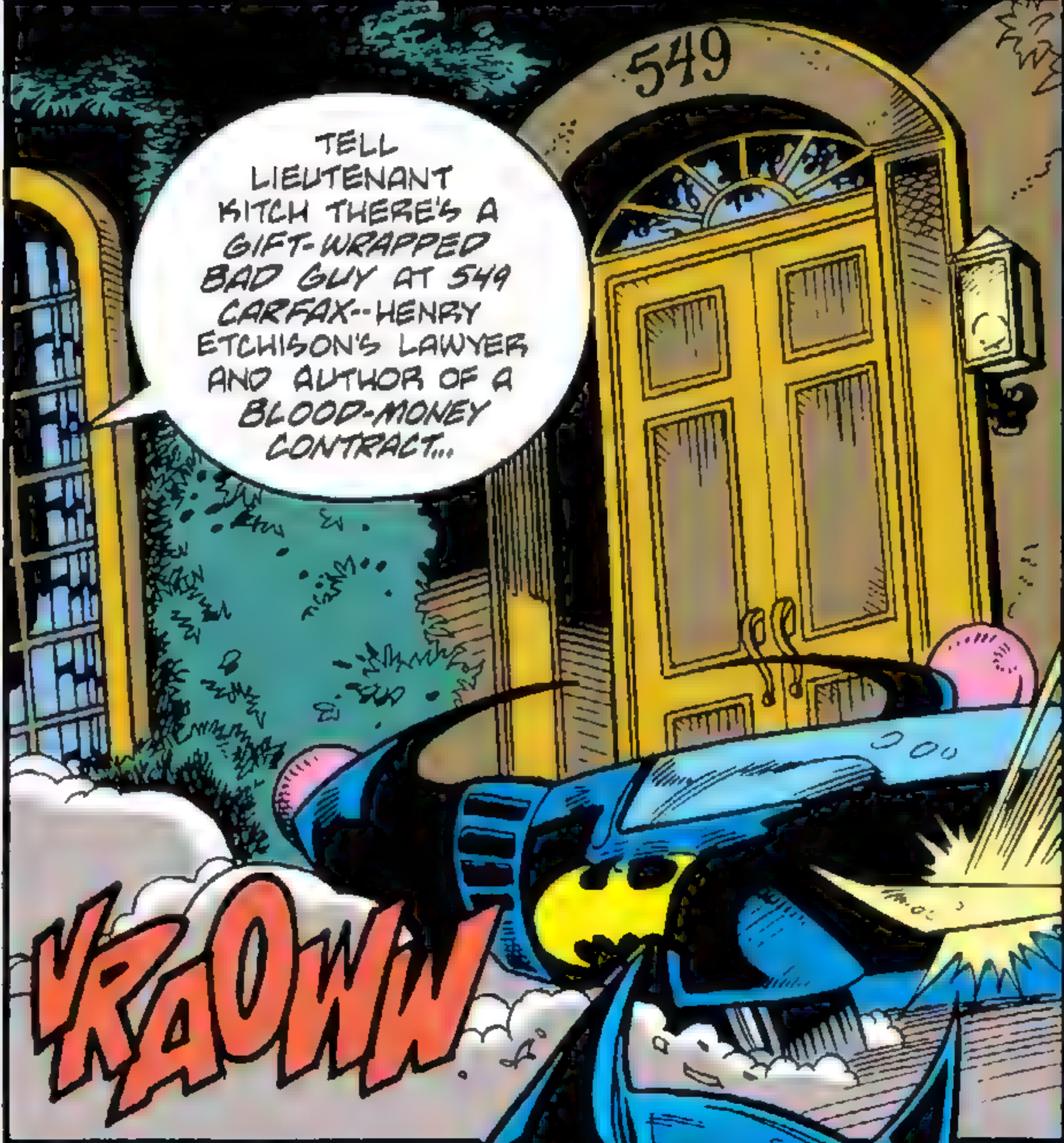
H-H-
HERE.

THE
MONEY'S
HIS.



BUT
ABATTOIR'S
MINE.

FAIR
ENOUGH...
PROBABLY.



TELL
LIEUTENANT
KITCH THERE'S A
GIFT-WRAPPED
BAD GUY AT 549
CARFAX--HENRY
ETCHISON'S LAWYER
AND AUTHOR OF A
BLOOD-MONEY
CONTRACT...



NEVER
MIND WHO
THIS IS.

I'M
LEAVING
TOWN
ANYWAY...



"A GUY LIKE THE BATMAN MAKES GOTHAM
TOO SMALL FOR ANYONE ELSE."

HE SLASHES THE NIGHT, A
DARK CRUSADER, HELLBENT
ON HIS BLOODY GRAIL.

ABATTOIR IS
ALREADY
DEAD.

**NEXT:
CREATURES
OF CLAY!**



KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE

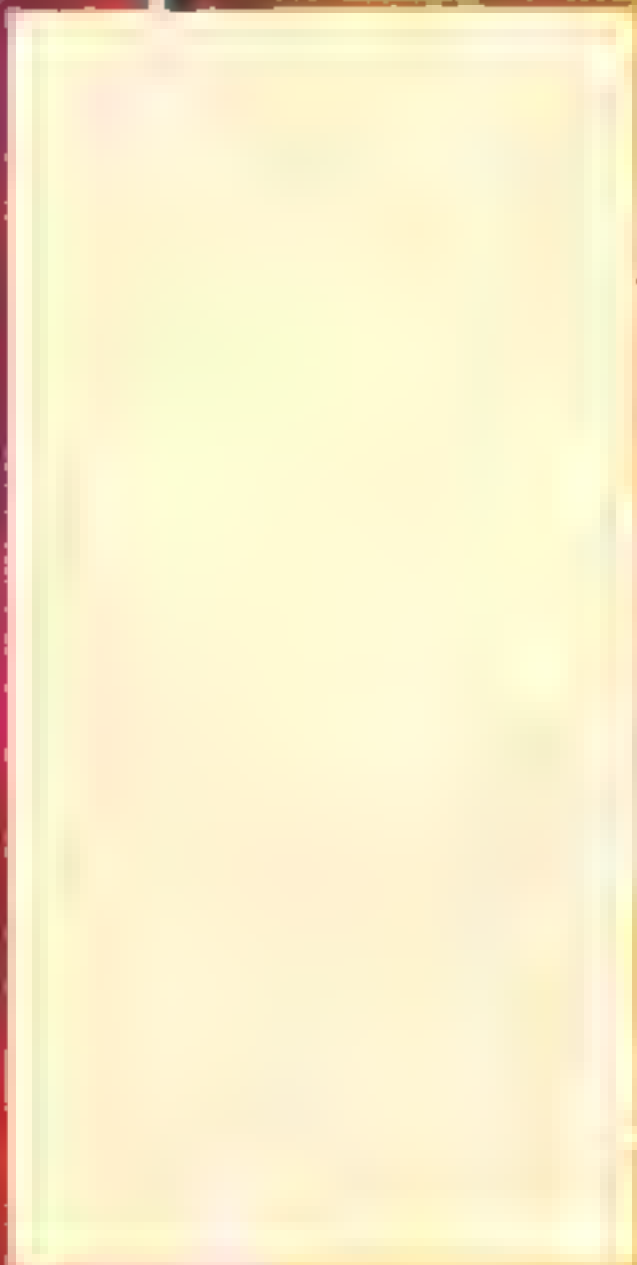


B A T M A N

No.26 APR 94
\$1.75 \$2.35 CAN £1.25p UK
PART ONE OF TWO

SHADOW OF THE BAT

creatures of
CLAY
DIARY OF A LOVER
BY GRANT, BLEVINS AND SMITH



"--THE HIJACKER THREATENED
TO KILL US ALL!"

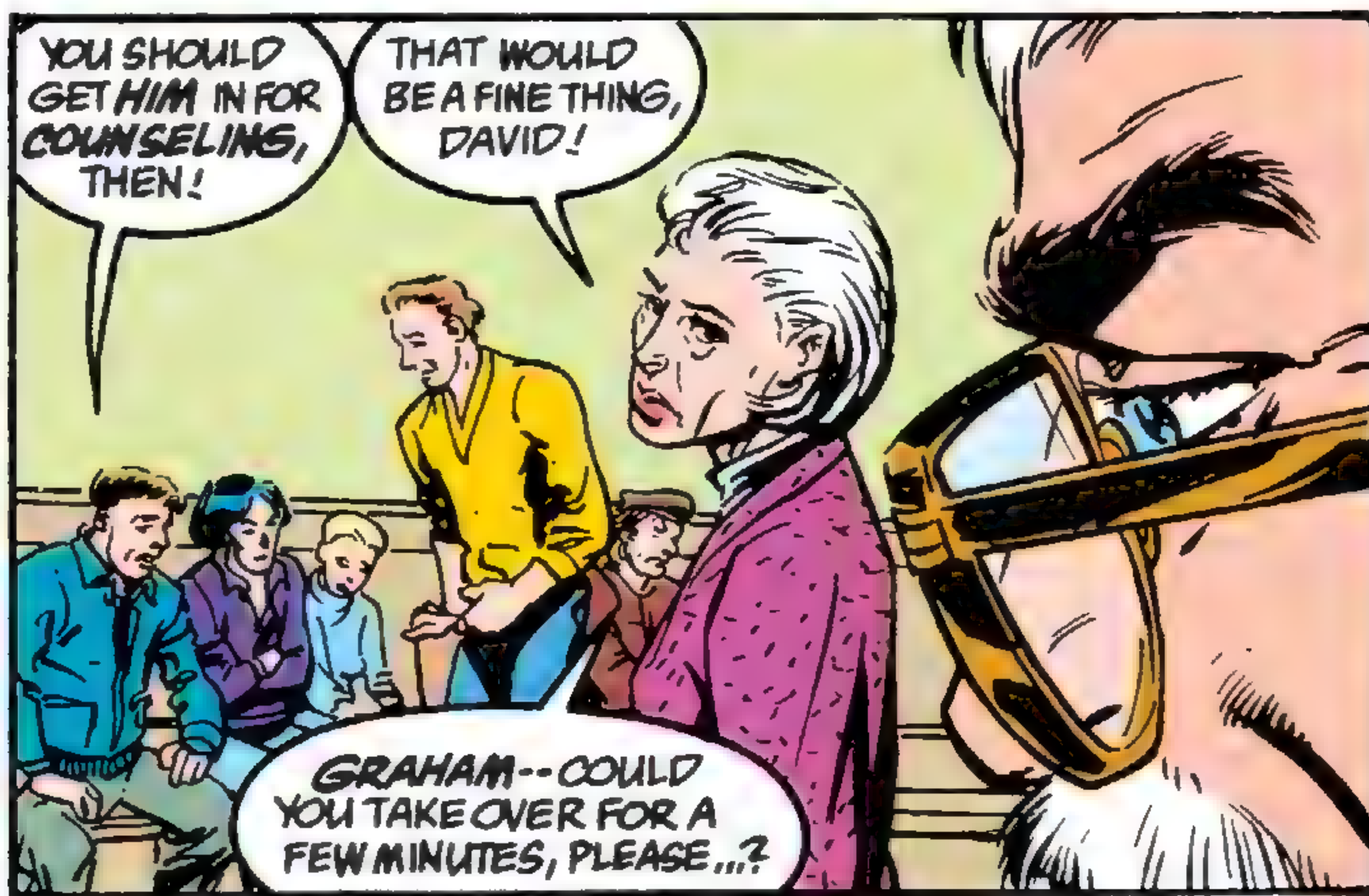
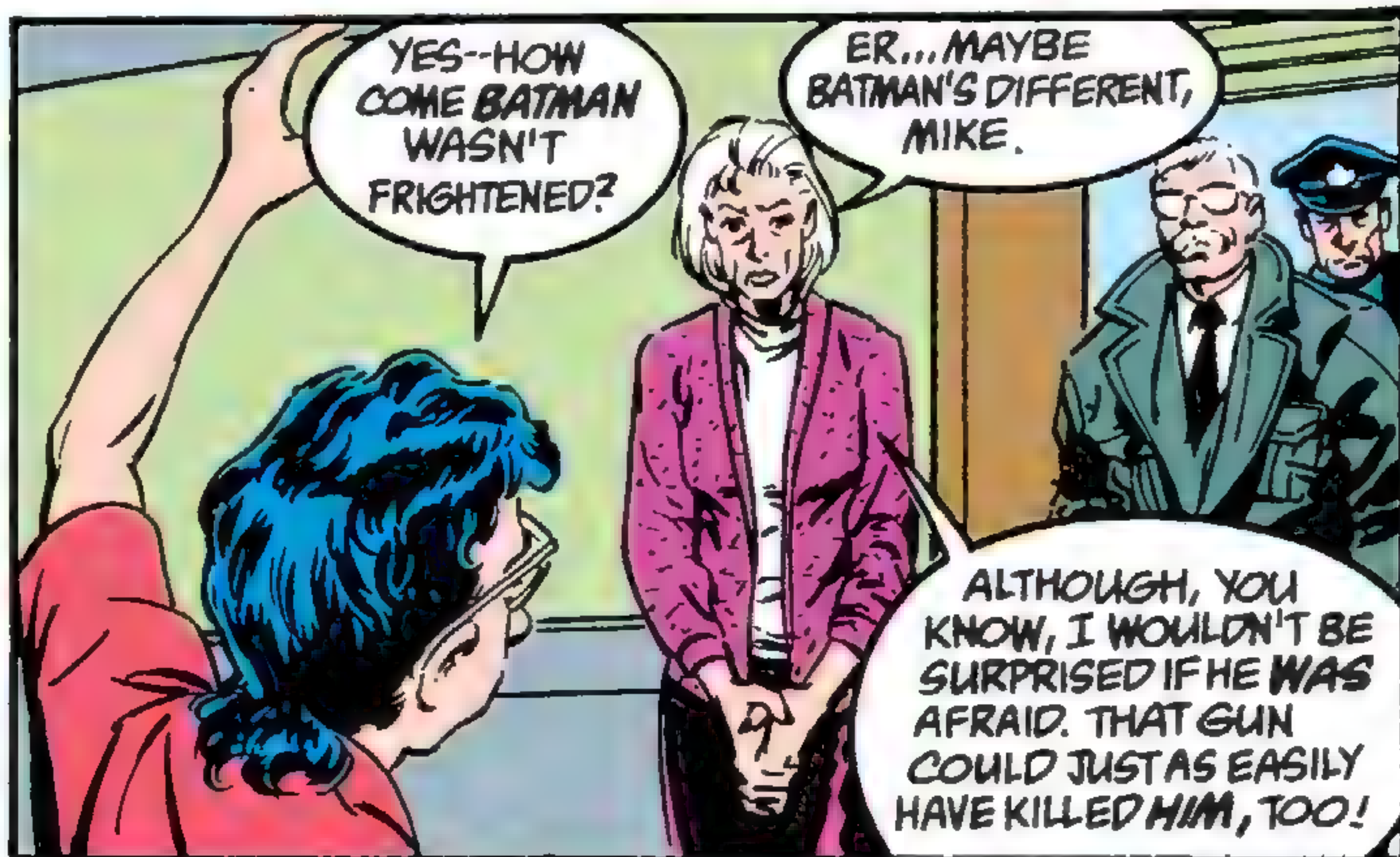
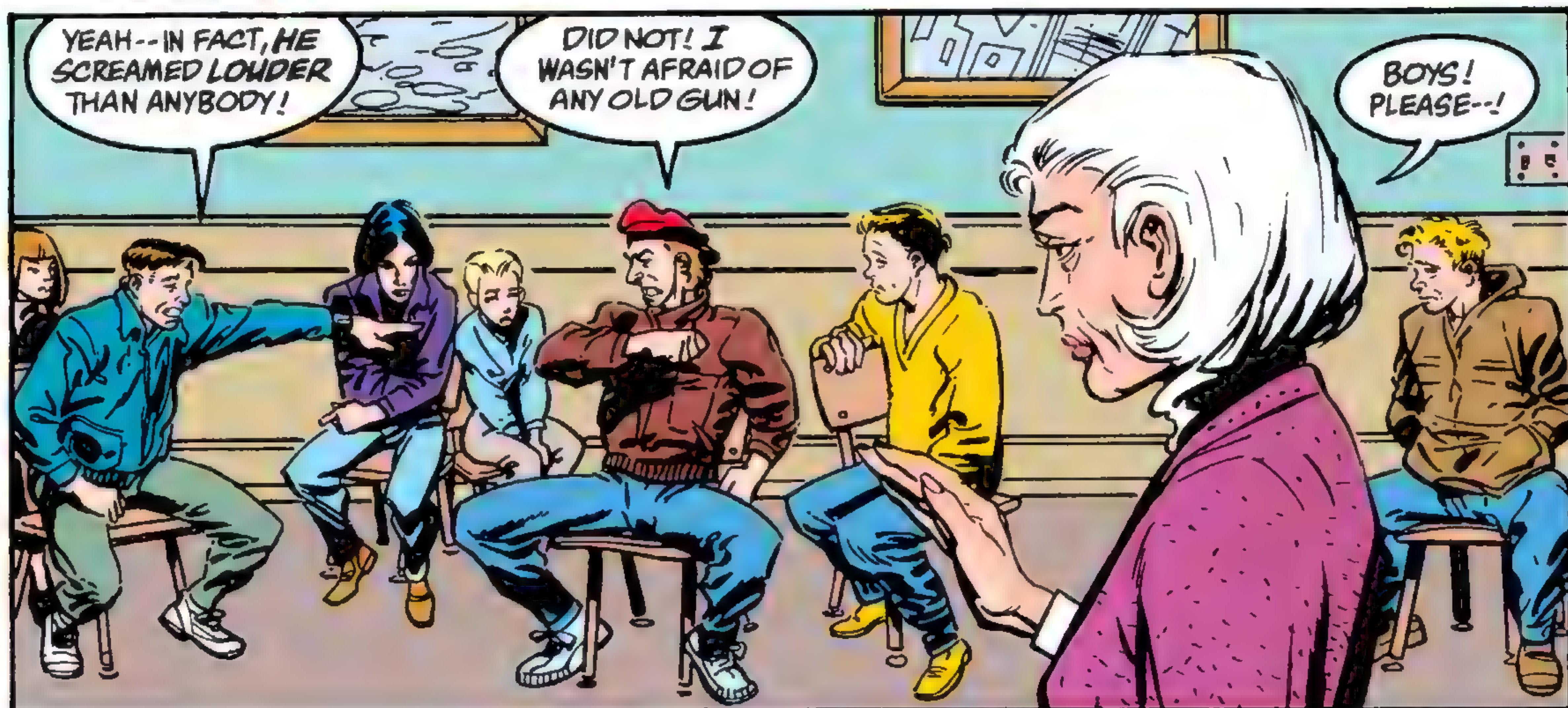
"SOMETHING BURST THROUGH
THE WINDSHIELD. I THOUGHT
IT WAS A DEMON!"

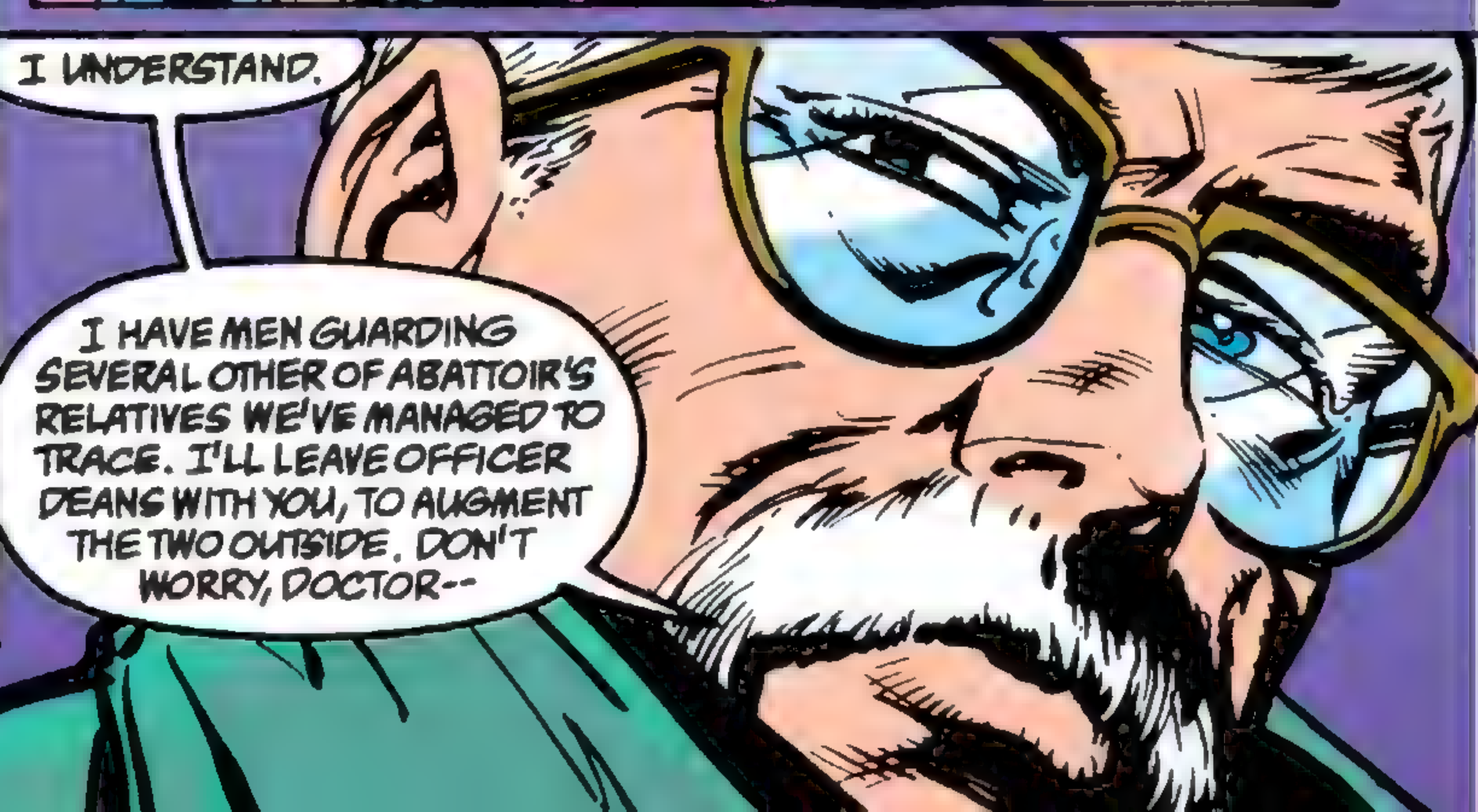
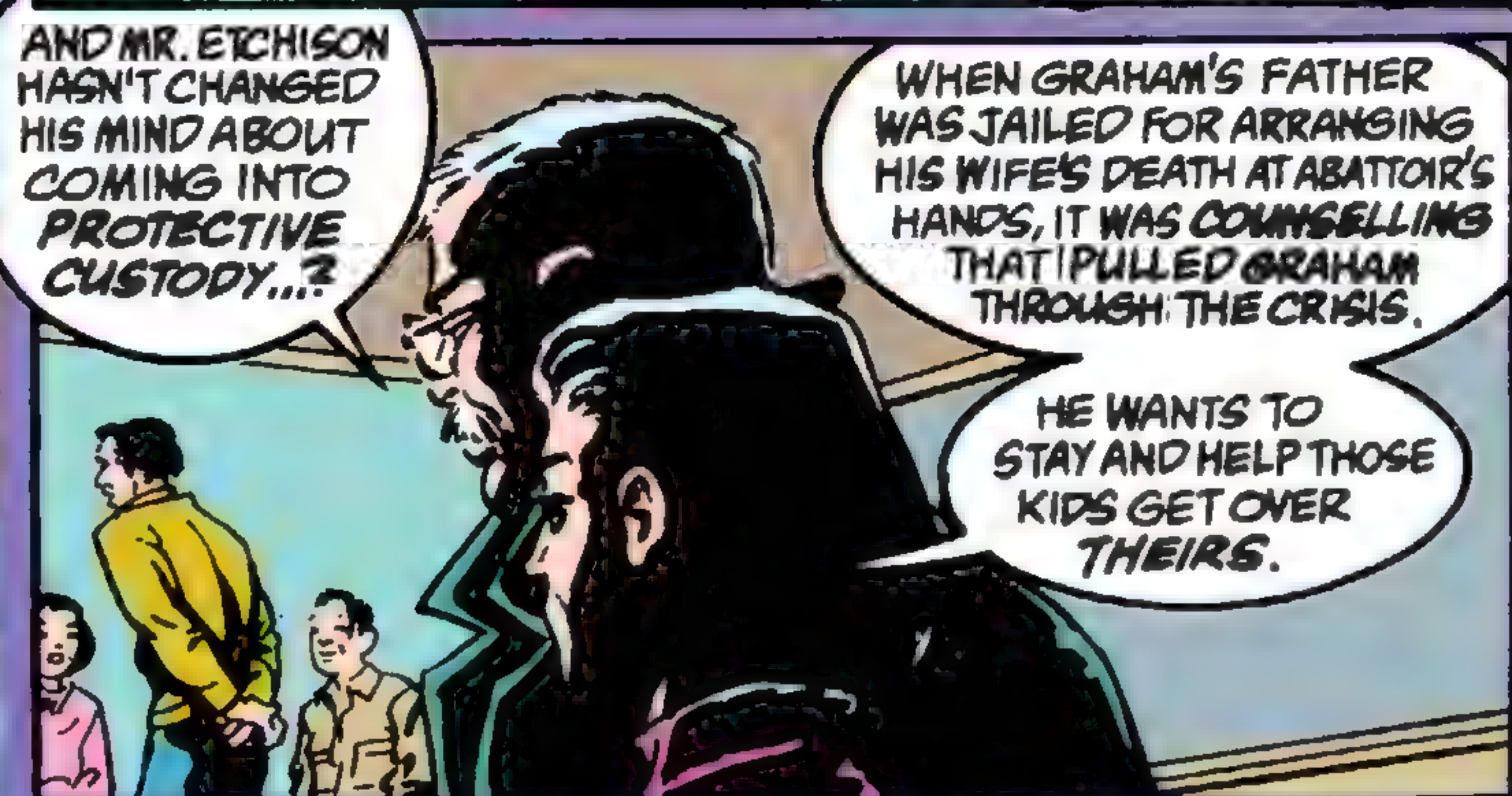
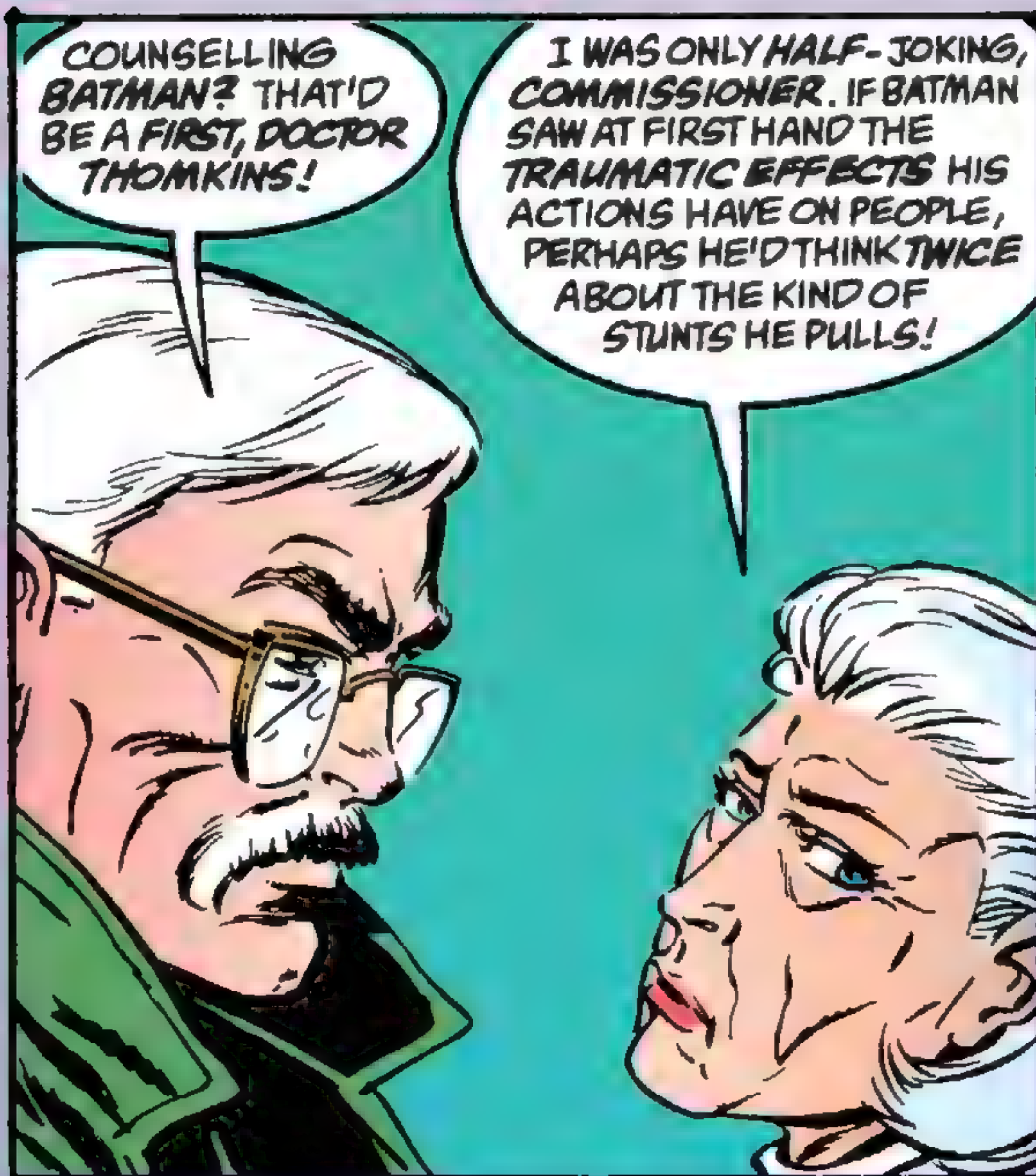
"--LIKE A BLACK CLOUD,
ALL SPIKY AND SPOOKY!"

"A LOT OF THE OTHER GUYS
SCREAMED -- BUT I DIDN'T!"

"--FOUGHT
LIKE TIGERS--"

"THEN THE BUS
CRASHED AND
THE HIJACKER
ESCAPED!"

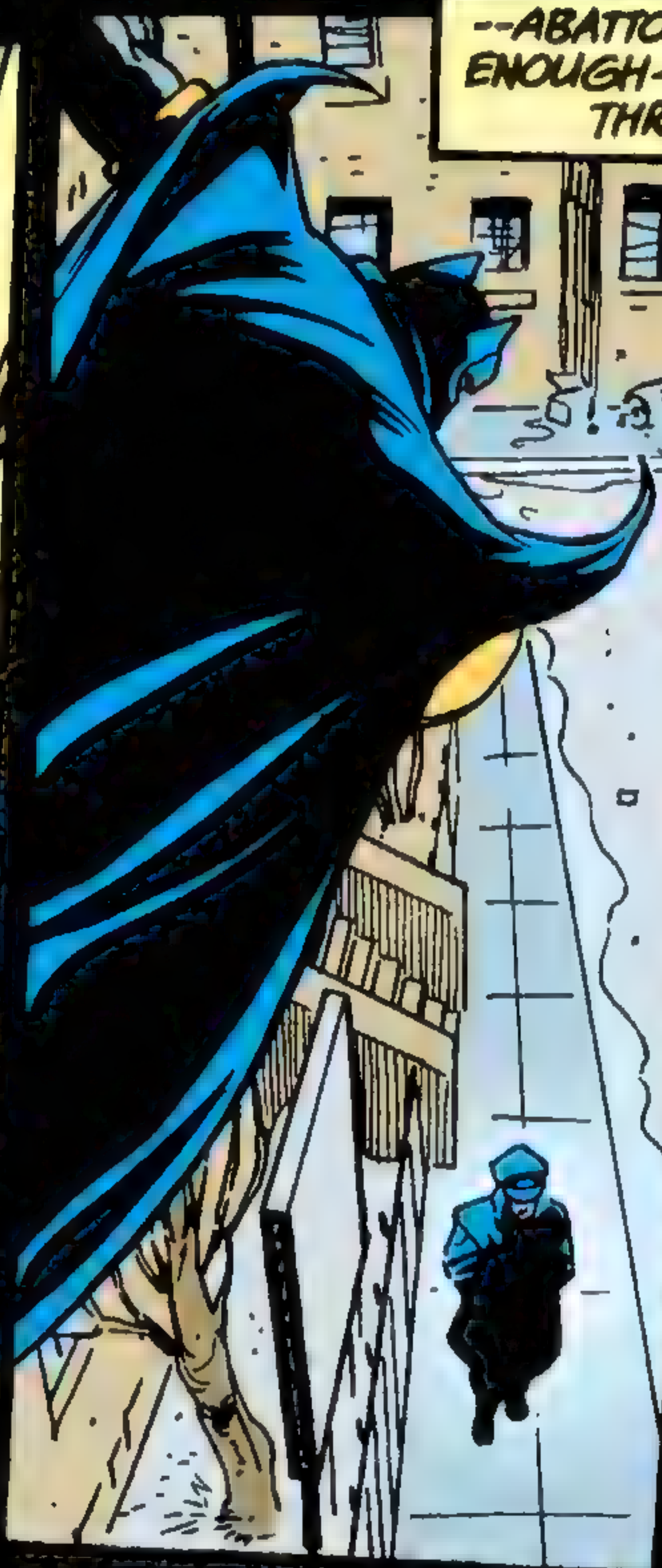






NO ONE WILL
GET PAST
THEM!

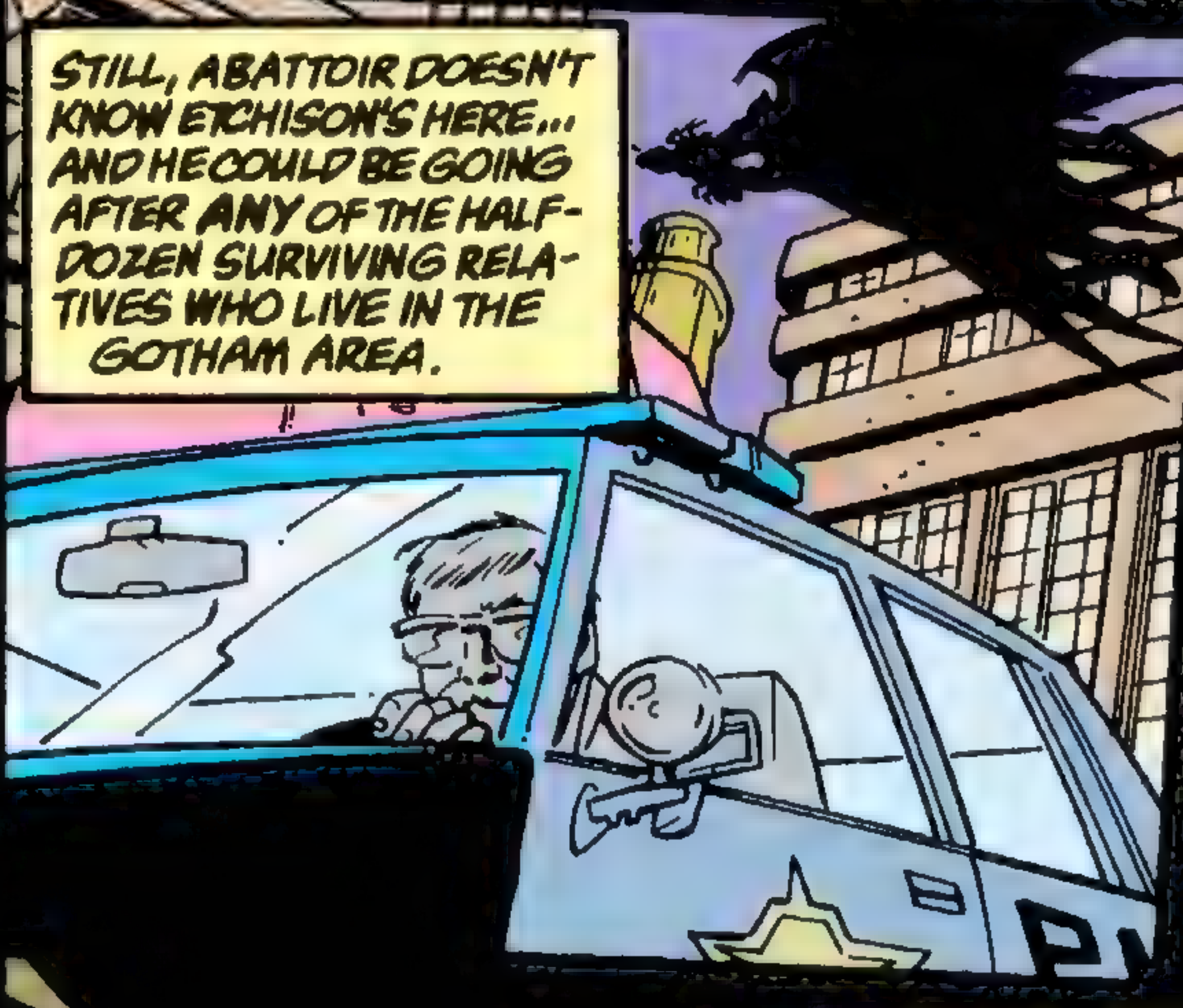
I DON'T
LIKE IT--



--ABATTOIR'S SHOWN HIMSELF RESOURCEFUL
ENOUGH--AND RUTHLESS ENOUGH--TO GET
THROUGH ANY POLICE GUARD.



DEANS IS ON
DUTY INSIDE. STAY
ALERT. FOR GOD'S
SAKE, DON'T LET
ANYTHING HAPPEN
HERE!



STILL, ABATTOIR DOESN'T
KNOW ECHISON'S HERE...
AND HE COULD BE GOING
AFTER ANY OF THE HALF-
DOZEN SURVIVING RELA-
TIVES WHO LIVE IN THE
GOTHAM AREA.



MY MISSION IS TO PROTECT THE
CITY--AND ITS INNOCENTS--

--FROM THE CRIME THAT
PLAGUES IT LIKE SOME
VILE DISEASE.



I CAN'T STAND
PERMANENT
GUARD, PRO-
TECTING ONE
MAN'S LIFE--



--WHEN GOTHAM HAS
SEVERAL TOO MANY MURDERS
EVERY NIGHT OF THE YEAR!



AT LAST! I WAS
BEGINNIN' TO THINK
IT WAS HIS NIGHT
OFF!

CHANGED A BIT--
BUT THERE'S NO
MISTAKIN' HIM. I HAVE
A LOT OF REASONS
TO CURSE THE
BATMAN,,, BUT IN A
STRANGE WAY, I HAVE
A LOT TO THANK
HIM FOR, TOO.

I'VE HAD A LONG
TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
I ALWAYS KNEW HIM AS MY
ENEMY... BUT REALLY,
HE'S A GOOD MAN
AT HEART.



A GOOD
MAN AT
HEART--

--WONDER HOW
MANY HAVE THAT
WRITTEN ON THEIR
TOMBSTONE?



I THOUGHT
I'D FINISHED
WITH KILLIN'--



--I WAS WRONG. SEEMS THERE'S
NO GOIN' BACK ONCE YOU'VE
GONE DOWN THAT PATH--

--NO
REDEMPTION,
EVEN FOR A
REFORMED
SINNER.



I DIDN'T WANT IT TO
BE THIS WAY EVER
AGAIN, BUT--

DON'T THINK!
JUST DO IT!
DO IT!



WHAT THE DEVIL IS THIS?
I'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL
WAYNE'S FILES--THIS
MONSTER DOESN'T FIT
ANY OF THEM.

COMMON SENSE SAYS IT'S THE CRIMINAL
CALLED THE GARGOYLE -- BUT THE
VISUALS JUST DON'T MATCH --

--NOW
IT'S GONNA
GET MESSY!

DAMN! I
HESITATED
TOO LONG --

STUPID! UNDER-
ESTIMATED HIS
STRENGTH! I
SHOULD HAVE PUT
DISTANCE BETWEEN
US --

--TOO
LATE
NOW.

I THOUGHT I'D NEVER
KILL AGAIN, BATMAN. BUT
AS I'M GONNA KILL YOU --

IT'S ONLY
FAIR YOU SHOULD
KNOW WHO DID
IT!

LADY CLAYFACE! SHE
VANISHED MONTHS AGO

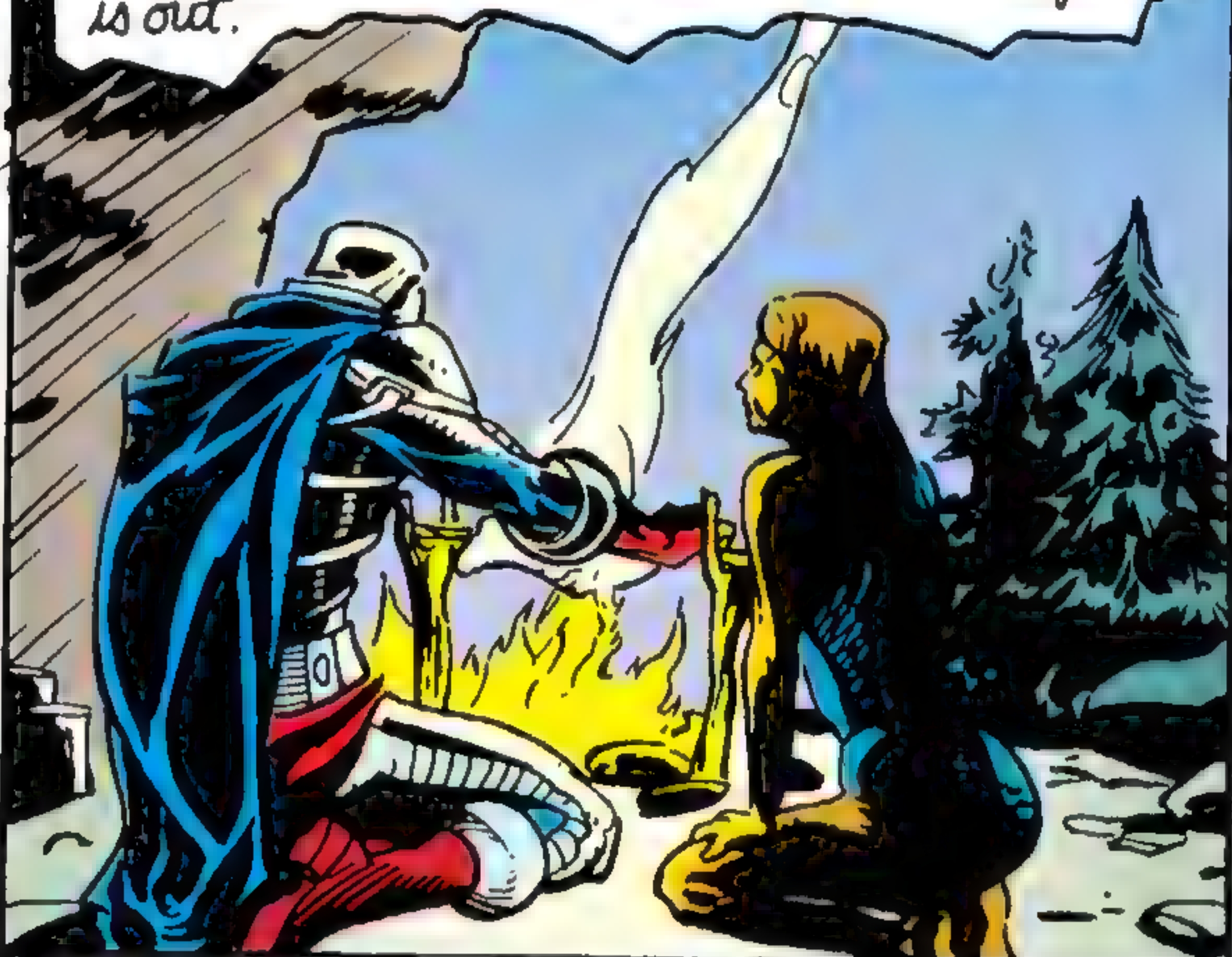
Today, for better or worse,
Preston Payne and I left
Gotham City.

We've found something in each other we've both long yearned for yet were always denied: Acceptance. Humanity. Love.

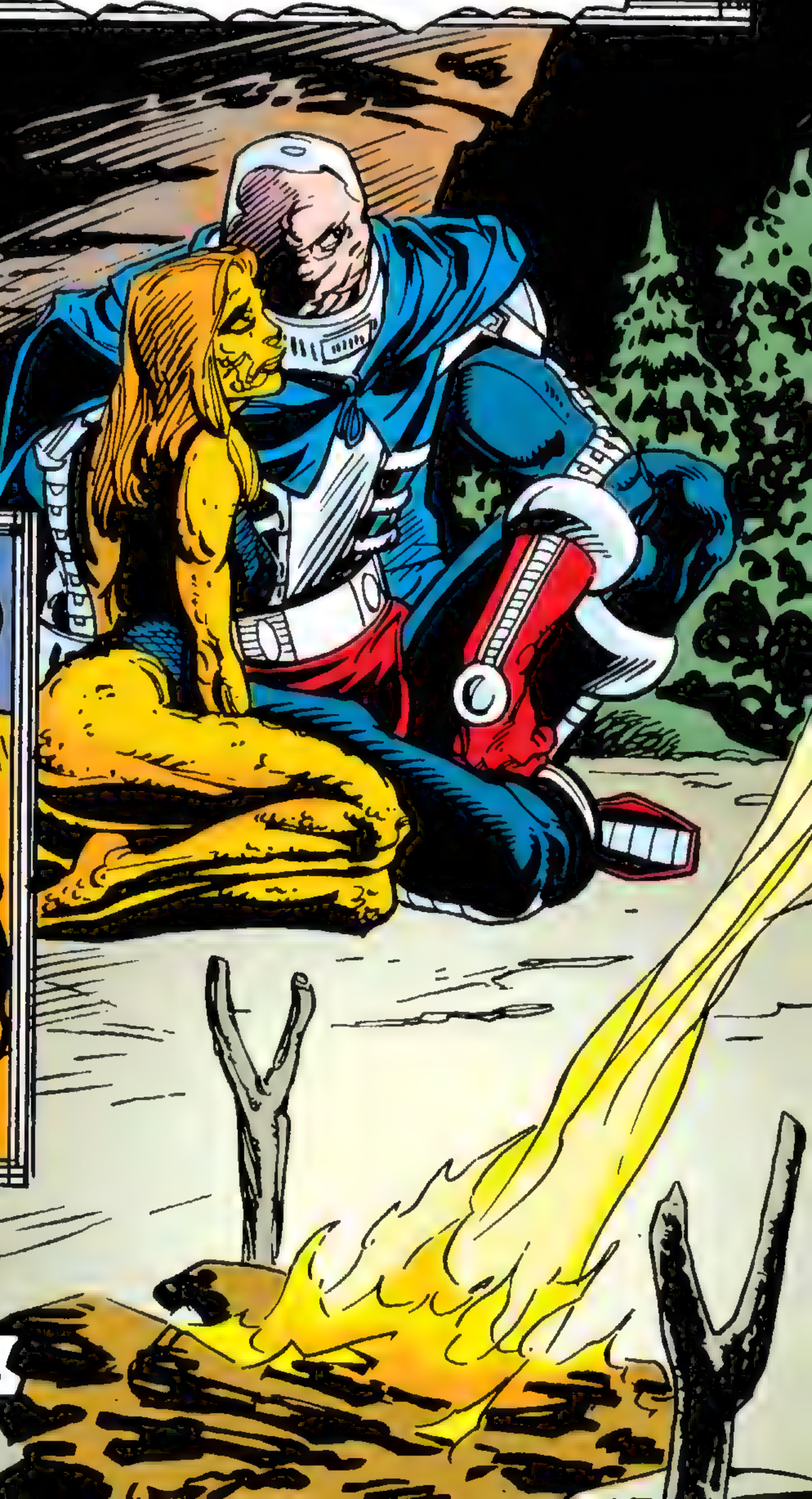


This diary will be my record of that love.

Though I can change my appearance at will, Preston - Clayface 3 - can't. Shut into that protective suit, there's no way he can hide - so a penthouse love-nest on Gotham Heights is out.



We've settled on a cave in the upstate National Forest. Not much - but it's the first place I've called "home" since I don't know when.



HEY, WHAT WAS THAT FOR? NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING, MIND YOU!

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.

BECAUSE I'M HOME.

Fruit-nuts-berries. Crystal stream water. When we need something that isn't free I warp into a human and steal it in the nearest store, 20 miles away.

Idyllic...

Except for one thing. Preston's skin burns anything it touches - and that would include me.

It's like there's something unfinished between us...

But it's something we just have to live with. For thirty days now we've been like schoolkids, wrapped up in each other with no thought of tomorrow or what it might bring. All that's mattered is the moment -

Until this moment.

DARLING!
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

PRESTON--
BREAKFAST!

IT HURTS...

OH GOD,
IT HURTS!

THE CLAYFACES WERE SOME OF BRUCE WAYNE'S HARDEST ENEMIES-- I DON'T KNOW WHERE LADY CLAYFACE HAS BEEN, BUT I KNOW WHERE SHE IS -- ABOUT TO KILL ME! BUT SHE SEEMS VERY RELUCTANT TO PRESS HOME HER VICTORY--

AND I DON'T NEED A SECOND CHANCE--

BELIEVE ME, THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED--BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE!

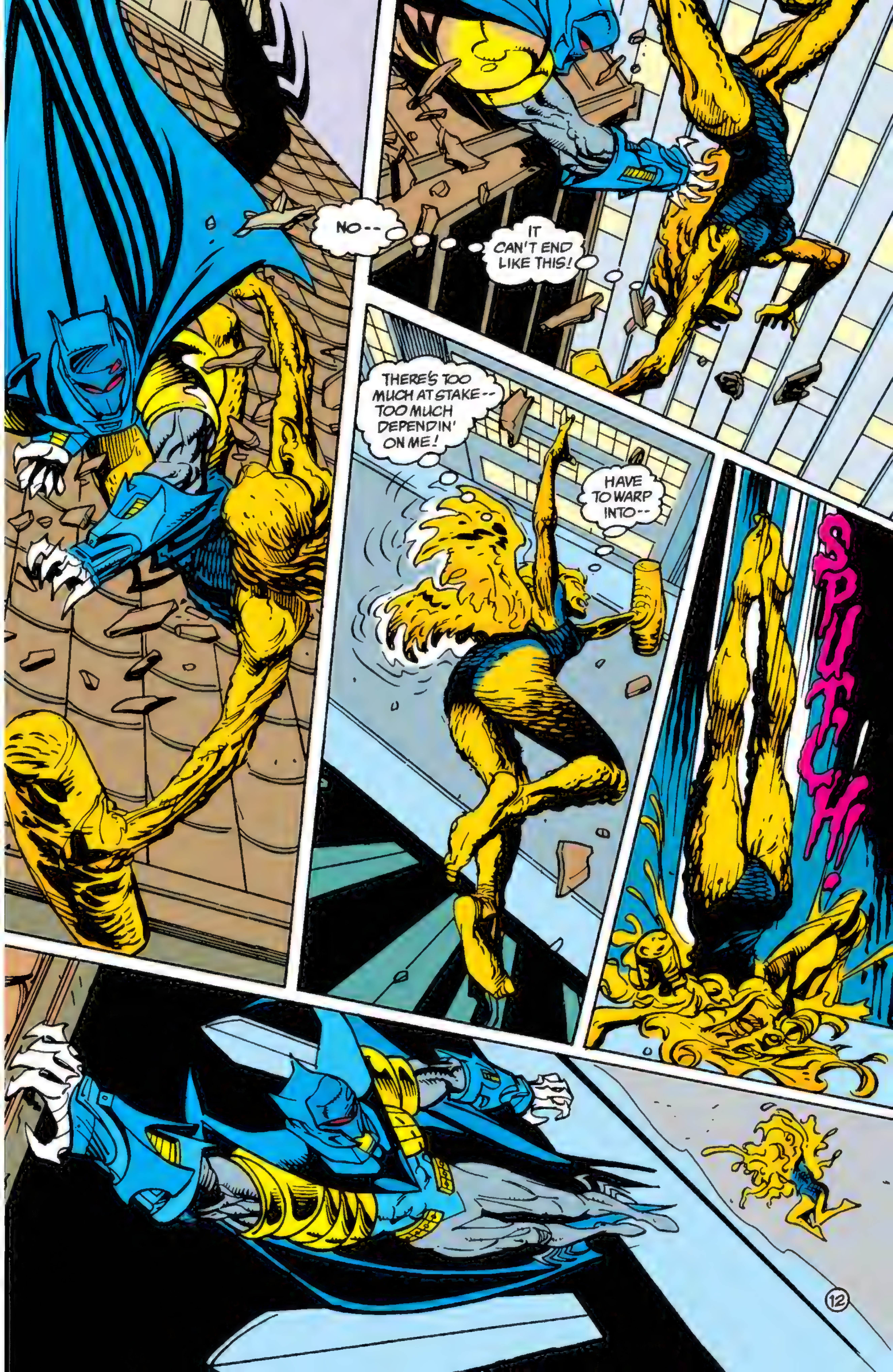
I HAVE TO TAKE HER OUT FAST! SHE ADOPTS THE POWERS OF WHATEVER SHE MIMICS--

AAAAH!

--SO I HAVE TO KEEP HER OFF-BALANCE, NOT GIVE HER ANY TIME TO CHANGE AGAIN--

THE WALL--!

WUNH!



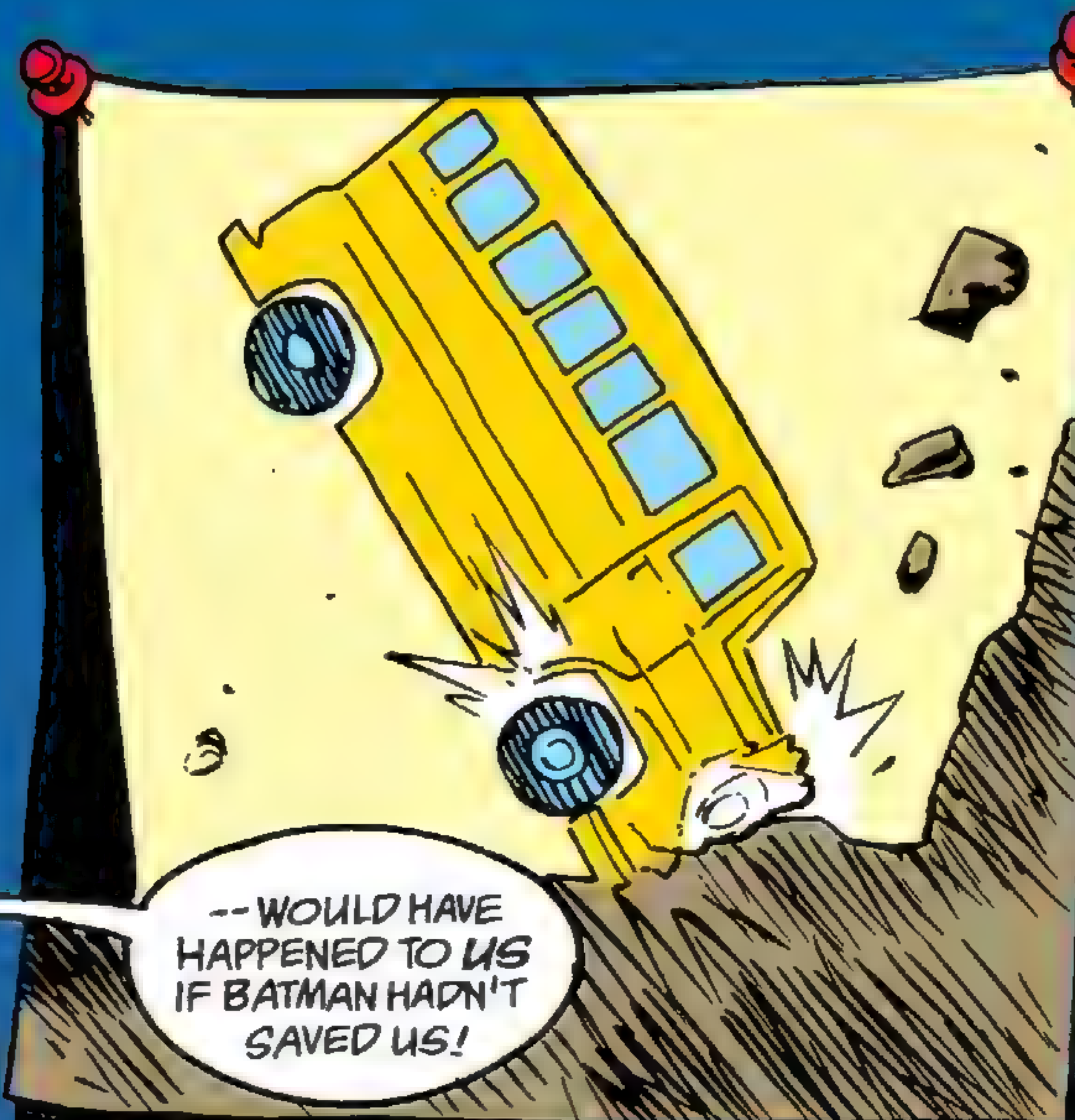
NO--

IT
CAN'T END
LIKE THIS!

THERE'S TOO
MUCH AT STAKE--
TOO MUCH
DEPENDIN'
ON ME!

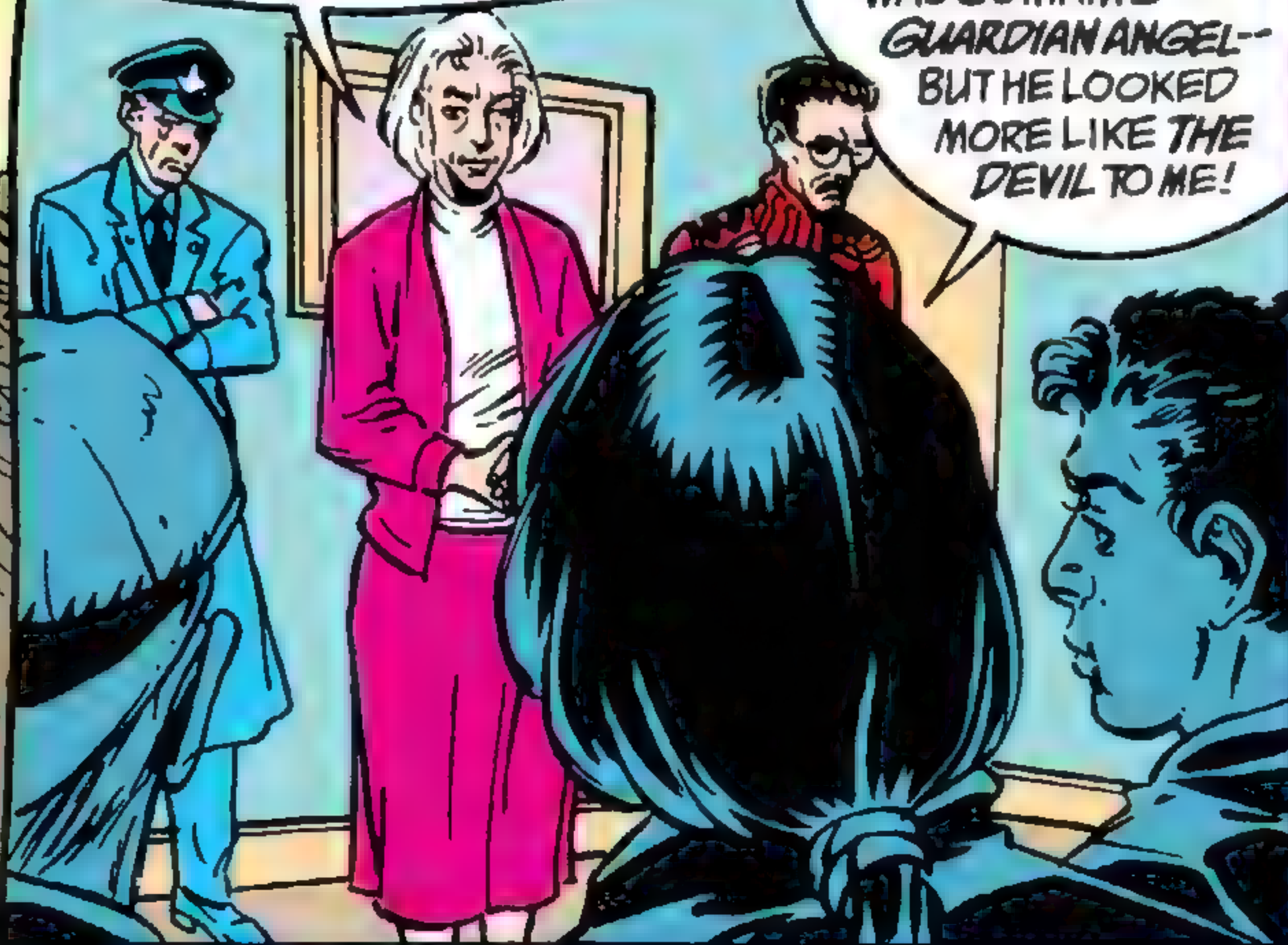
HAVE
TO WARP
INTO--

SPURTS!



BATMAN AGAIN! HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD MORE AFFECTON ON YOU THAN THE MURDERER DID!

YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN HIM, MISS! MY DAD ONCE TOLD ME BATMAN WAS GOTHAM'S *GUARDIAN ANGEL*-- BUT HE LOOKED MORE LIKE *THE DEVIL* TO ME!



EVERYTHING'S CLEAR HERE. HOW ABOUT YOU, DEANS? THIS CUSHY, OR WHAT?

WAIT A MINUTE! THERE'S A GUY--



FALSE ALARM! IT'S JUST SOME OLD BUM...!



CAN'T EVEN TAKE CARE OF MY OWN ANYMORE...



C-C-CLAYFACE--!

I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS BUT--



--IT SEEMS LIKE KILLING IS ALL I KNOW!

PRESTON PAYNE ... THEY NAMED ME WELL, DEAR. SEEMS ALL I DO THESE DAYS IS SUFFER!

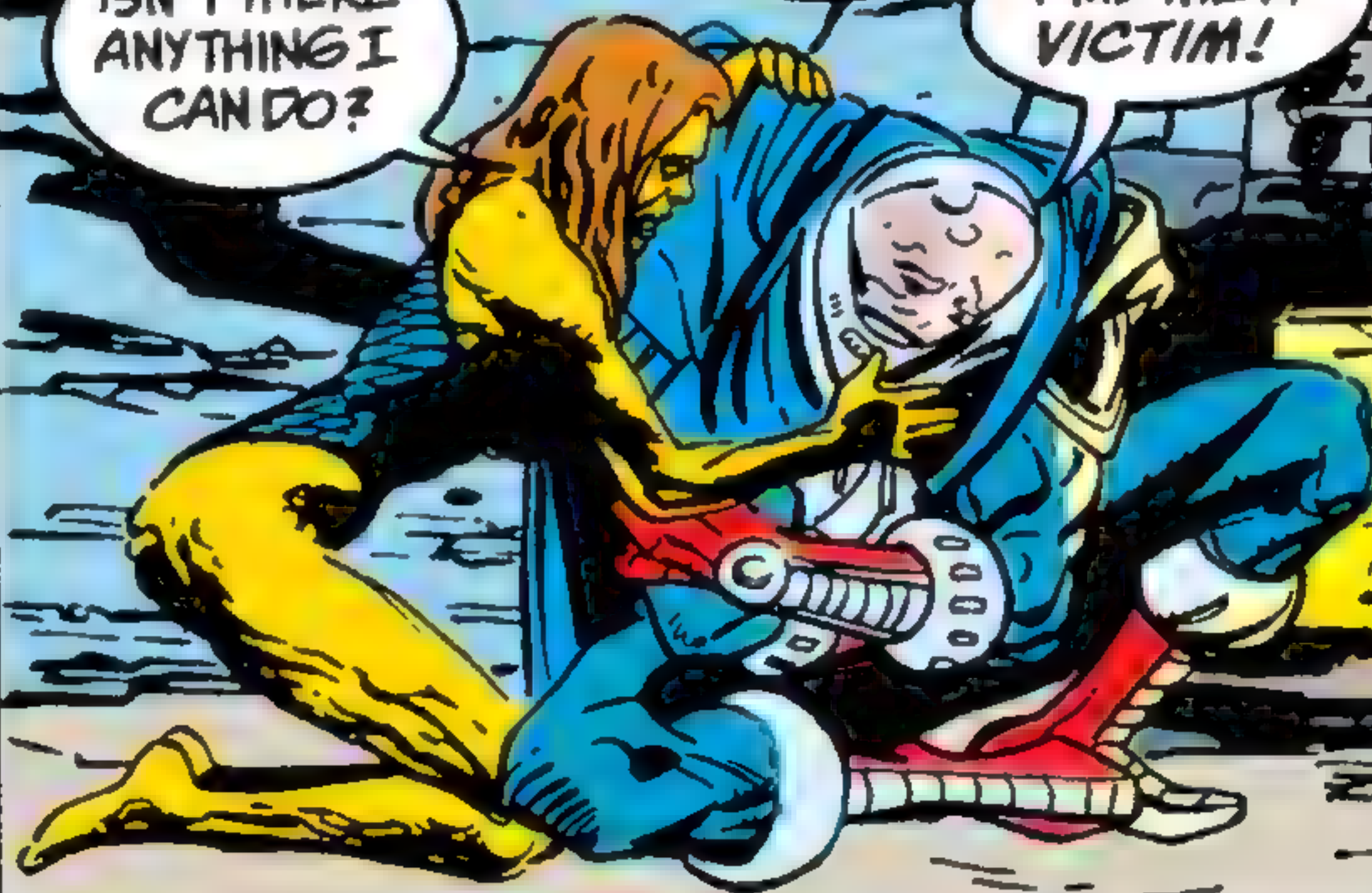


We've been here two months now, playing at being a normal couple in a normal relationship. But Preston's getting more depressed by the day.

ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

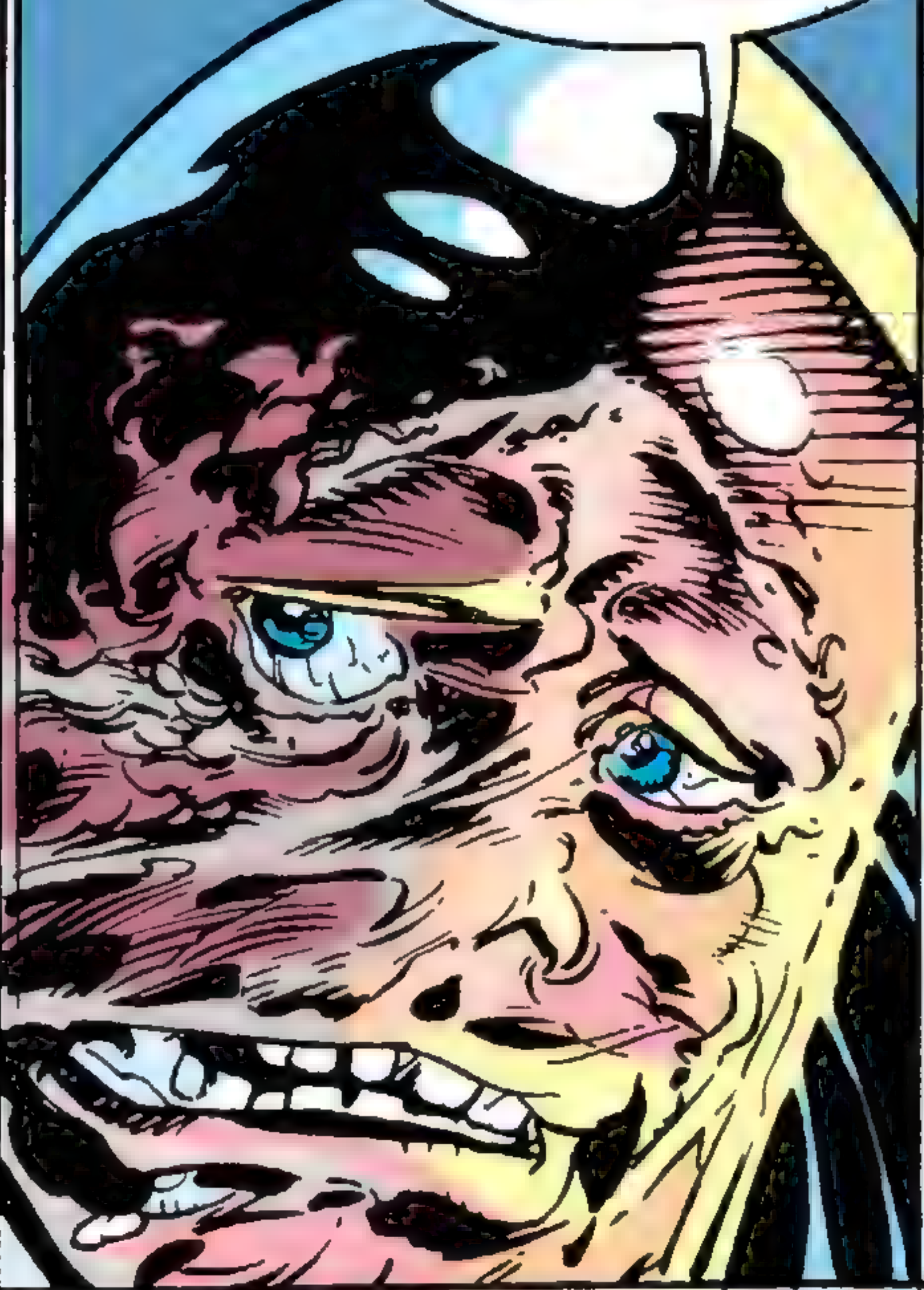
SURE...

FIND ME A VICTIM!



SORRY, HONEY. POOR ATTEMPT AT A JOKE.

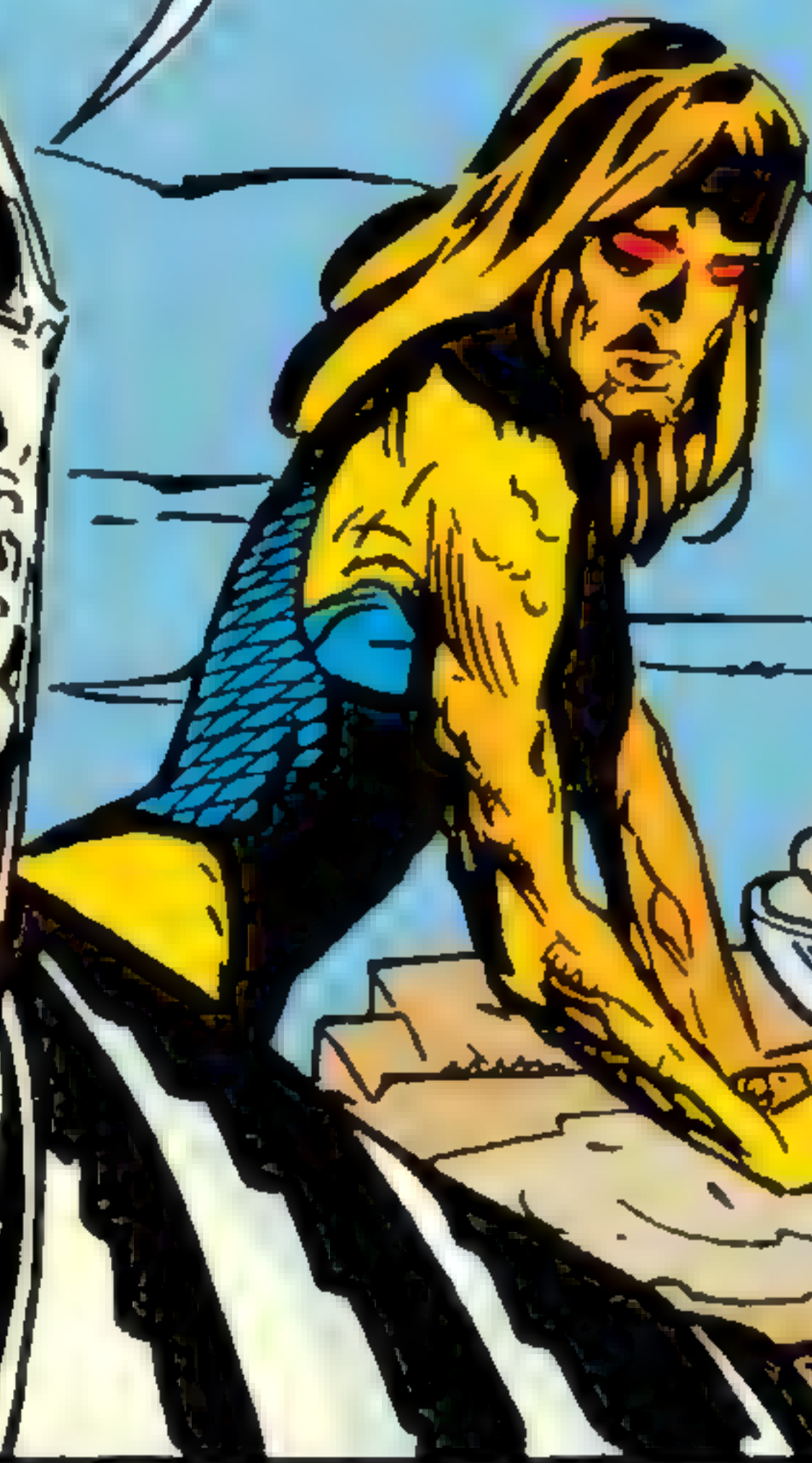
BUT IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EASES IT-- THE BURNING GOES FOR A WHILE WHEN I PASS THE CONTAGION ON TO SOMEBODY ELSE!



Truth be told, I'm beginning to worry. One minute he's down, in the pits of despair--the next he's laughing, fired by wild enthusiasm--

TWO FREAKS LIVING IN A CAVE ... IT ISN'T NATURAL, DEAR! FOLKS NEED OTHER FOLKS.

MAYBE WE OUGHT TO ADVERTISE-- START A LITTLE COMMUNITY. FREAKS ONLY-- NO NORMALS ALLOWED!



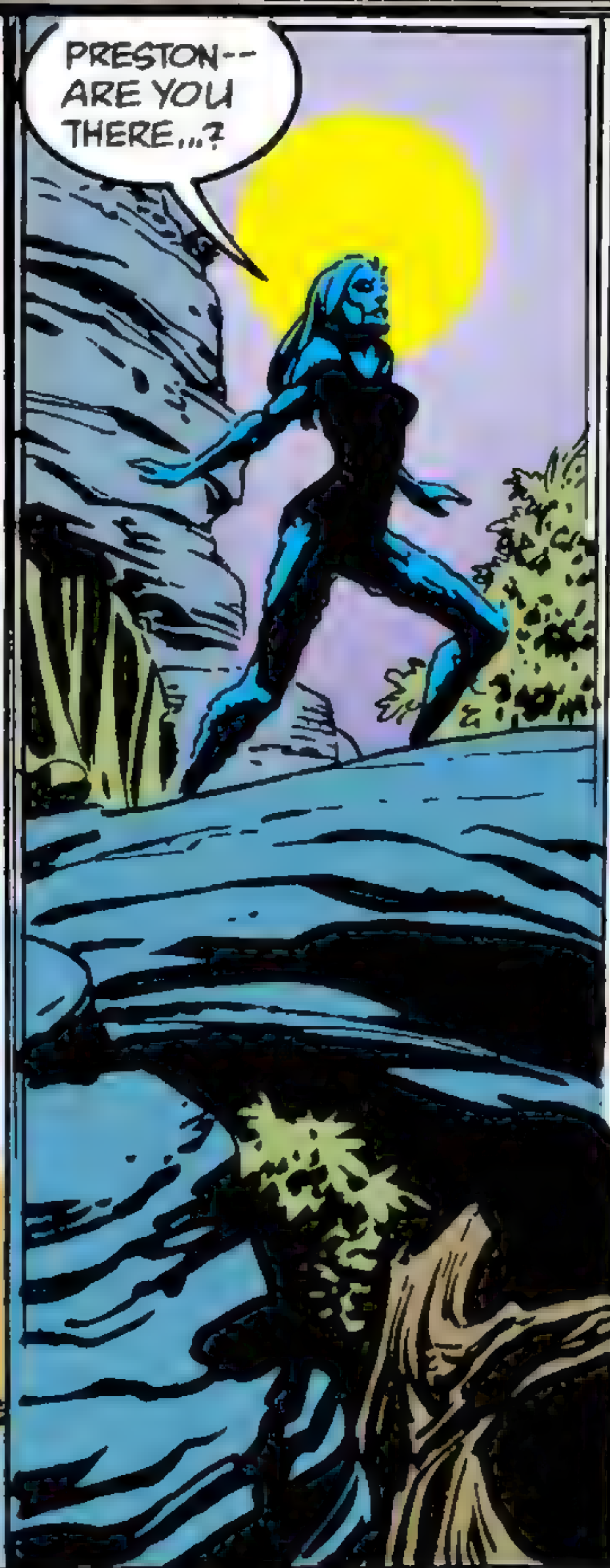
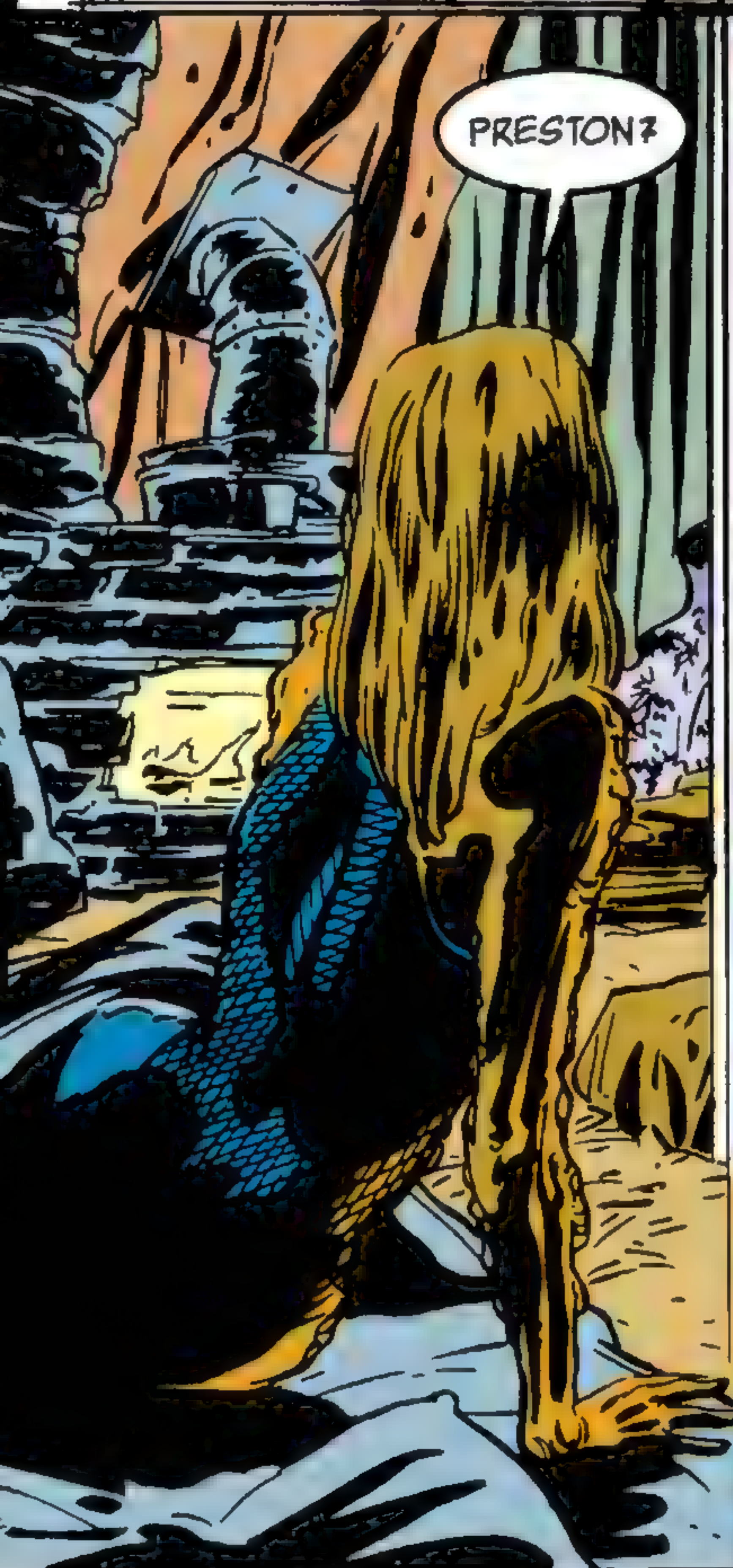
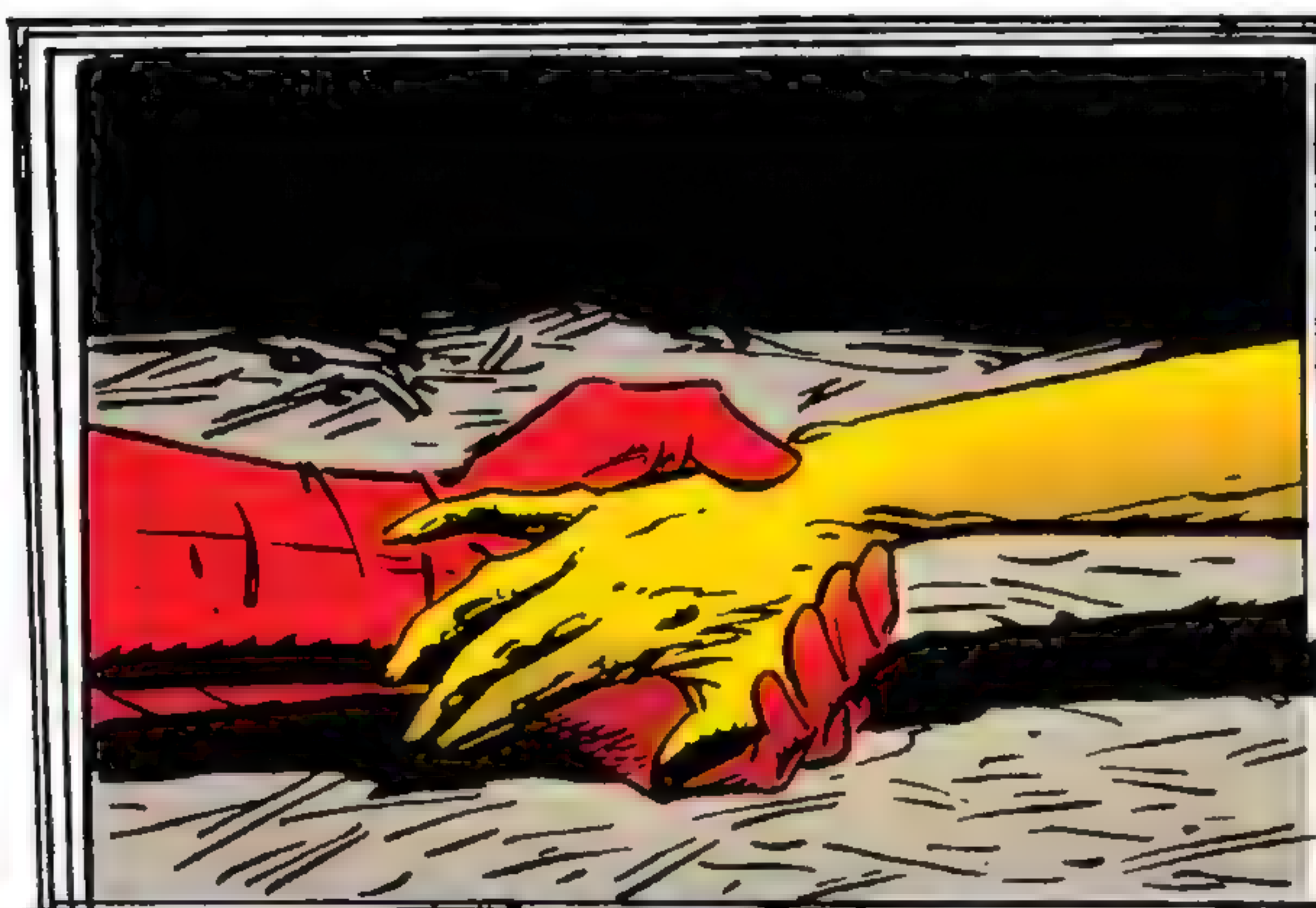
RELAX, PRESTON. I KNOW THIS ISN'T PERFECT-- BUT NOTHING IS. I'LL SETTLE FOR WHAT WE HAVE.

YOU'RE AN ANGEL, DEAR.



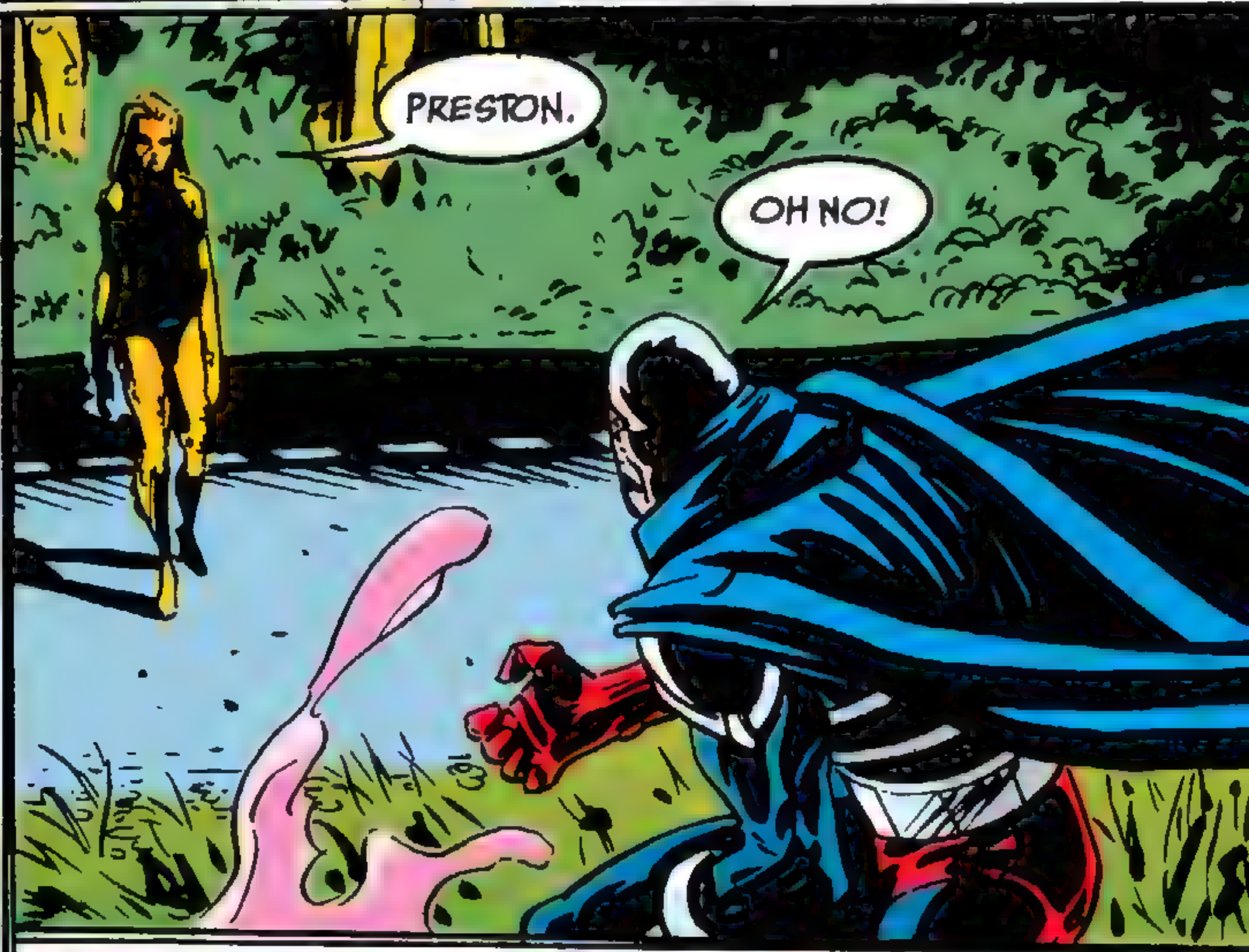
I DON'T DESERVE YOU.





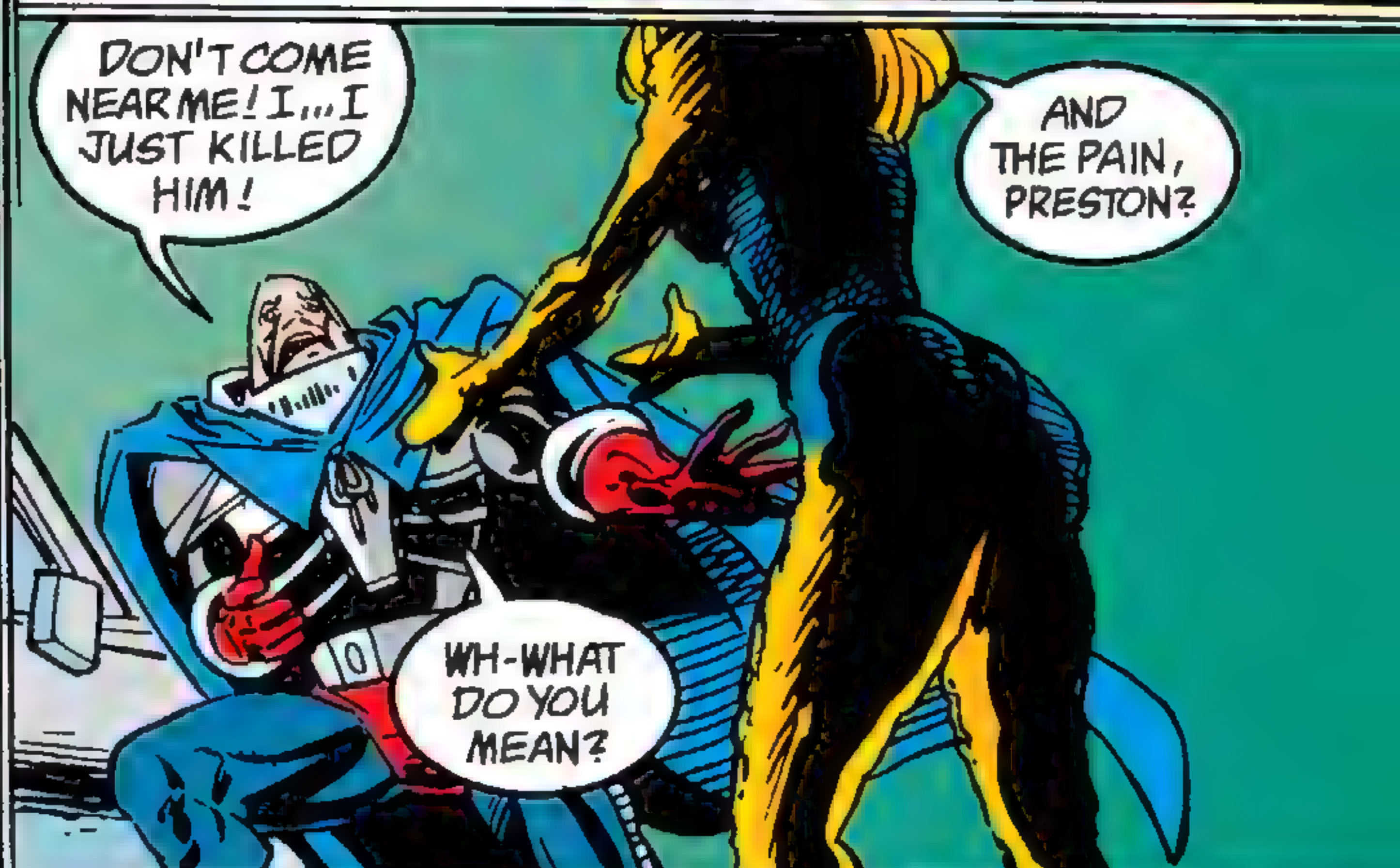


DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
I HAVE TO! I CAN'T TAKE
ANY MORE PAIN...!



PRESTON.

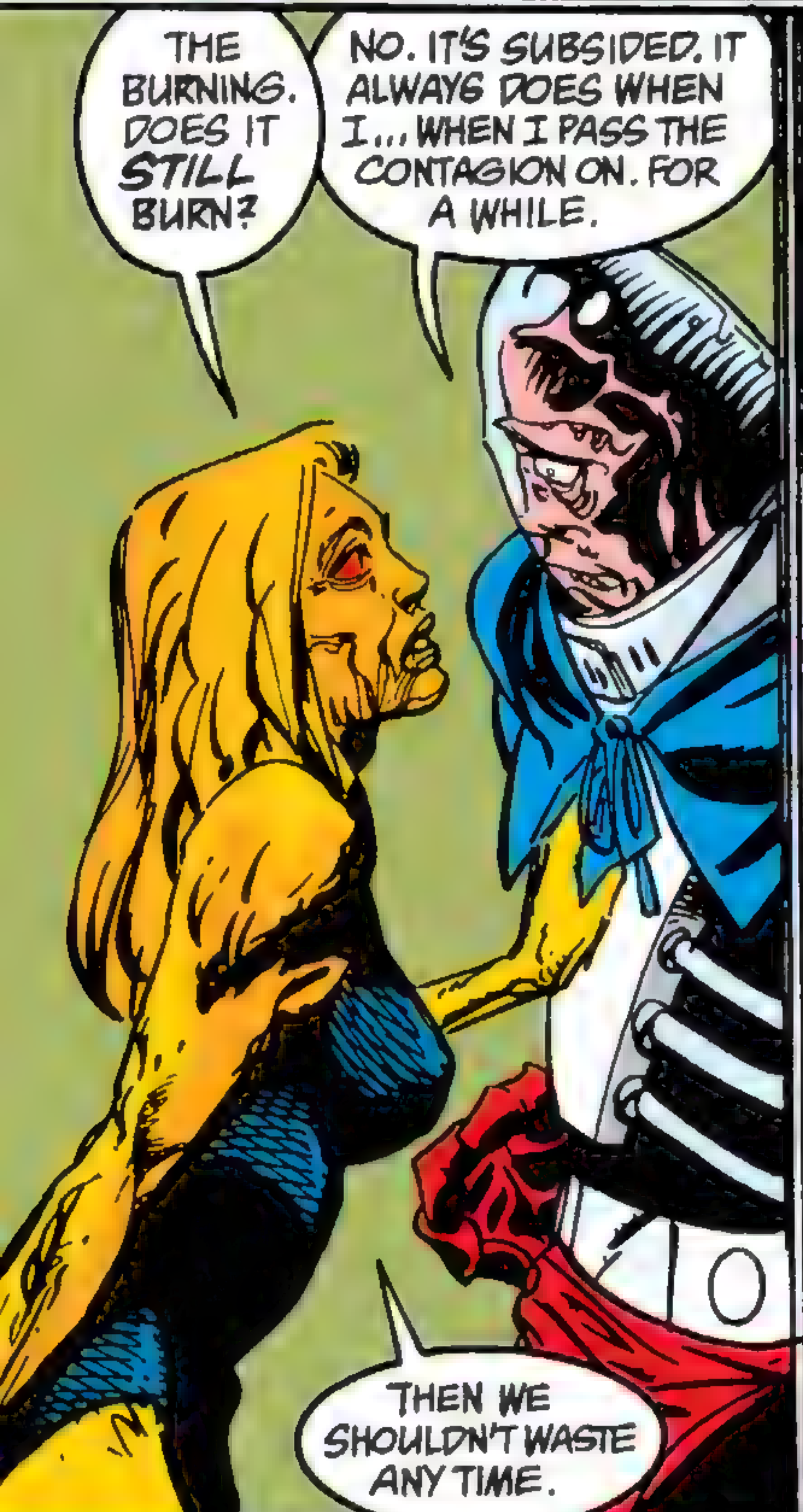
OH NO!



DON'T COME
NEAR ME! I... I
JUST KILLED
HIM!

AND
THE PAIN,
PRESTON?

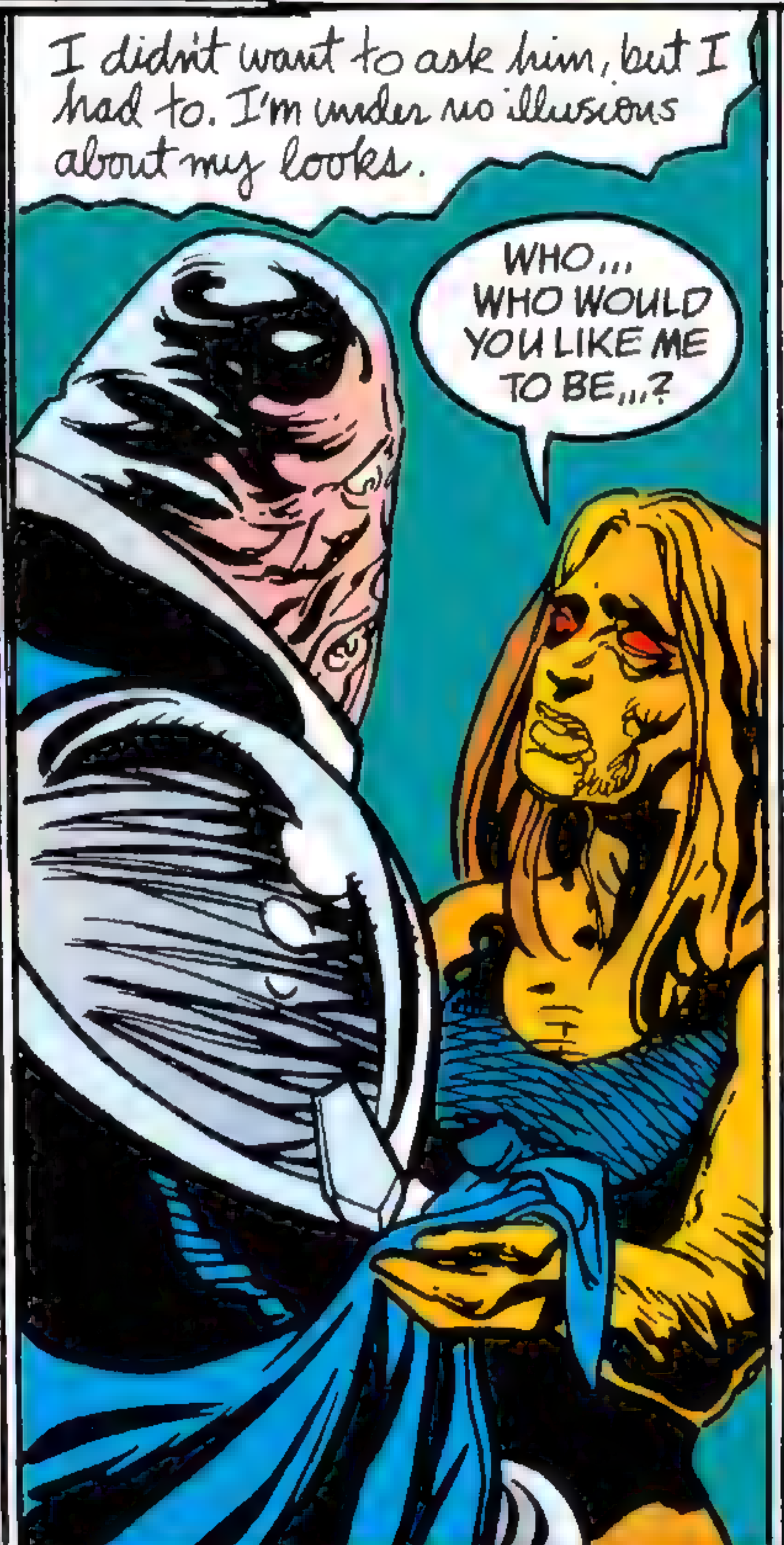
WH-WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



THE
BURNING.
DOES IT
STILL
BURN?

NO. IT'S SUBSIDED. IT
ALWAYS DOES WHEN
I... WHEN I PASS THE
CONTAGION ON. FOR
A WHILE.

THEN WE
SHOULDN'T WASTE
ANY TIME.



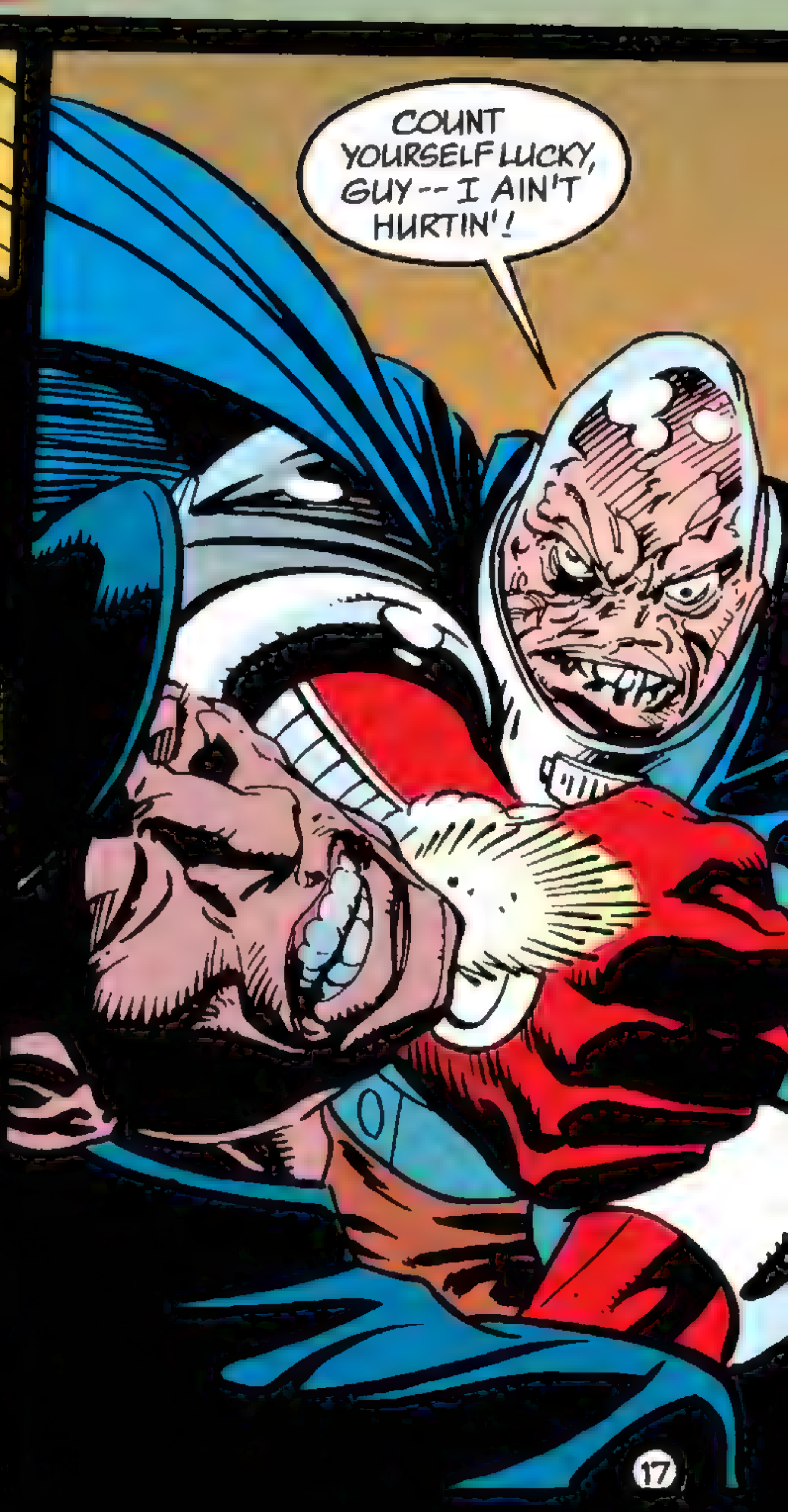
I didn't want to ask him, but I
had to. I'm under no illusions
about my looks.

WHO...
WHO WOULD
YOU LIKE ME
TO BE...?



YOURSELF. I WANT YOU
TO BE LADY CLAYFACE.

I LOVE
YOU EXACTLY
AS YOU ARE.



WONDER WHAT HER PROBLEM WAS? SHE SEEMED ANXIOUS TO KILL ME--IF A LITTLE RELUCTANT IN THE EXECUTION.

GUESS I WRITE IT DOWN TO EXPERIENCE--JUST ANOTHER CRAZY GOTHAM NIGHT!

IT'S NOT OVER, BATMAN!

WHAT THE DEVIL--?

IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO LEARN HOW PRECIOUS LIFE IS. I CAN'T AFFORD TO DIE, NOW THAT I HAVE SO MUCH TO LIVE FOR.

OFF!

ALL THE MORE IRONIC THAT I DARE NOT FAIL IN KILLING YOU!

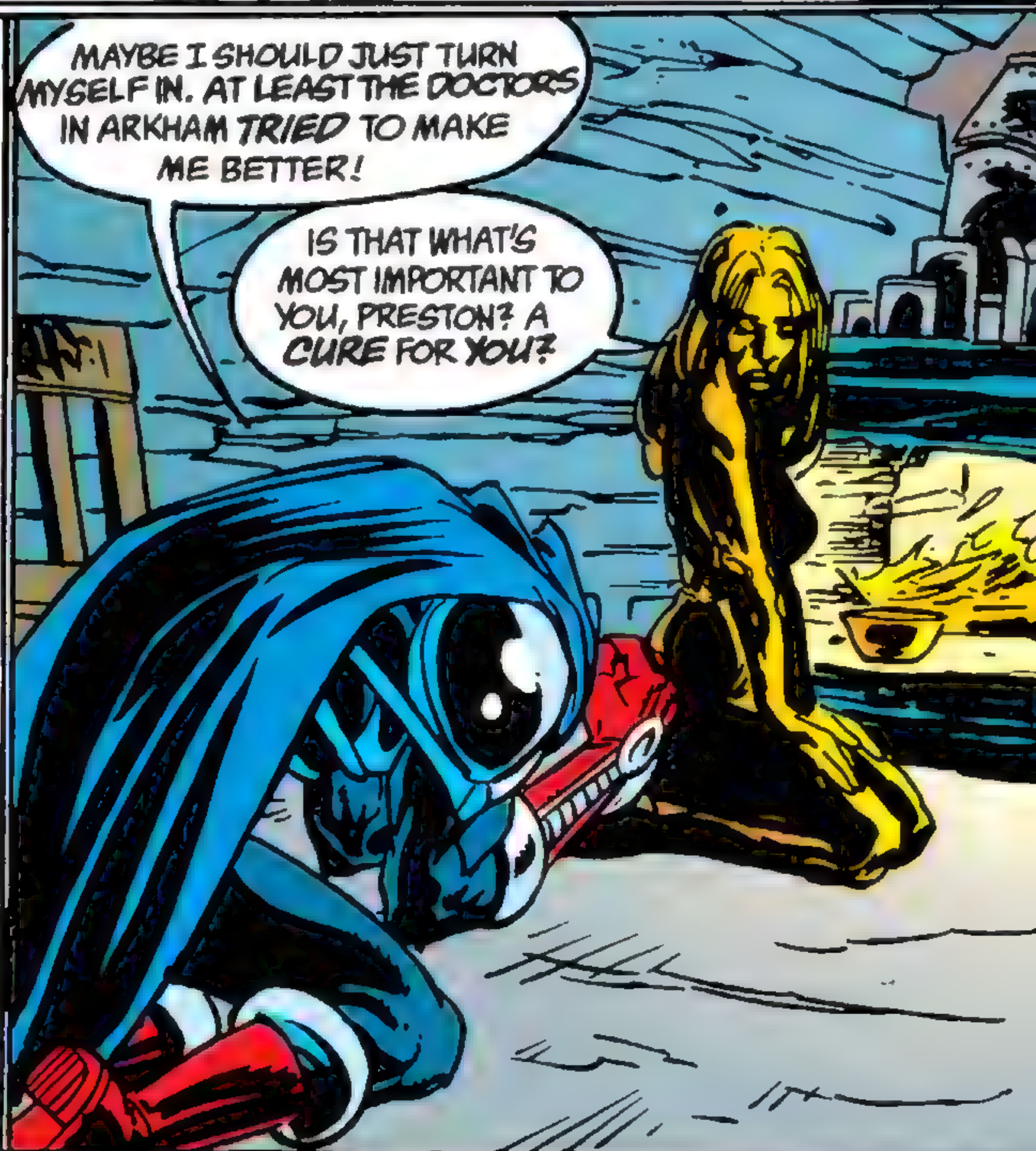
Four months, and it's beginning to look like our little bit of heaven has run its span...

AHH, I GIVE UP! WHAT'S THE USE?



I'VE READ EVERYONE OF THESE BOOKS YOU STOLE-- BUT IT'S ALL USELESS!

FACE IT, DEAR-- WE'RE NEVER GONNA FIND A CURE FOR WHAT AILS ME!



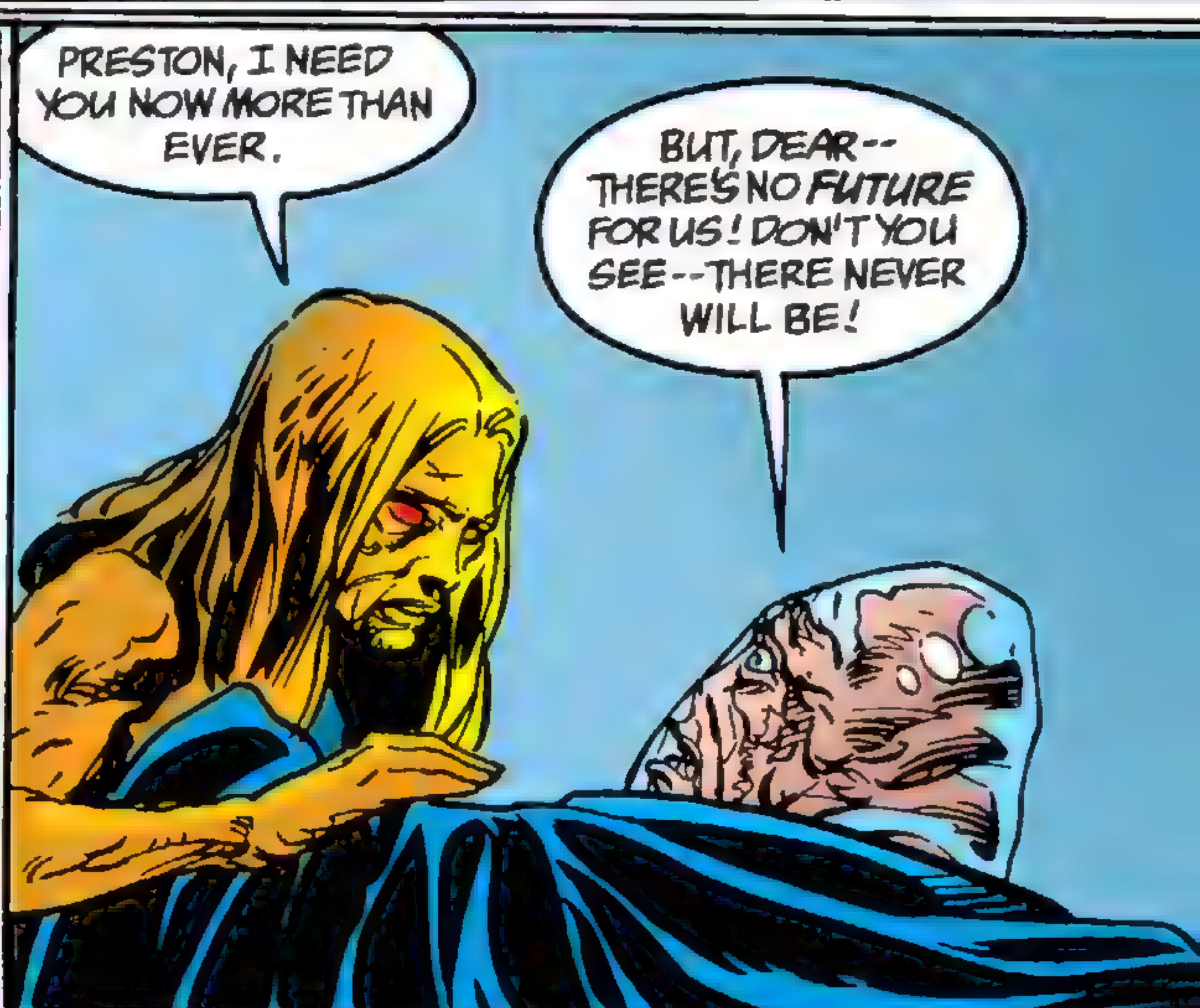
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST TURN MYSELF IN. AT LEAST THE DOCTORS IN ARKHAM TRIED TO MAKE ME BETTER!

IS THAT WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU, PRESTON? A CURE FOR YOU?



NO-- I WAS THINKING OF YOU! YOU CAN WARP INTO ANYONE YOU LIKE, AND NOBODY WOULD KNOW YOU WEREN'T AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING.

BUT ME-- I'M A MONSTER! YOU CAN'T BE SEEN WITH ME-- CAN'T TAKE ME ANYWHERE! IT'S LIKE I'M YOUR JAILER! YOU DON'T NEED THAT!



PRESTON, I NEED YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER.

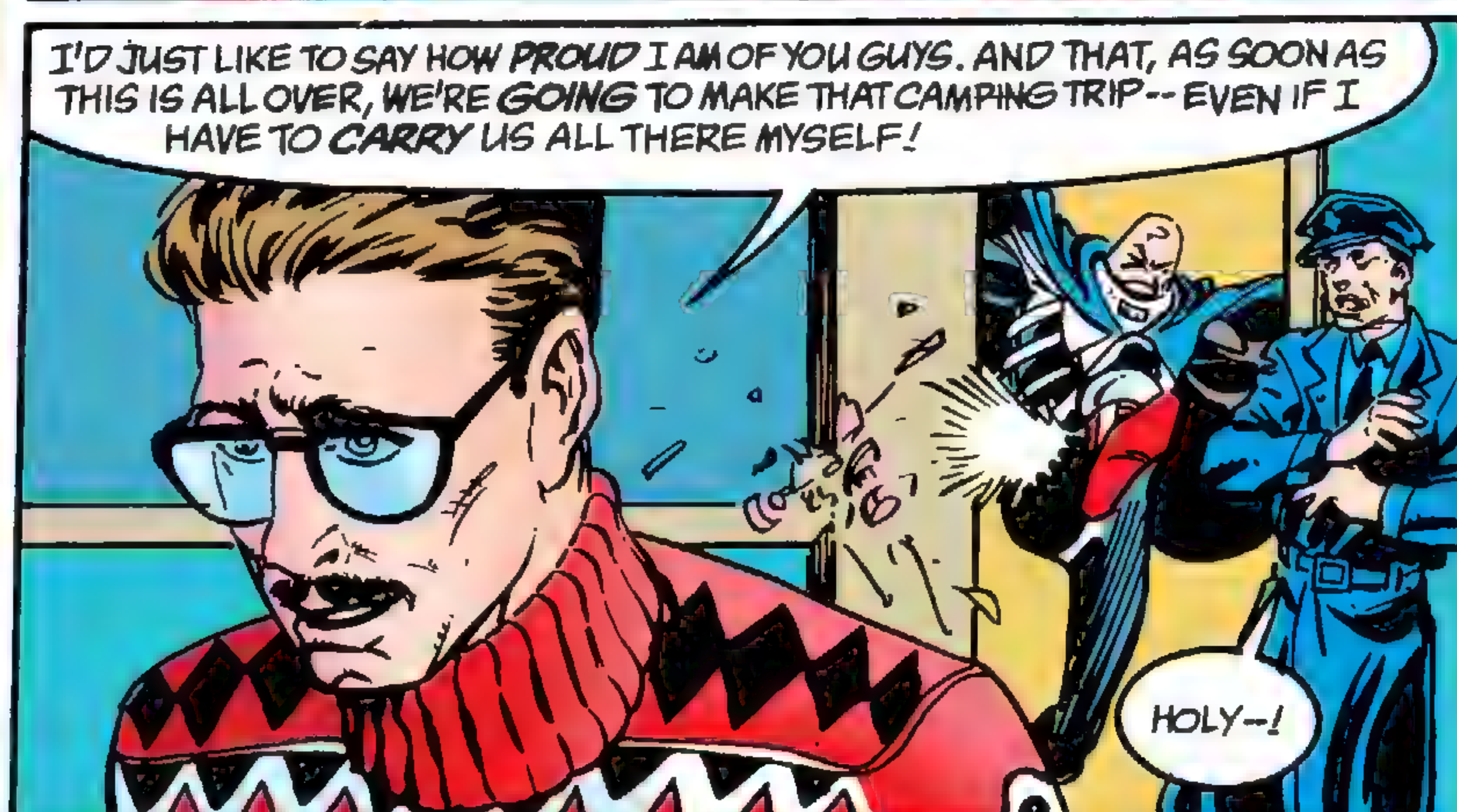
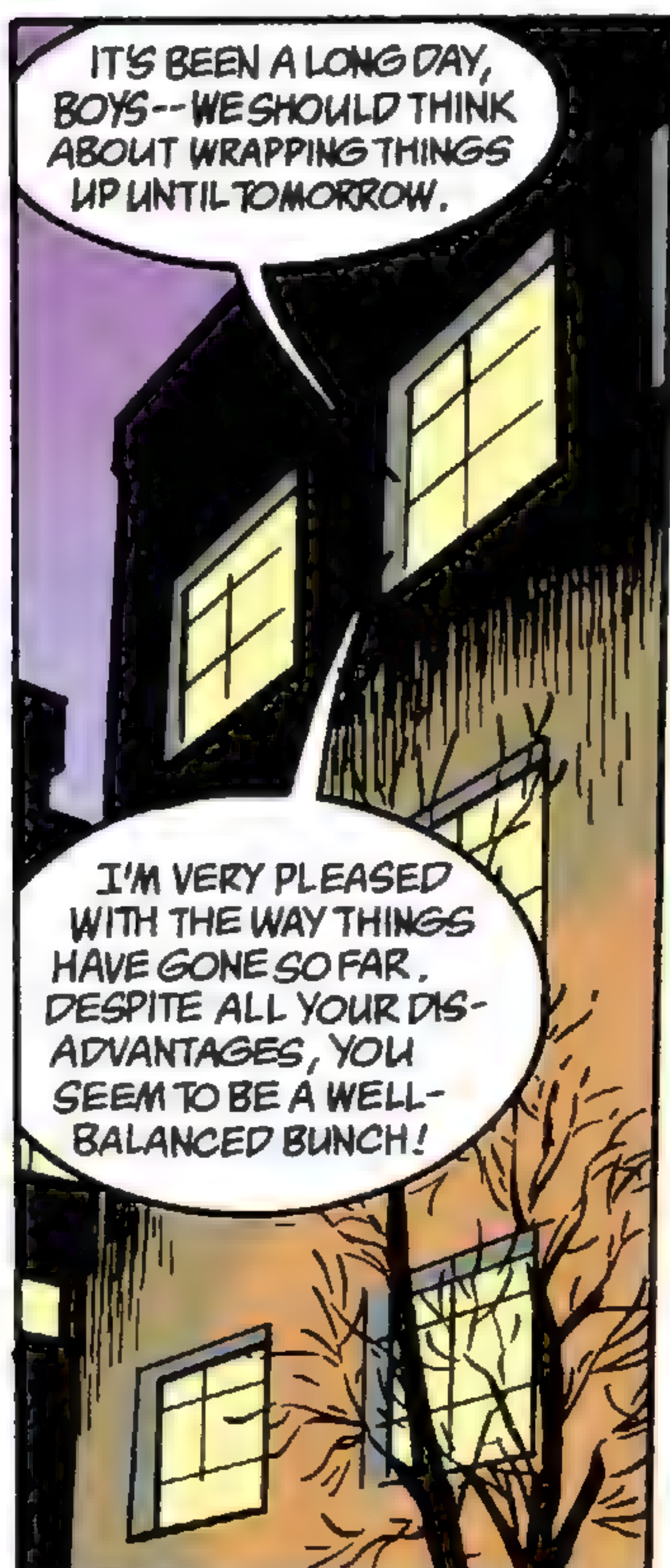
BUT, DEAR-- THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR US! DON'T YOU SEE-- THERE NEVER WILL BE!

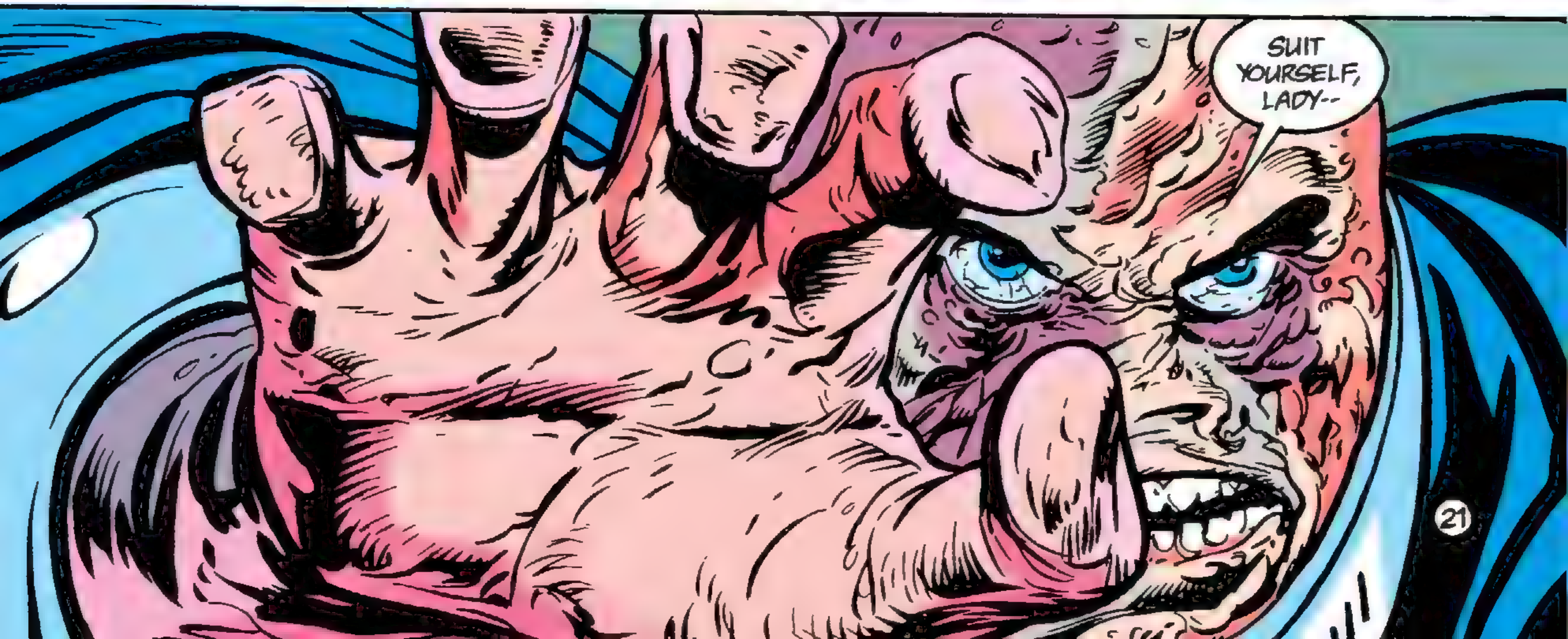
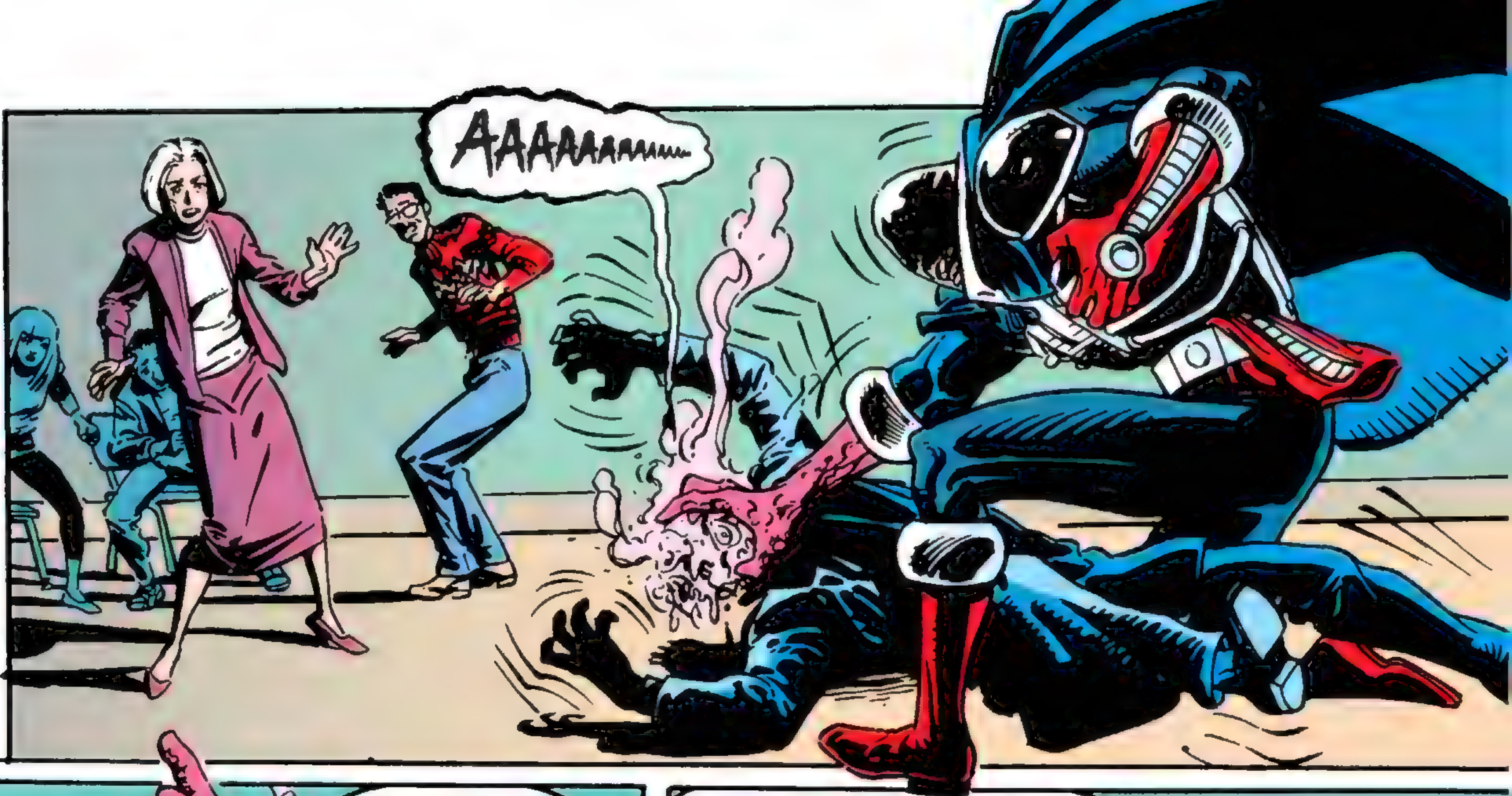


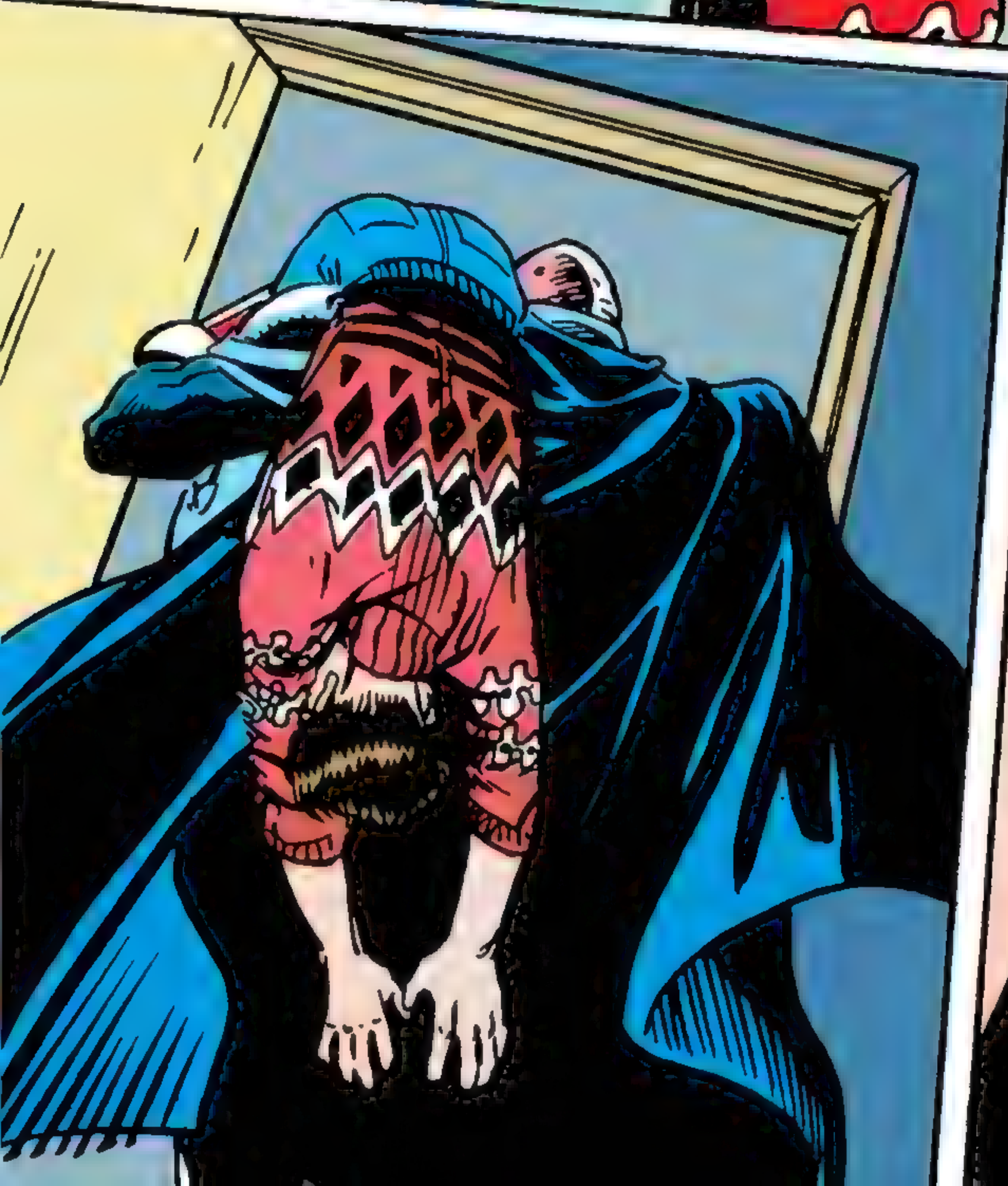
THERE HAD BETTER BE, PRESTON PAYNE.



I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE A SINGLE PARENT!









THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
CAN'T GET A GRIP --!

NOW THEY'RE MERGING--
TURNING BACK INTO ONE
ENTITY!

IT'S OVER, BATMAN! JUST
RELAX AS I SQUEEZE THE
BREATH FROM YOUR BODY--

--AND LET
YOURSELF
DIE!

BUT WHY?
WHY ARE YOU
KILLING
ME?!

NEXT ISSUE:
BABY CLAY!



KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE

B A T M A N



No. 27 MAY 94

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PART TWO OF TWO

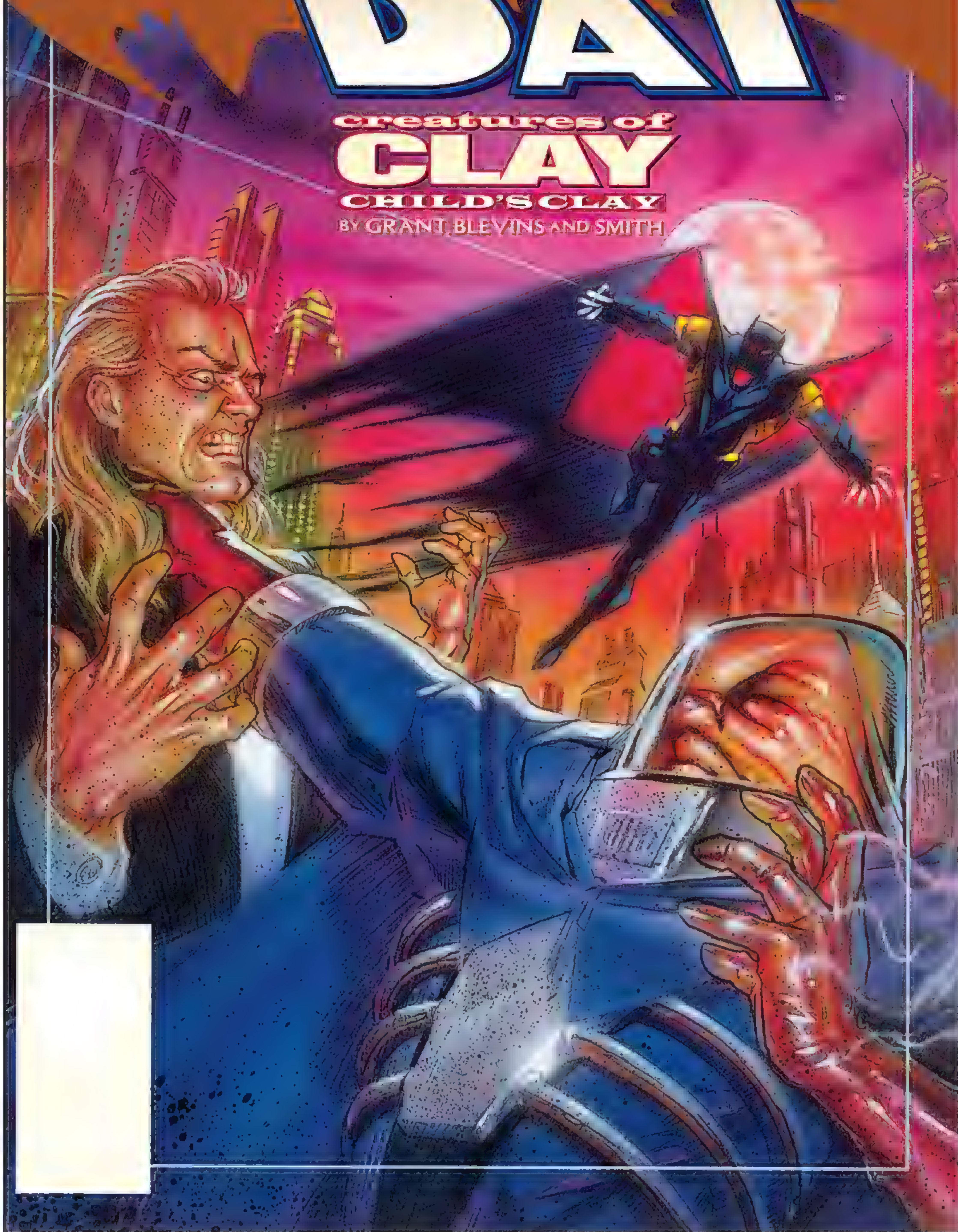
SHADOW OF THE BAT

creatures of

CLAY

CHILD'S CLAY

BY GRANT BLEVINS AND SMITH



BREATH'S GOING--
RIBS'LL BE POPPING
ANY SECOND! I HAVE
TO PLAY FOR TIME--

WHY? WHY
ARE YOU... DOING
THIS?

BECAUSE
I HAVE
TO!

IF IT WAS
UP TO ME, I'D
NEVER HAVE
COME BACK
TO THIS
DAMNED
CITY!

BUT I'M
NOT CALLIN' THE SHOTS
HERE-- I'M JUST THE TOOL
FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S
HATRED!

COLD COMFORT,
I'M SURE, TO A
DEAD MAN!

SHE'S SHOWING THE SAME
RELUCTANCE TO FINISH ME OFF
THAT SHE SHOWED EARLIER.
EASED HER GRIP JUST ENOUGH
FOR ME TO HIT--

--MY PANIC
BUTTON!



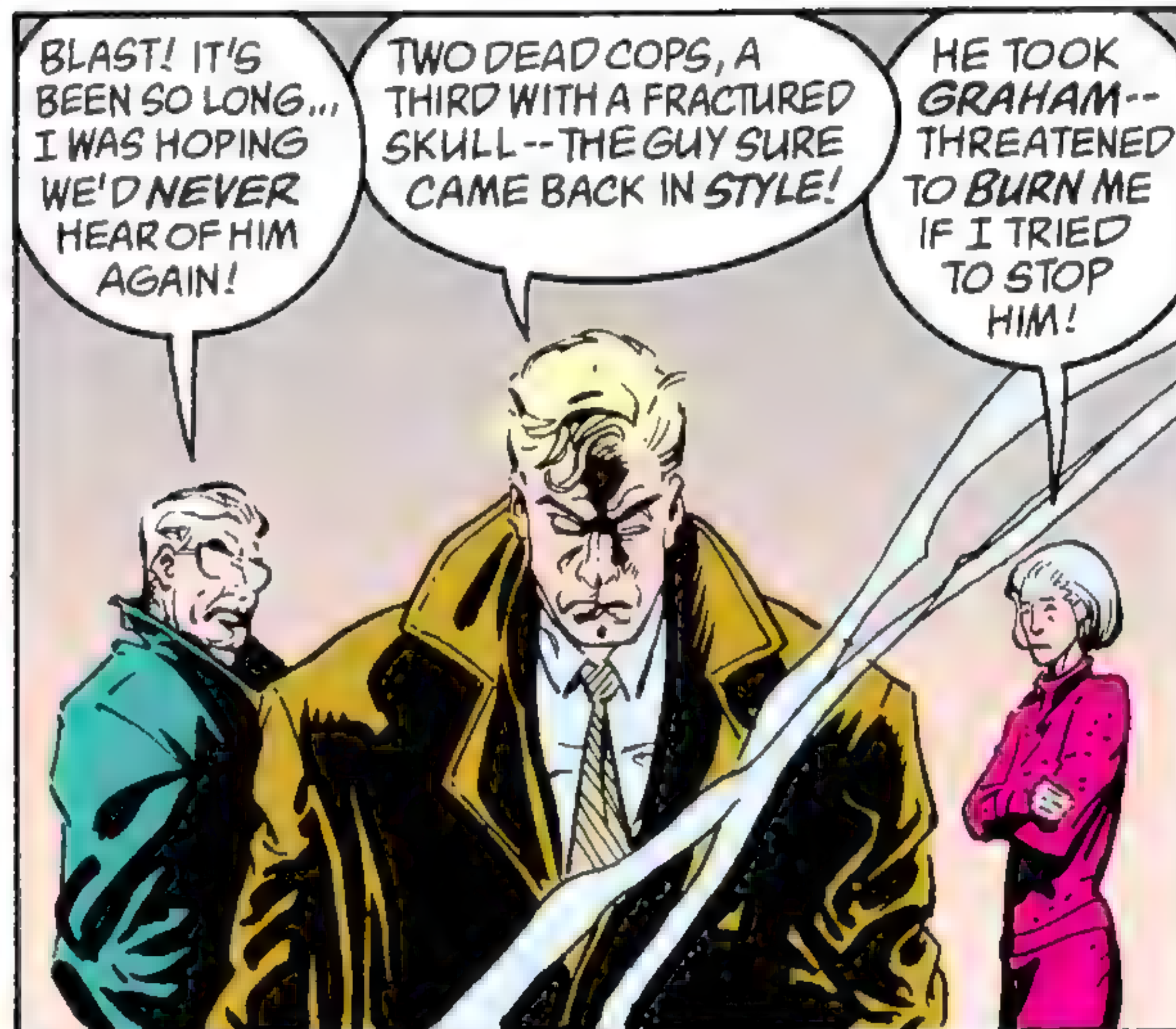
--BUT NOW THAT
I'VE GOT HER--

SUDDEN DISCHARGE
OF ALL MY COSTUME'S
POWER WAS ENOUGH.
SHE'S OUT COLD--

--WHAT DO I DO
WITH HER?



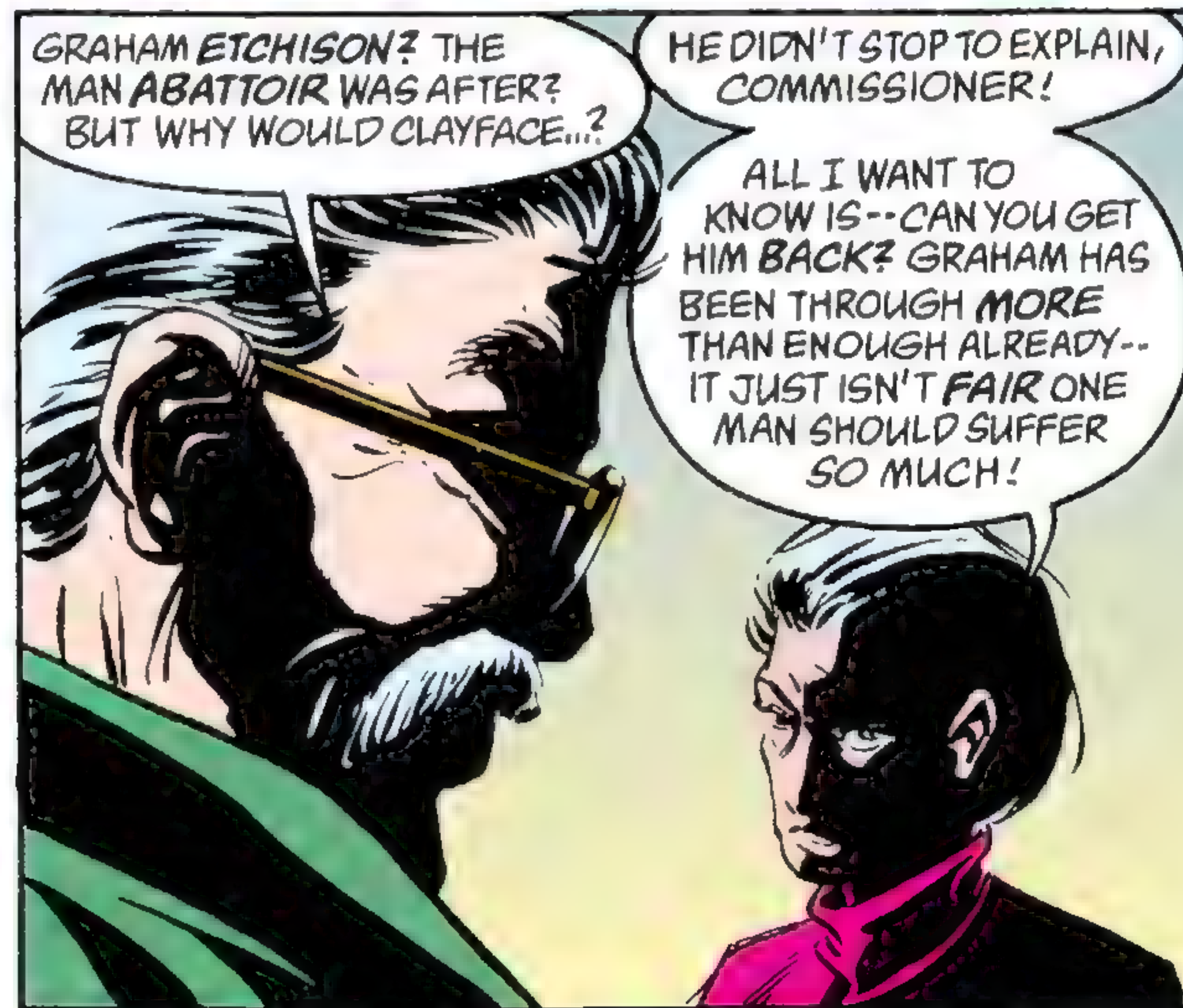
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, COMMISSIONER--THAT'S CLAYFACE THREE'S WORK!



BLAST! IT'S BEEN SO LONG... I WAS HOPING WE'D NEVER HEAR OF HIM AGAIN!

TWO DEAD COPS, A THIRD WITH A FRACTURED SKULL--THE GUY SURE CAME BACK IN STYLE!

HE TOOK GRAHAM--THREATENED TO BURN ME IF I TRIED TO STOP HIM!



GRAHAM ETCHISON? THE MAN ABATTOIR WAS AFTER? BUT WHY WOULD CLAYFACE...?

HE DIDN'T STOP TO EXPLAIN, COMMISSIONER!

ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS--CAN YOU GET HIM BACK? GRAHAM HAS BEEN THROUGH MORE THAN ENOUGH ALREADY--IT JUST ISN'T FAIR ONE MAN SHOULD SUFFER SO MUCH!



WE'LL FIND HIM, DOCTOR THOMPKINS, DON'T WORRY!

ALL DOWNTOWN UNITS-- BE ON ALERT FOR PRESTON PAYNE, A.K.A. CLAYFACE THREE! HE'S BIG AND HE'S SLOW--CARRYING A CAPTIVE, SO HE CAN'T HAVE GOT FAR.



IF SEEN, DO NOT APPROACH! CONTACT ME FOR FURTHER ORDERS!

CLAYFACE THREE? THAT THE ONE CAN STRETCH LIKE A RUBBER BAND?

NAH! HE'S THE ONE WHO MELTS YOU JUST BY TOUCHING YOU! THE ONE WITH THE EXO-SKELETON THAT TRIPLES HIS STRENGTH!

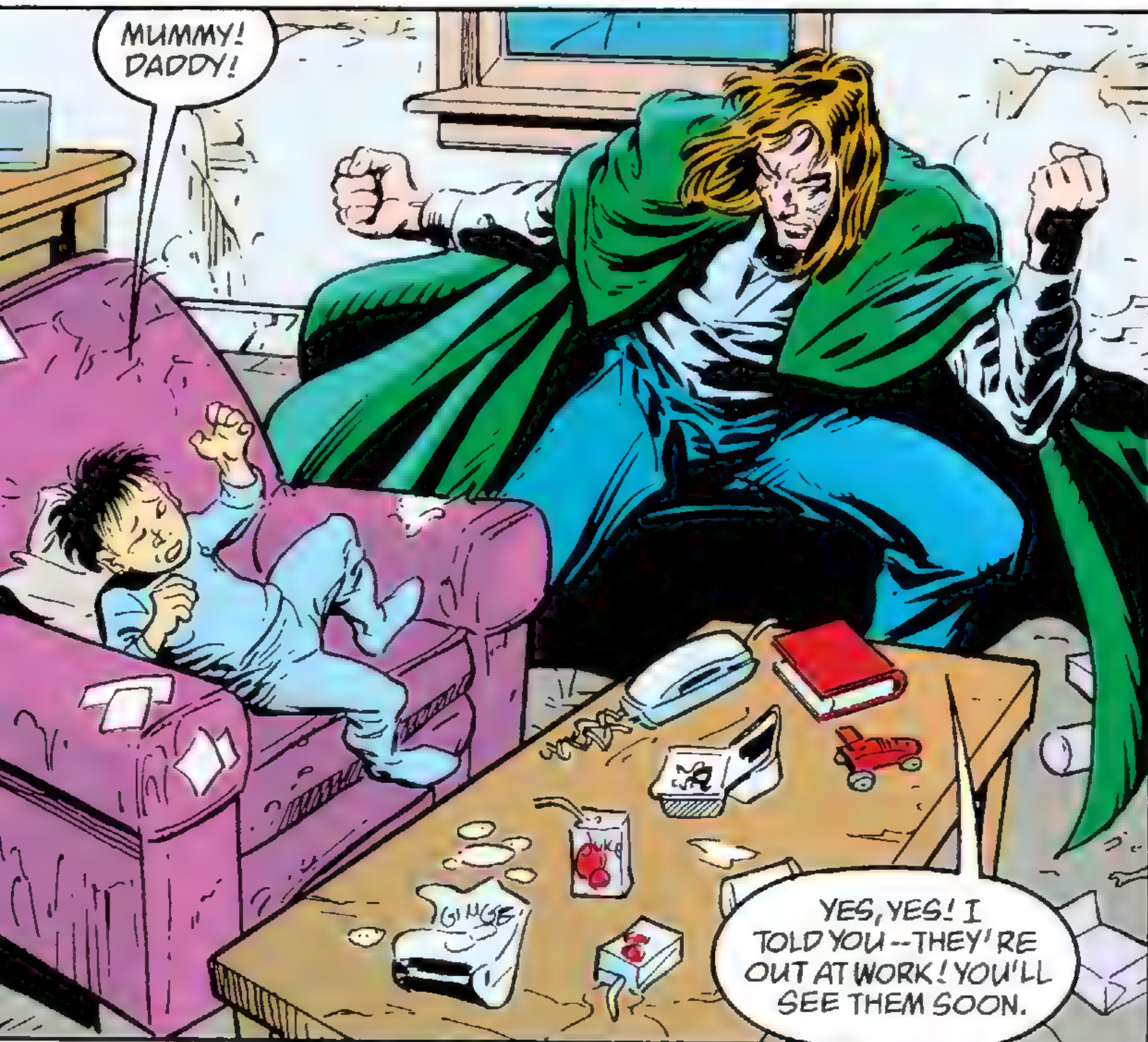
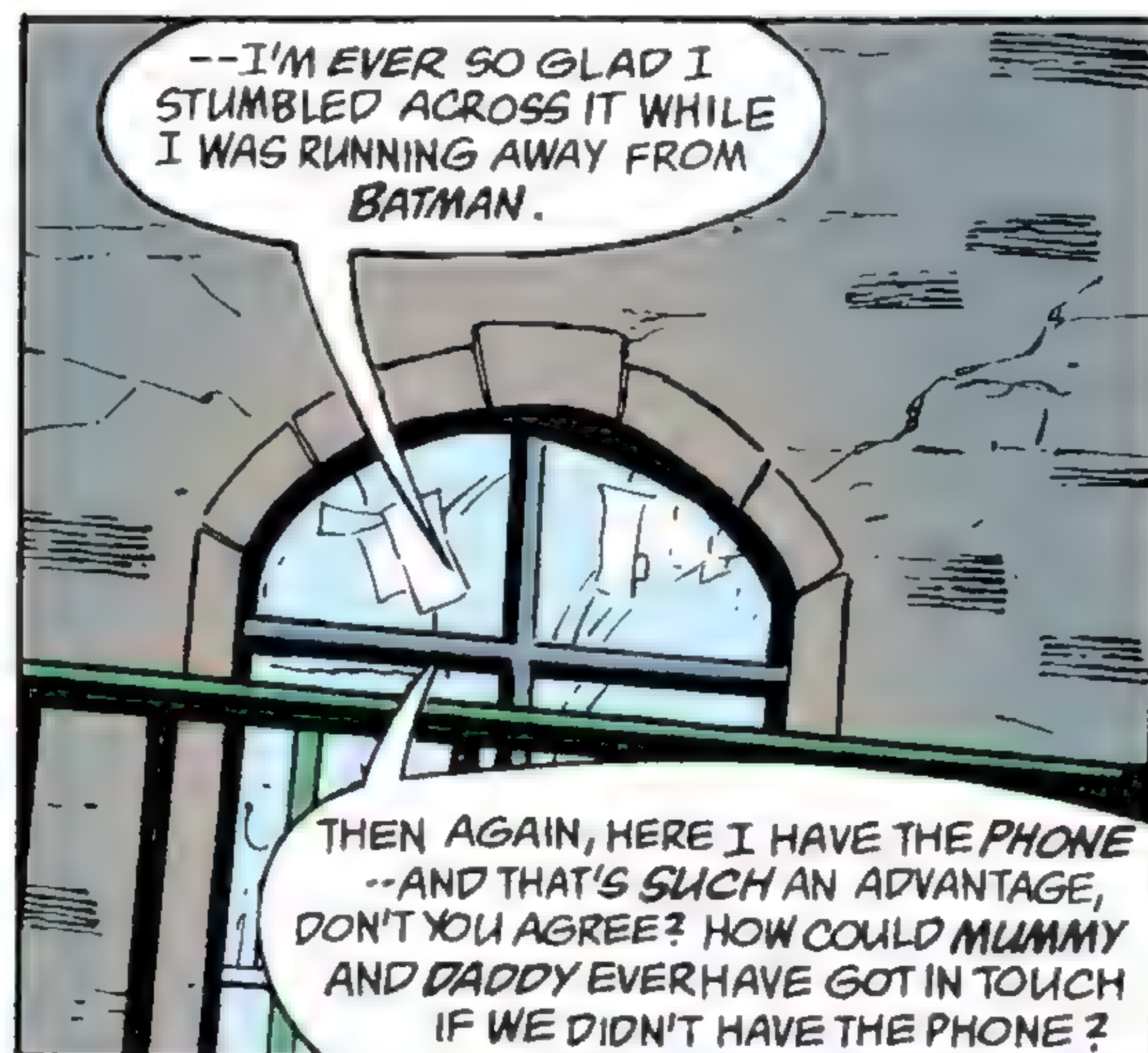
I HATE THIS RUNNING, AND
SKULKING AND HIDING! I THOUGHT
IT WAS ALL OVER AND FINISHED
WITH!

MAN, I
SURE HOPE WE
DON'T FIND
HIM!

WHATTA CHUMP!
I MUST HAVE HAD STARS
IN MY EYES! A **FREAK** LIKE
ME CAN NEVER KNOW
ANY OTHER LIFE.

I OUGHTA
KILL THAT GEEK...
AND I WILL, TOO!

BUT RIGHT NOW
THERE'S JUST TOO
MUCH AT STAKE!



ONCE UPON A TIME YOUR MUMMY
AND DADDY LOOKED AT A PICTURE
OF YOU BEFORE YOU WERE BORN...

IT DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE THOSE PICTURES IN
THE MED BOOKS PRESTON....!

MAYBE
THE SCANNER'S
BUSTED---!

IT
WILL BE
NOW!

WE HAVE TO FACE FACTS,
DEAR--TWO FREAKS LIKE US
COULD NEVER HAVE A
NORMAL KID! BUT IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHAT IT'S LIKE--

WHAT'S IMPORTANT
IS THAT ITS PARENTS'
LOVE IT!

"It's going to be a
special kid," Preston
told me, "The most special
kid in the world."

We were like two kids
ourselves, lost in our own
little dream world.

SO...DO YOU
WANT A BOY OR
A GIRL?



WHICHEVER.
I DON'T MIND.

ME NEITHER.
WHAT'LL WE
CALL IT?

HADN'T EVEN
THOUGHT YOU GOT
ANY SUGGESTIONS?

WELL, IF IT'S
A BOY... HOW ABOUT
CASSIUS?

OAT
BRAND

POPE

BUSH

FLAP
DOOD



CASSIUS...?

YEAH.
YOU
KNOW--



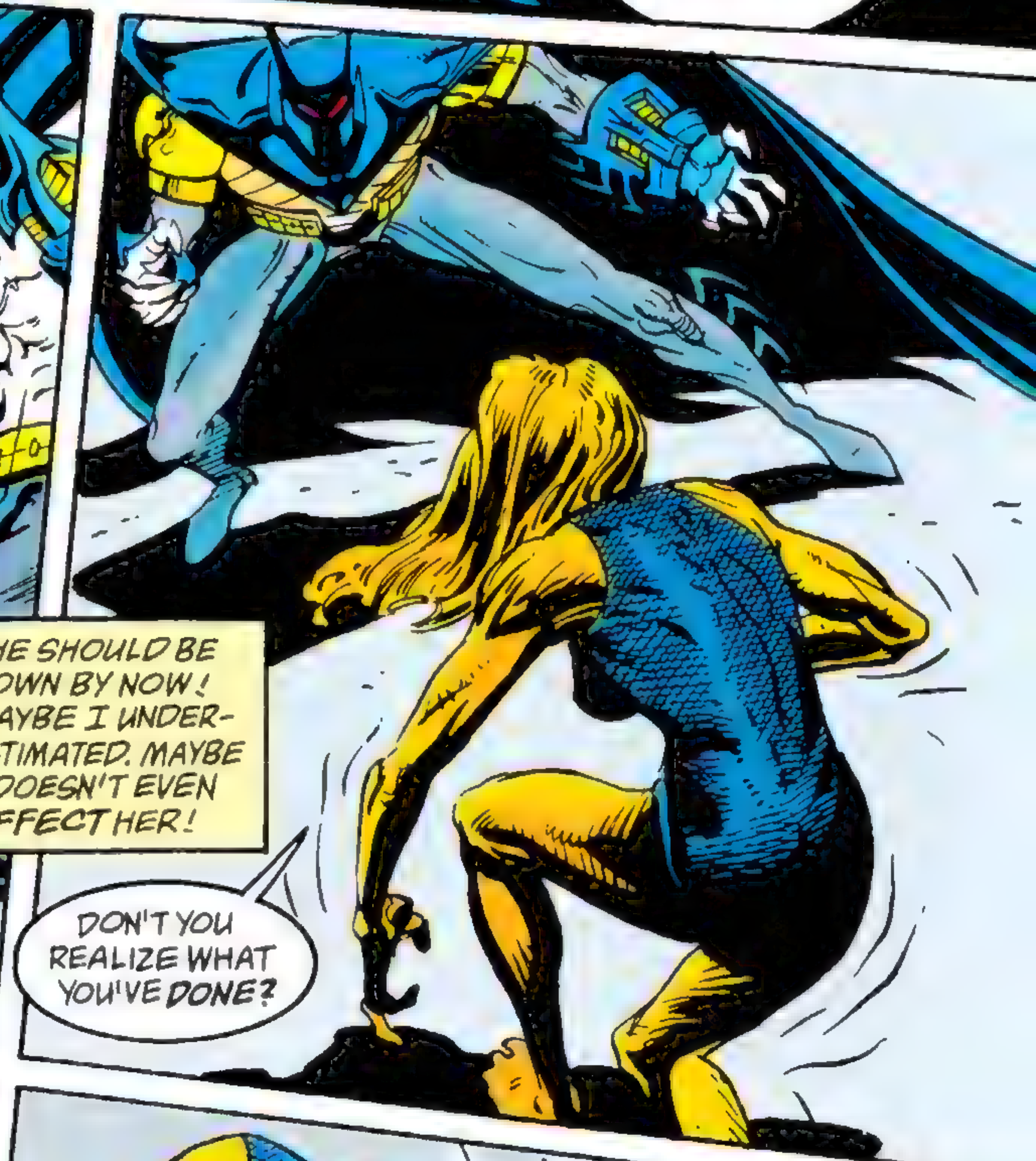
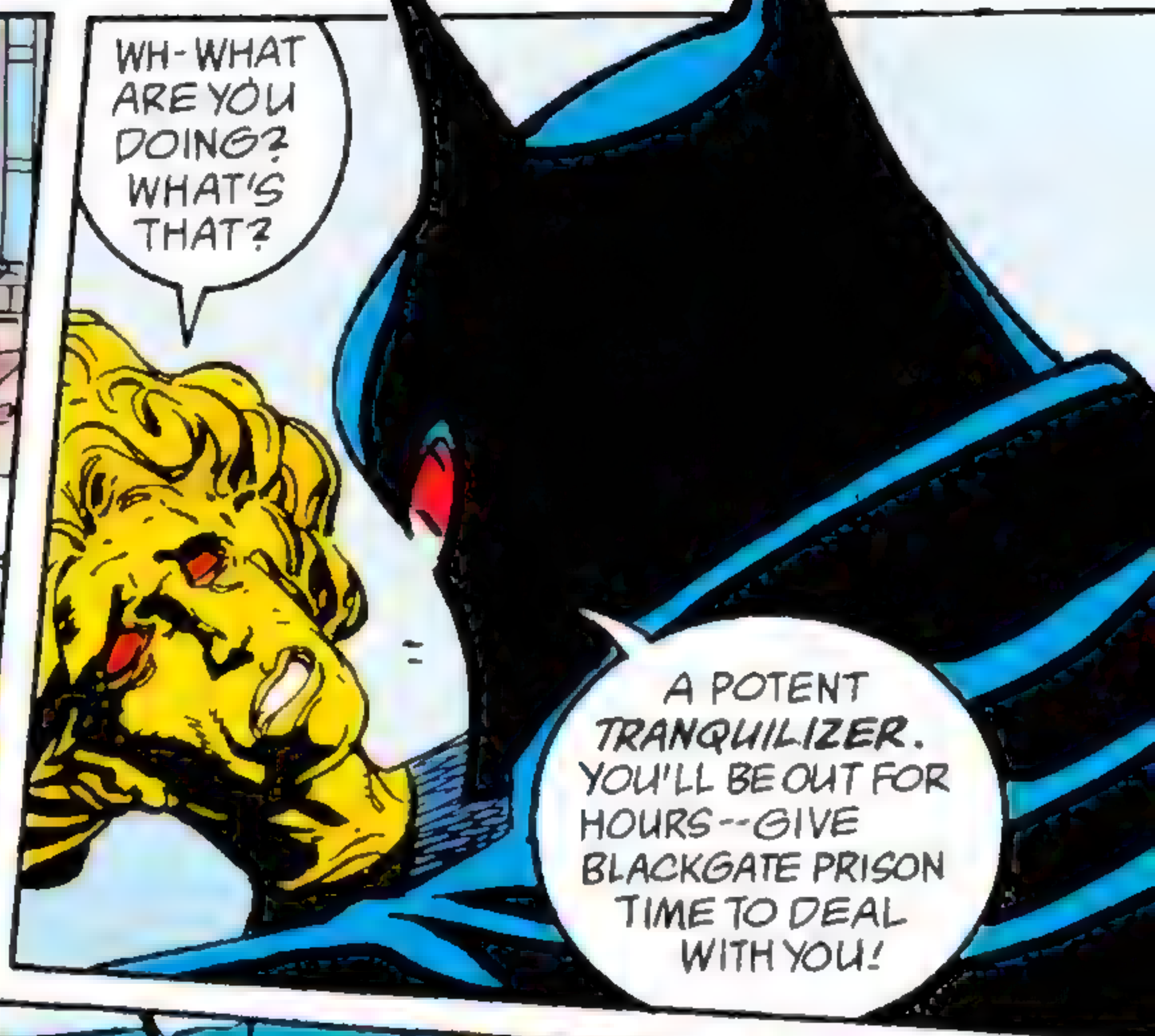
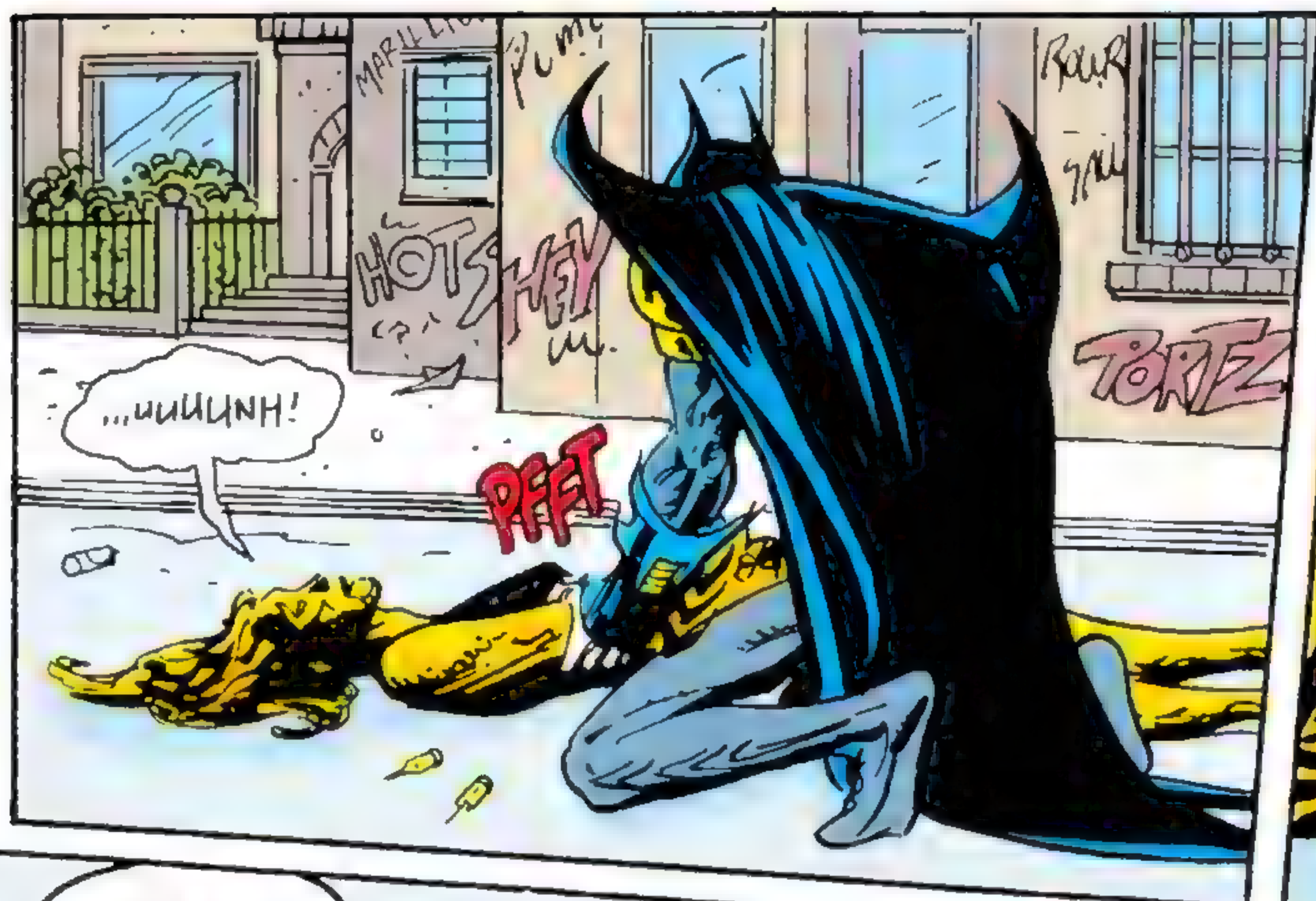
--CASSIUS
CLAY!



HAHAHAHAHA!

Who was it who said, "love
is all you need"...?







TOUCHING, ISN'T IT?
LET'S SEE WHAT
HAPPENED NEXT--!



And the months
sped by and
suddenly, one
night, when the
moon was high
and the stars
were bright--

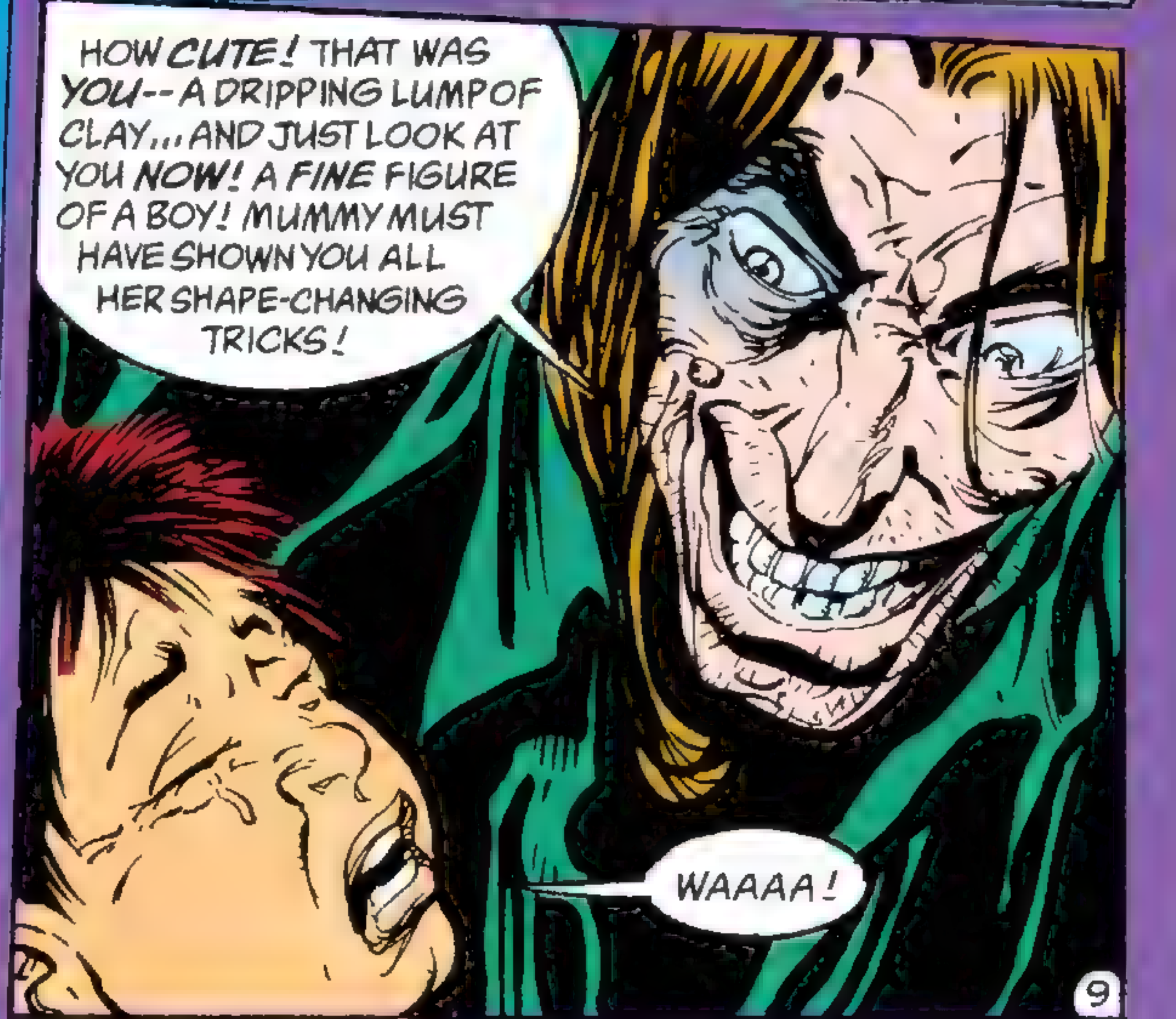


--our child
came into the
world.



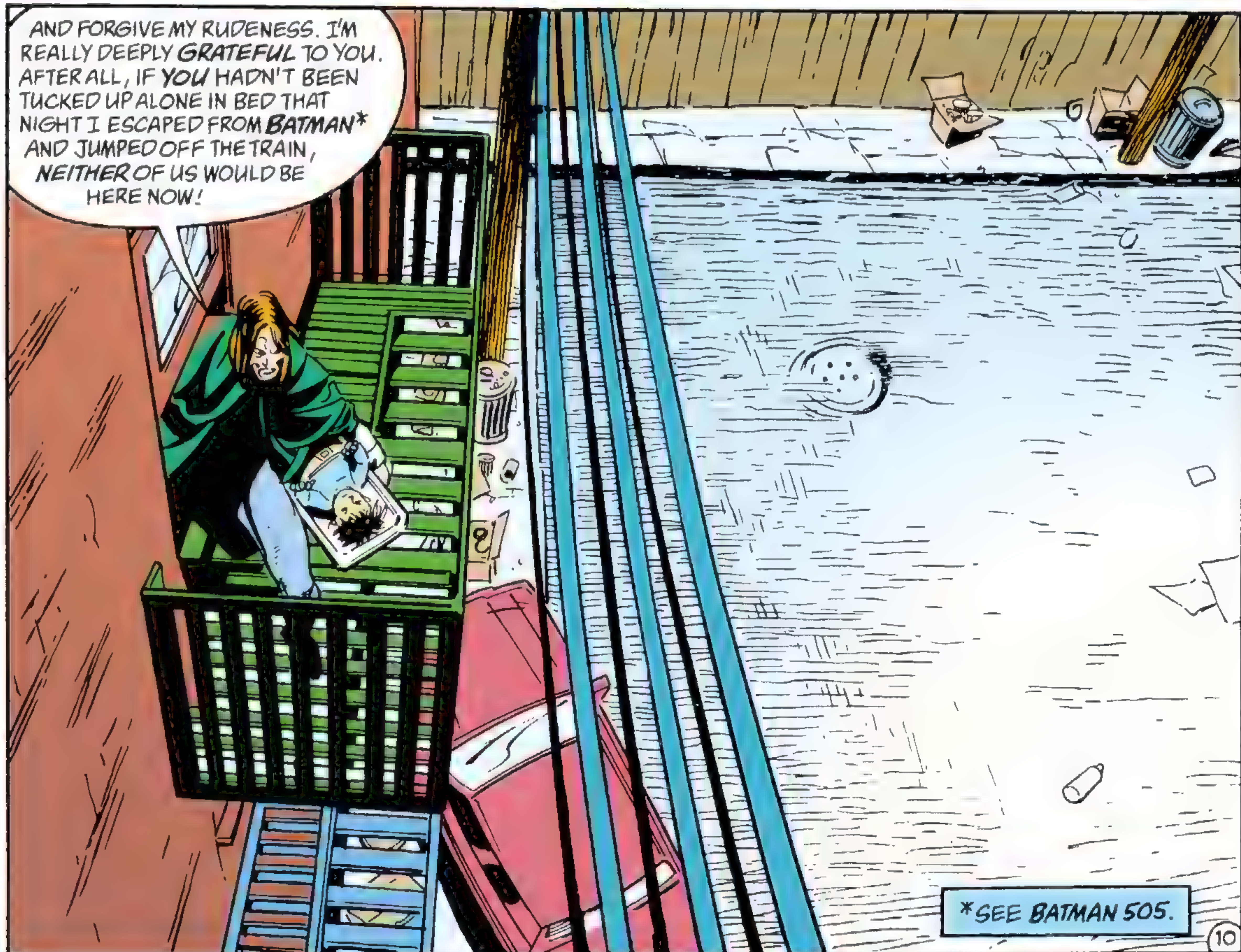
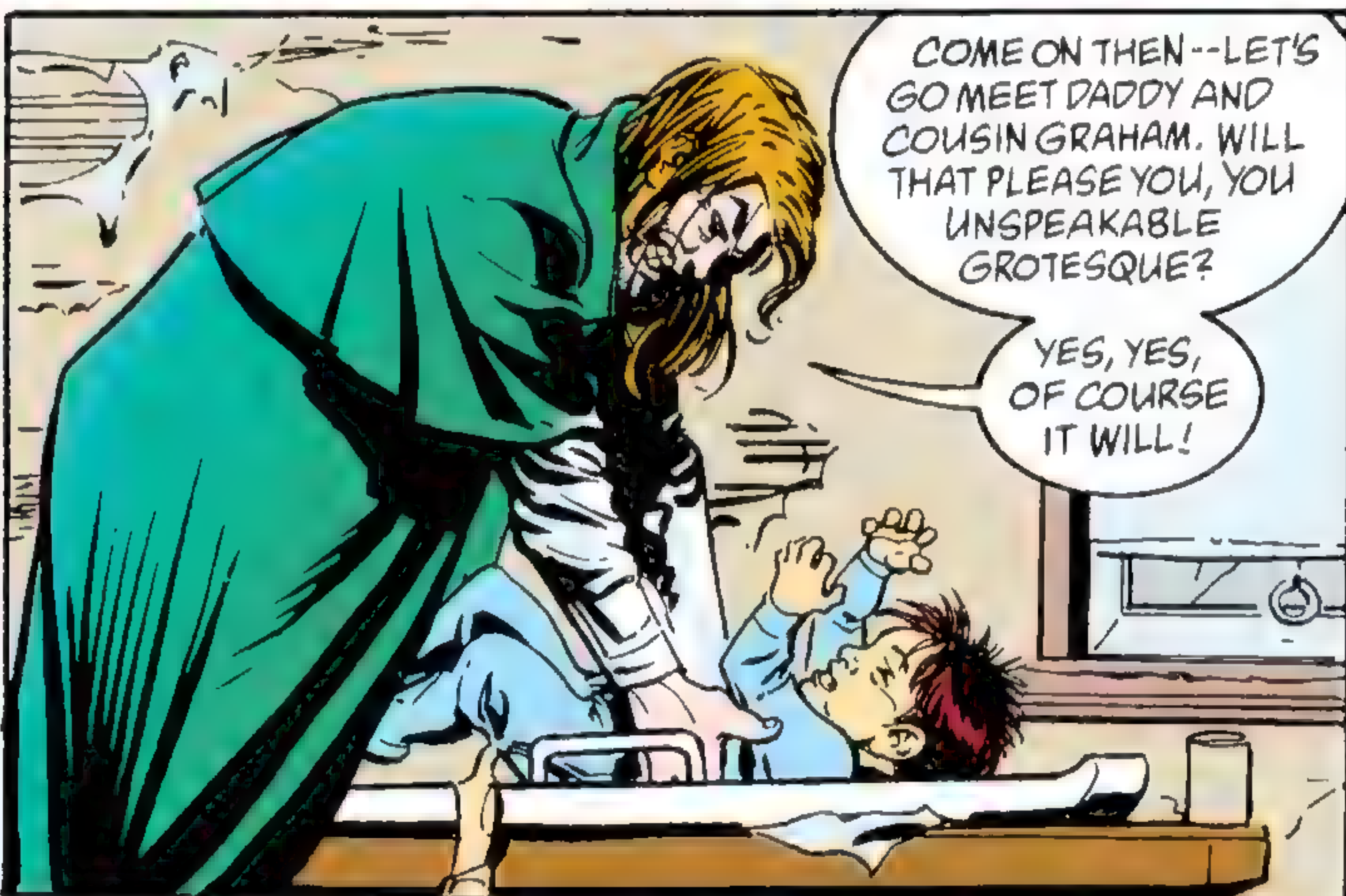
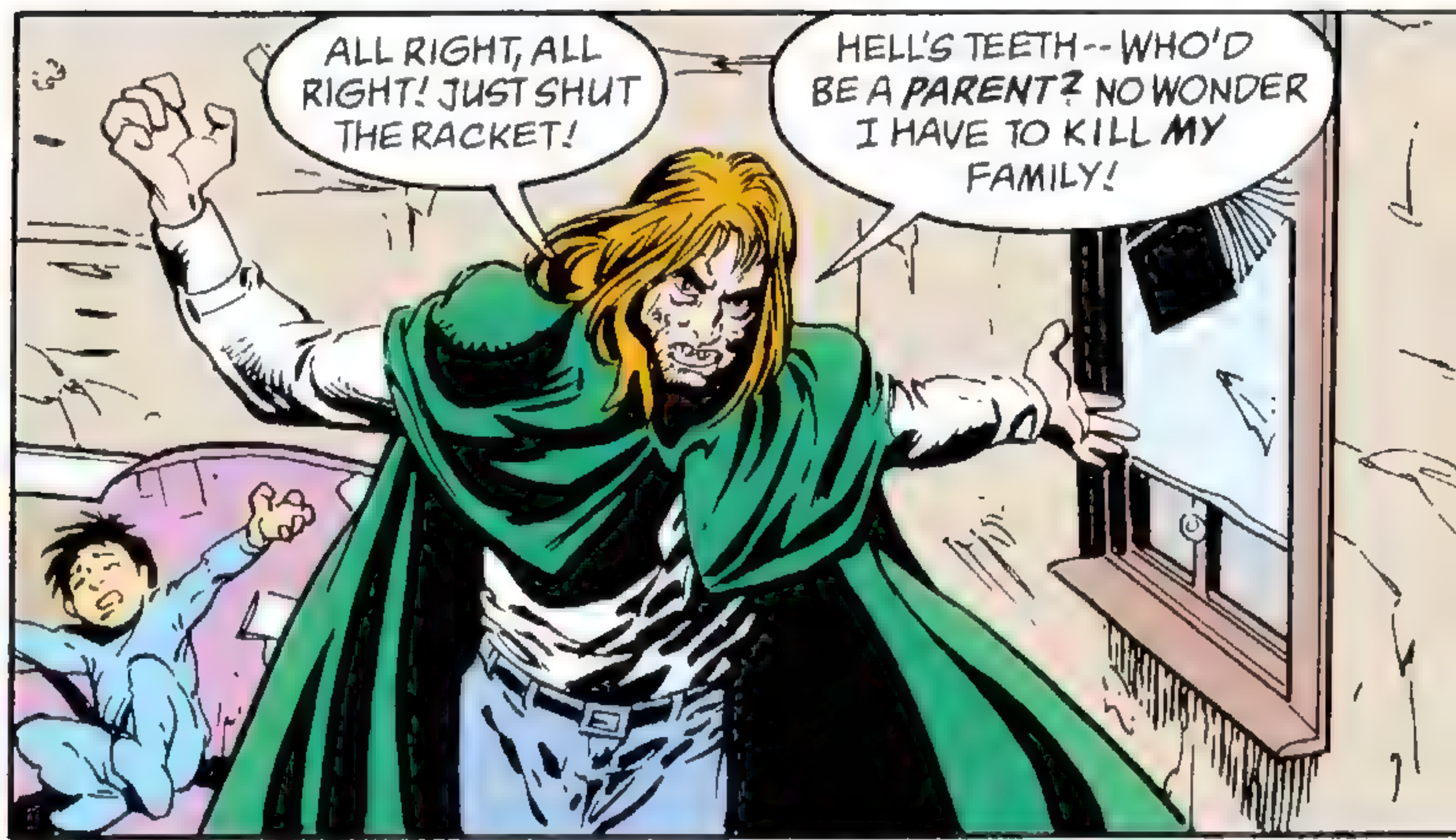
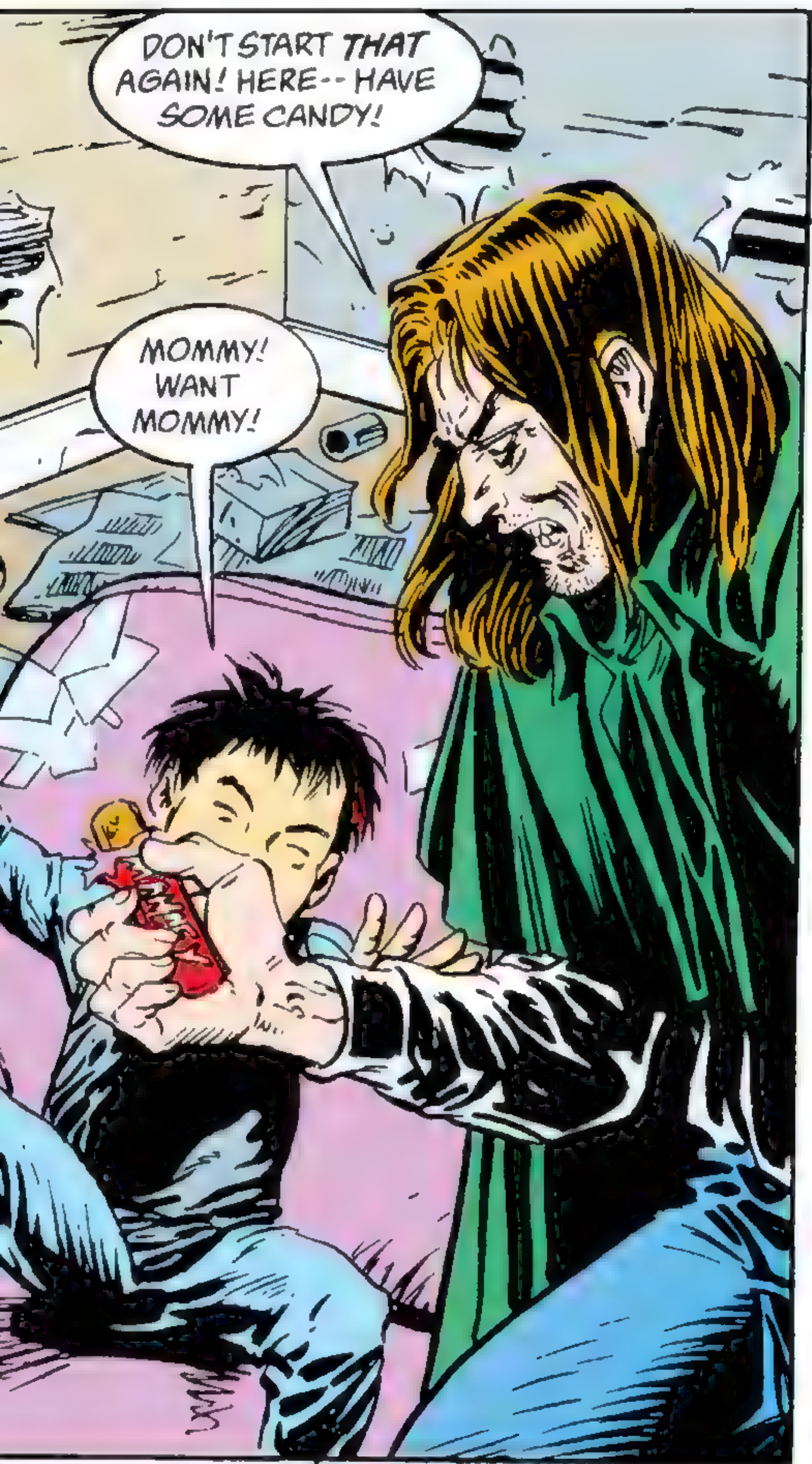
A blob of clay--
neither male nor
female--barely
humanoid.

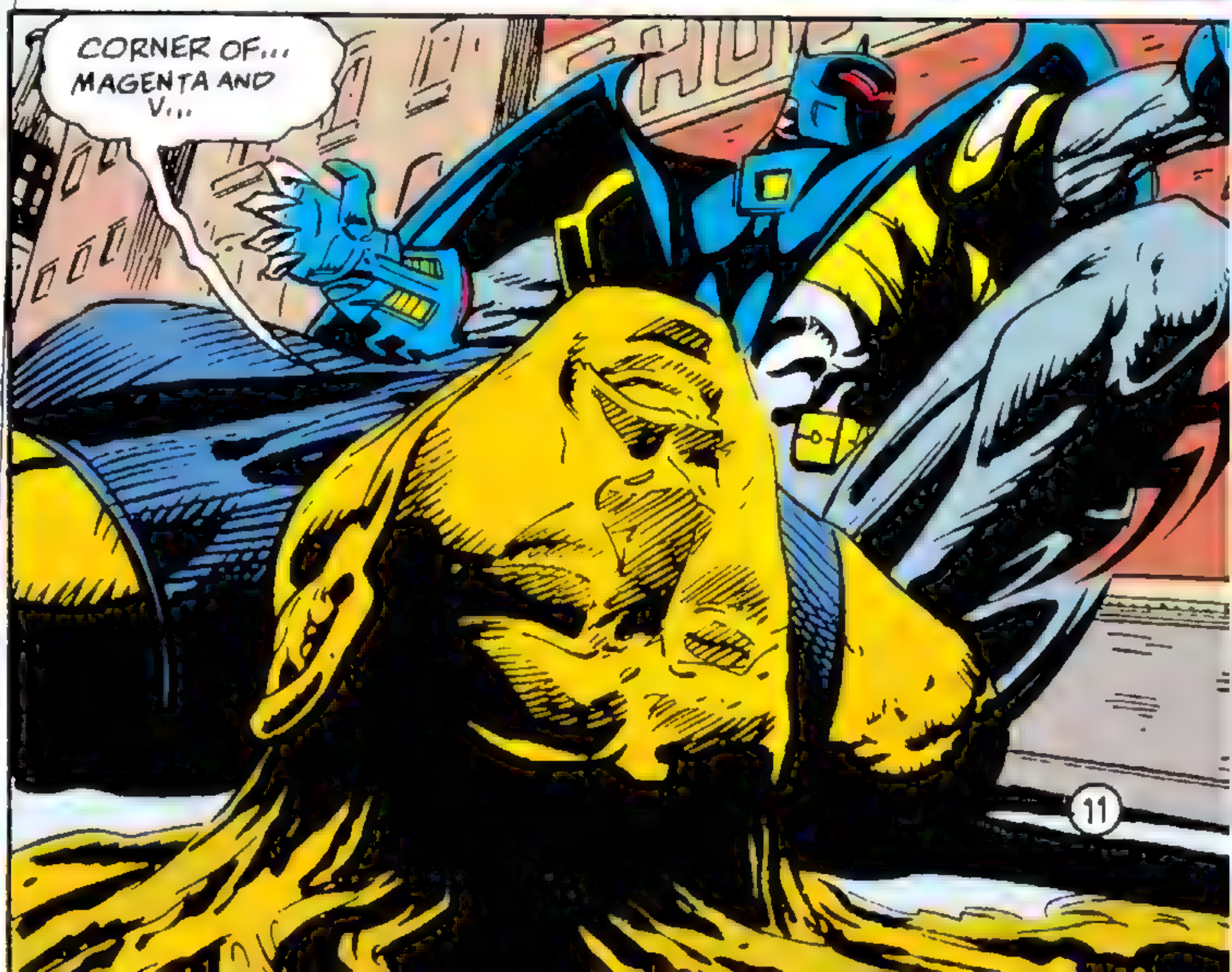
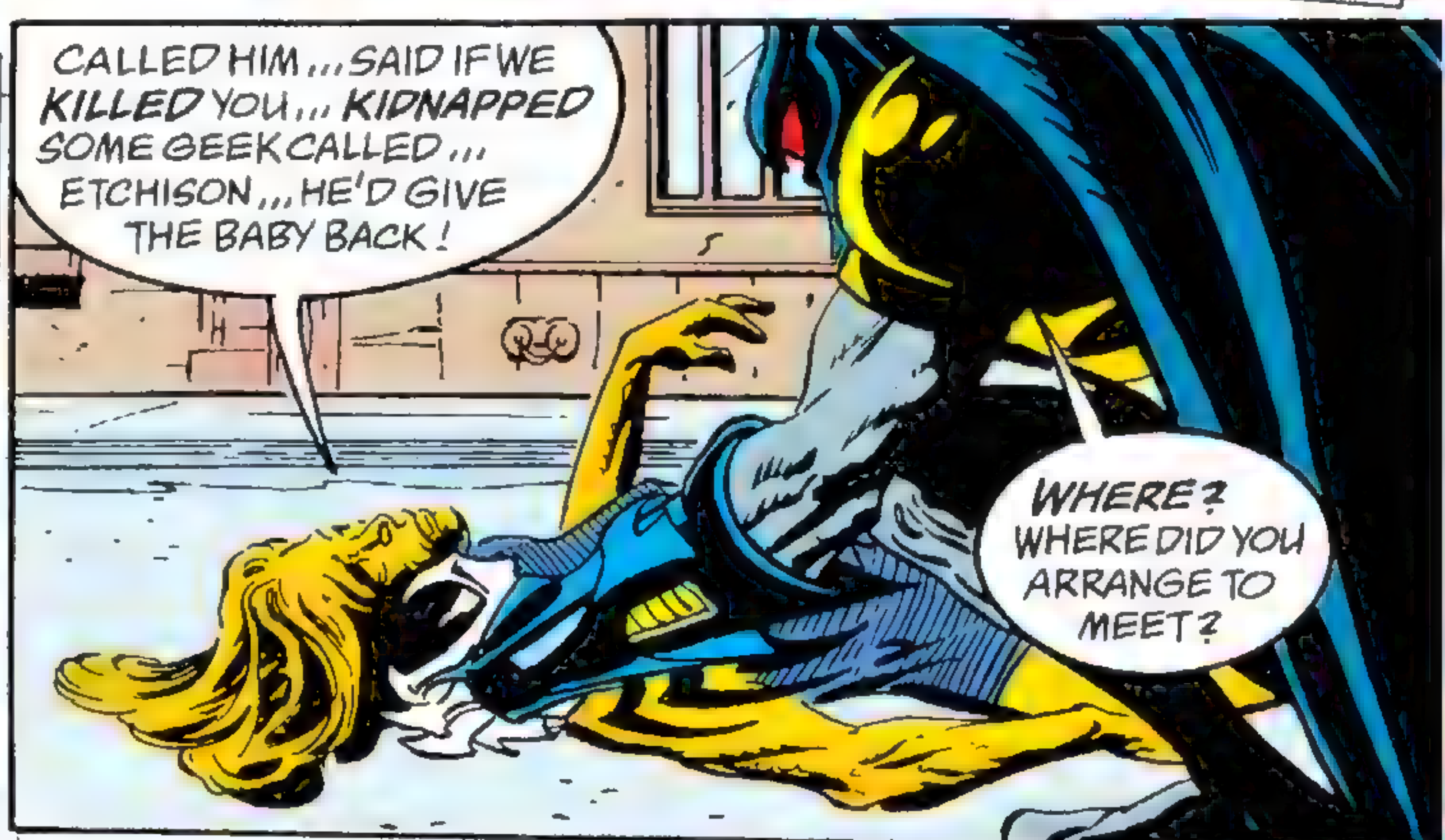
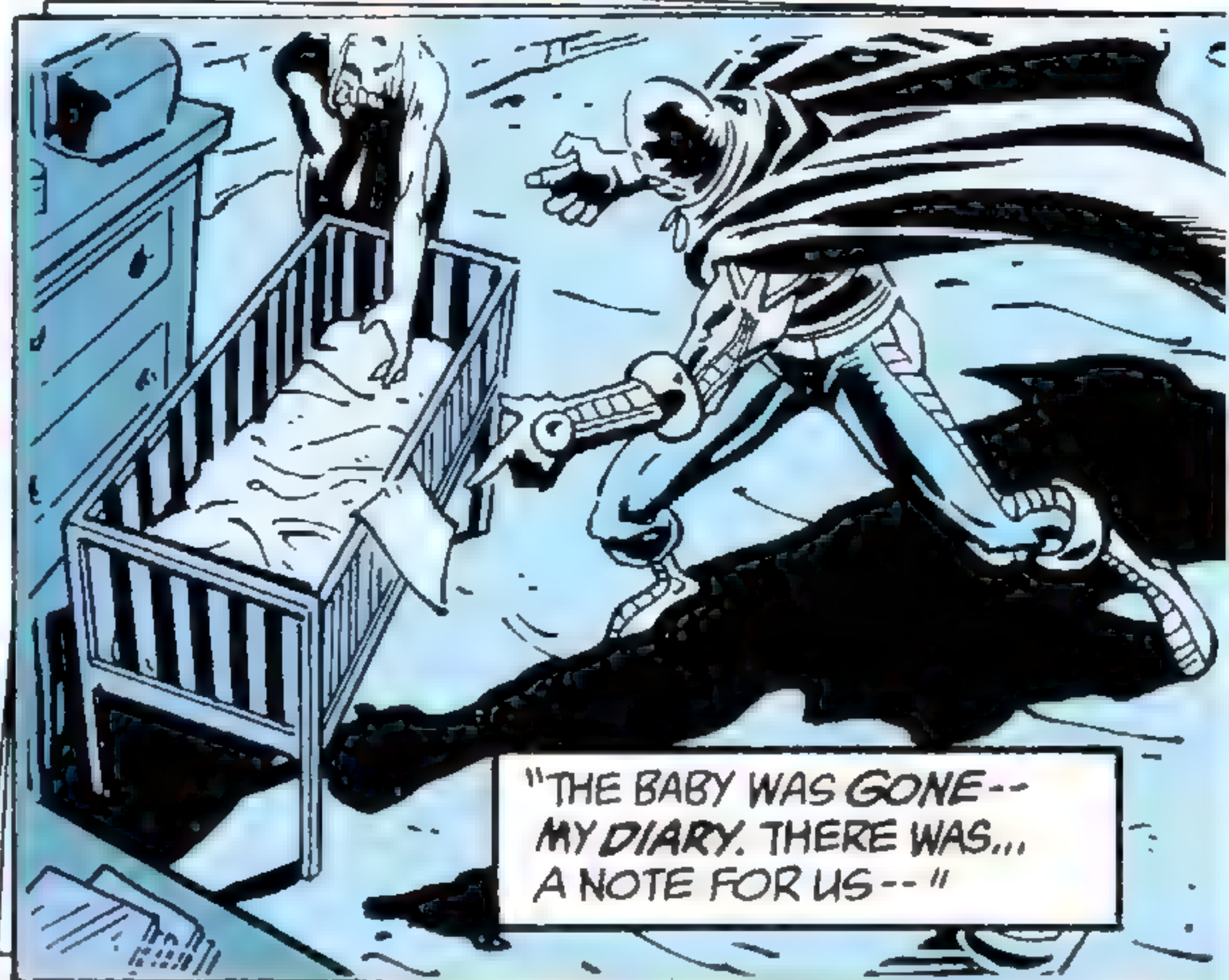
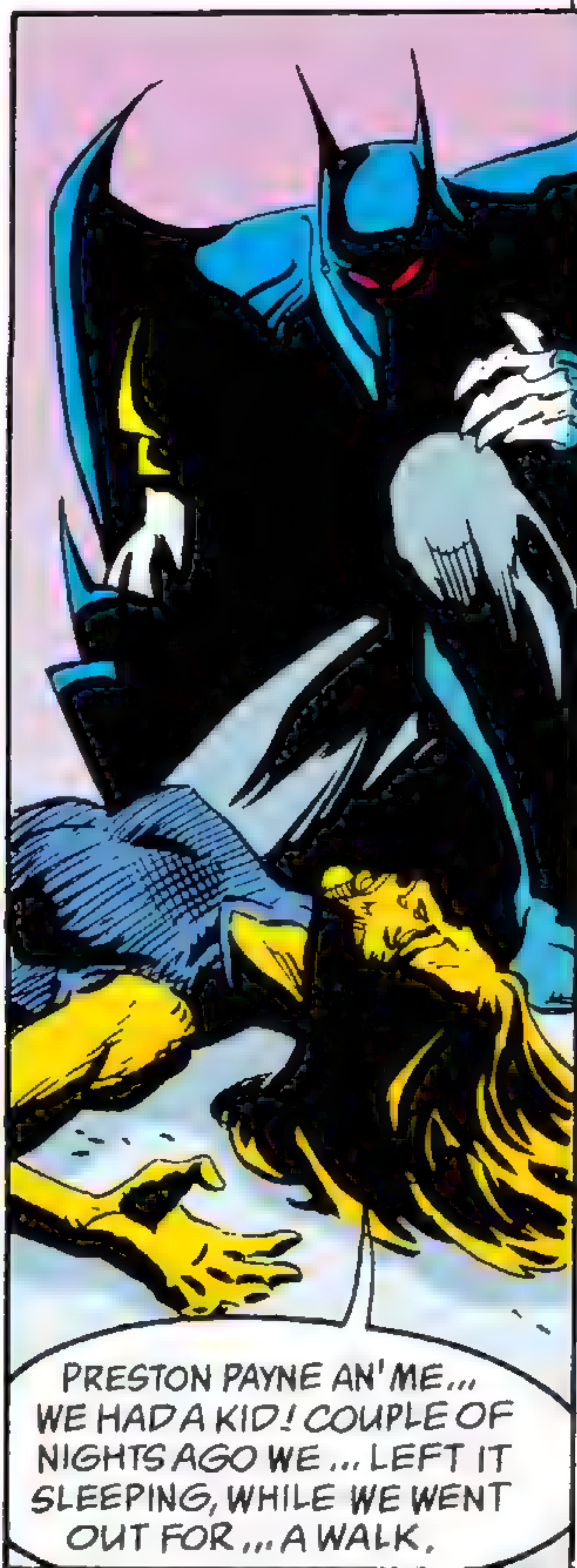
My baby--our
baby. None
loved more!

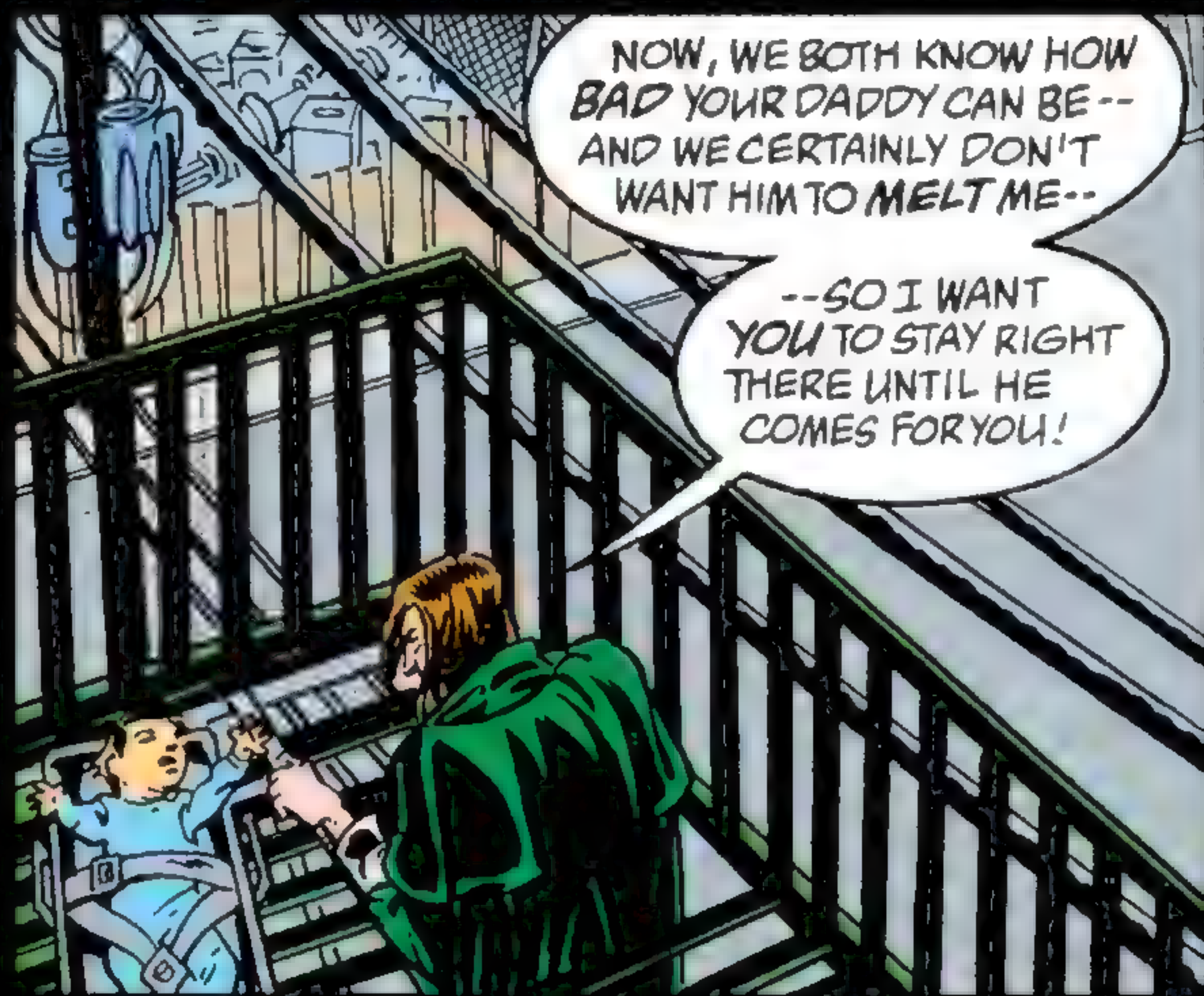


HOW CUTE! THAT WAS
YOU--A DRIPPING LUMP OF
CLAY... AND JUST LOOK AT
YOU NOW! A FINE FIGURE
OF A BOY! MUMMY MUST
HAVE SHOWN YOU ALL
HER SHAPE-CHANGING
TRICKS!

WAAAA!

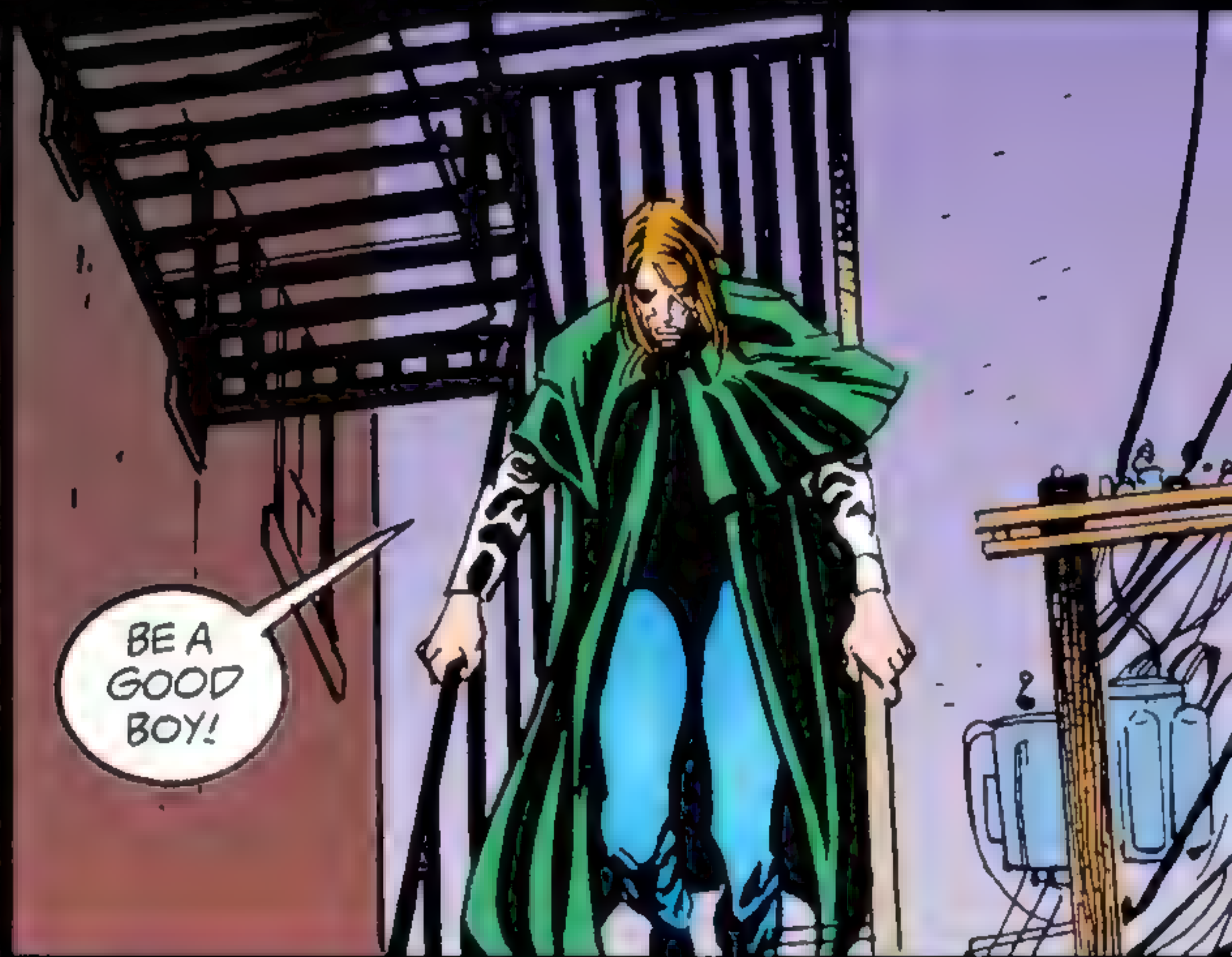






NOW, WE BOTH KNOW HOW BAD YOUR DADDY CAN BE-- AND WE CERTAINLY DON'T WANT HIM TO MELT ME--

--SO I WANT YOU TO STAY RIGHT THERE UNTIL HE COMES FOR YOU!



BE A GOOD BOY!



THIS IS WHERE THE CREEP SAID--!

VINTO



WELL DONE, MR. CLAYFACE! NO SIGN OF YOUR LADY YET-- BUT I'M GLAD YOU AT LEAST ARE PUNCTUAL.

THE CAR'S UNLOCKED. PUT ETCHISON IN THE BACK!



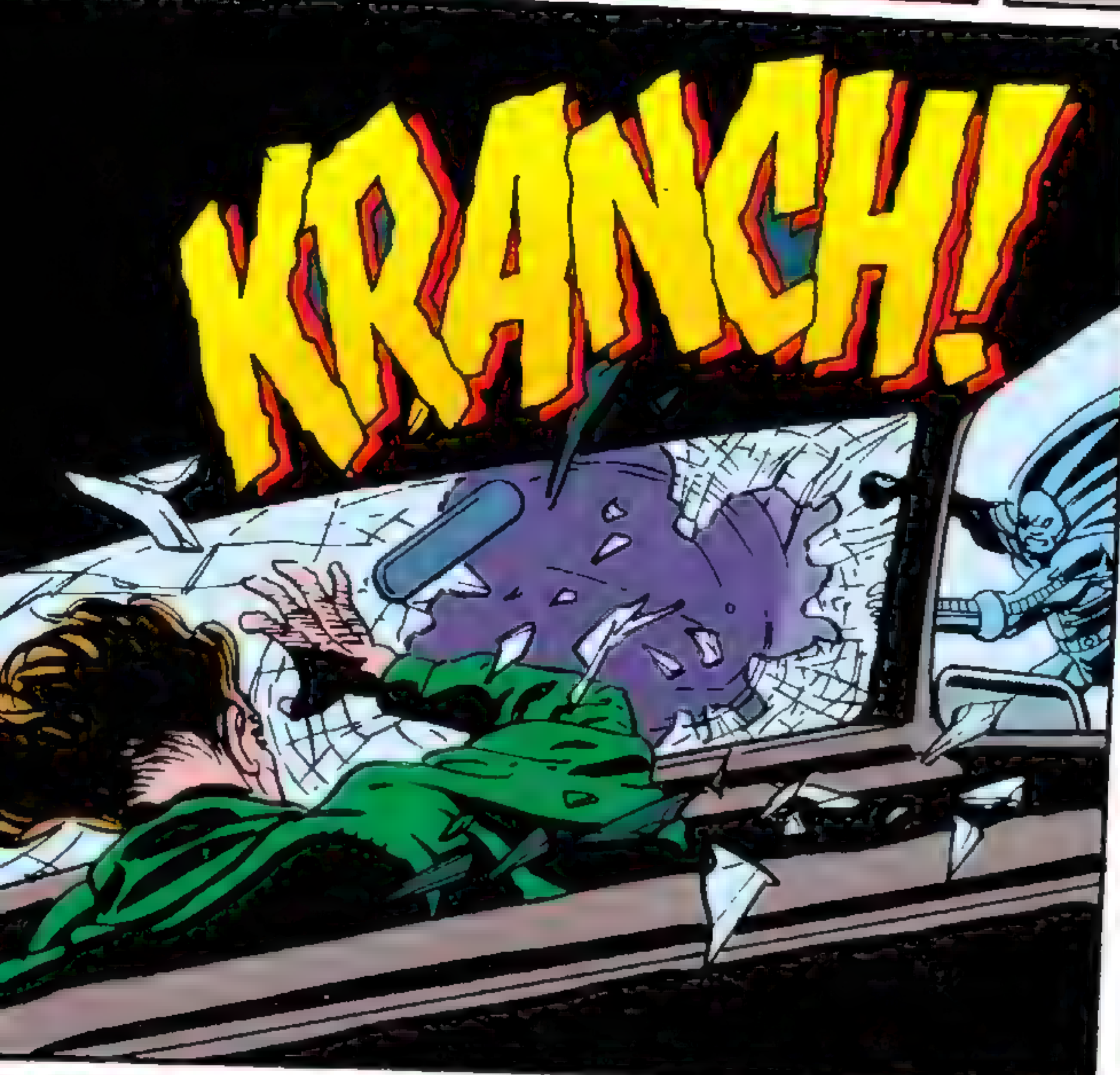
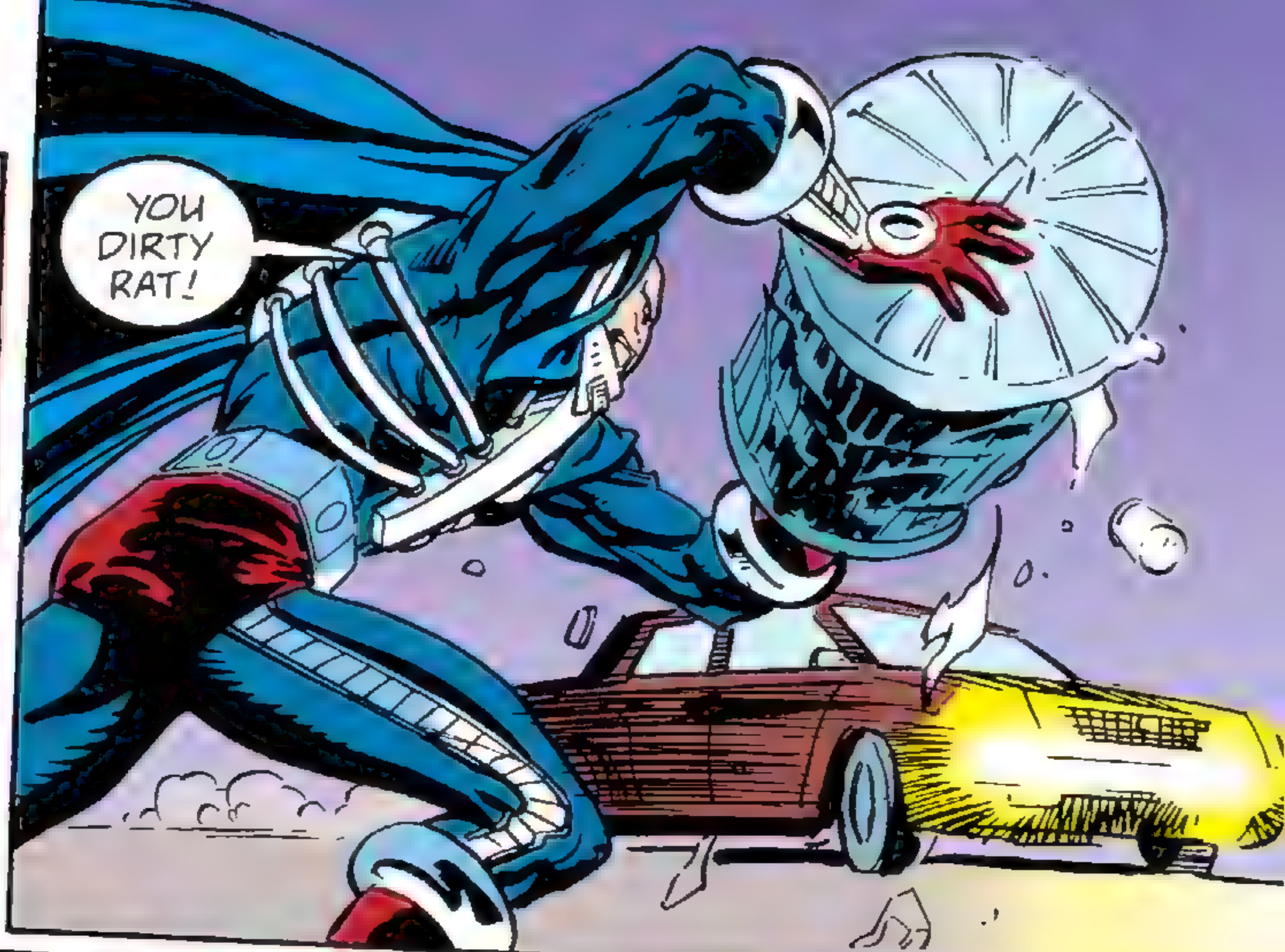
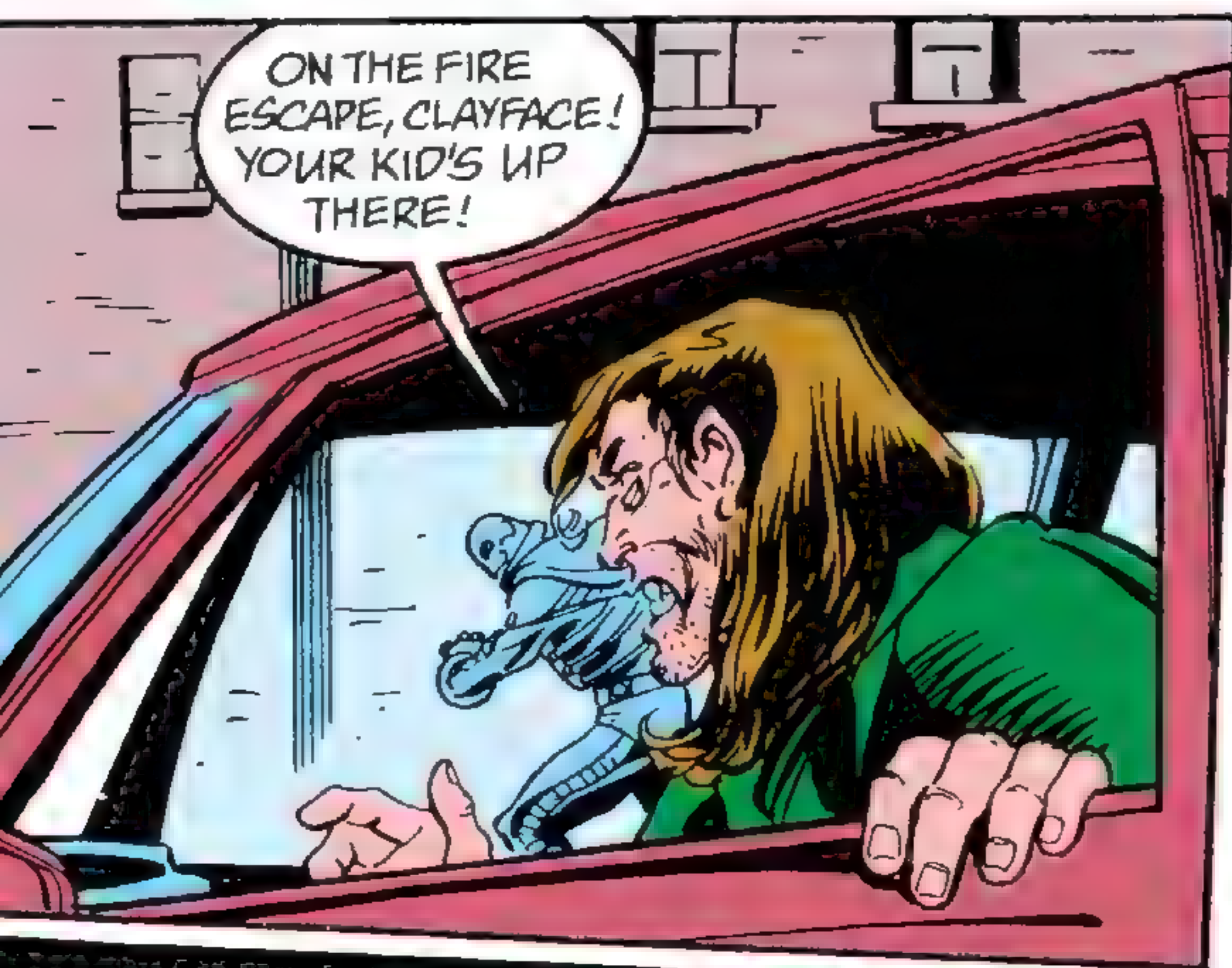
MY KID-- WHERE IS HE?

YOU'LL HAVE HIM IN ONE MINUTE.

IF HE'S HURT--!



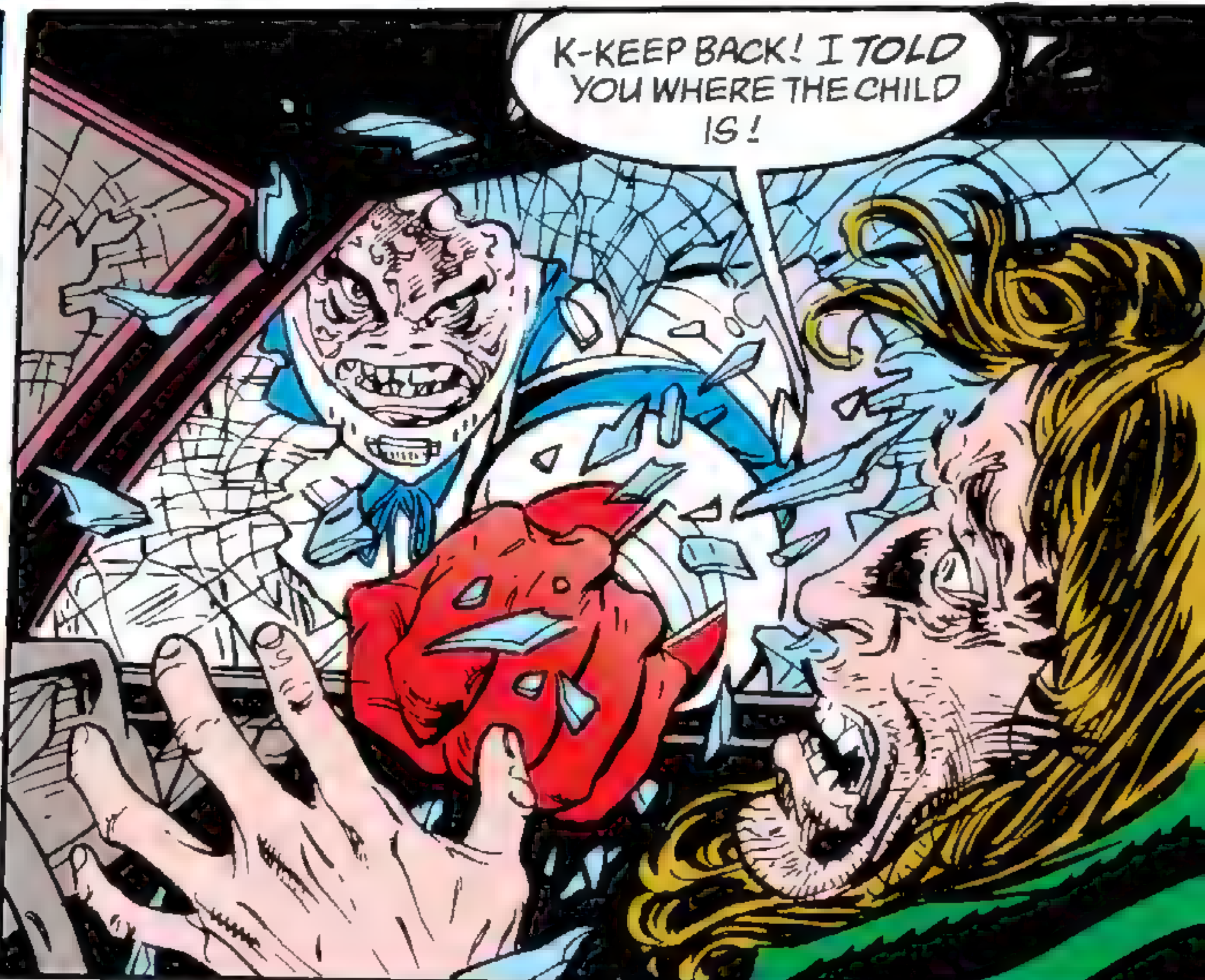
BELIEVE ME, HE'S IN FINE FETTER! NOW WALK TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET--AND KEEP YOUR HEAD TURNED AWAY!



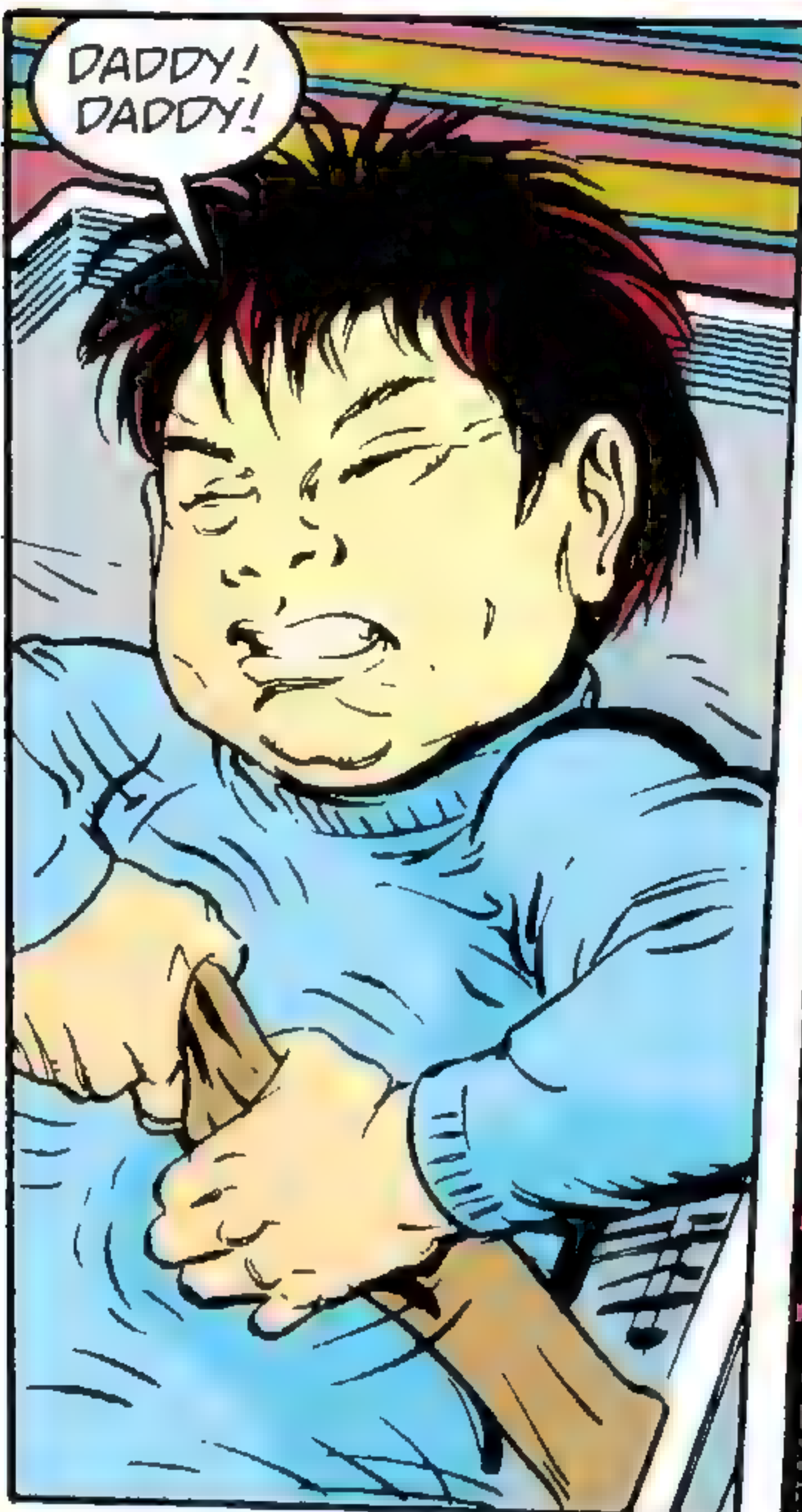
AND THE FACT THAT IT WAS GRAHAM ECHISON
CLAYFACE TOOK CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING--
THAT ABATTOIR KIDNAPPED THEIR BABY!



WITH A LITTLE LUCK, I
CAN TAKE BOTH OF THEM!



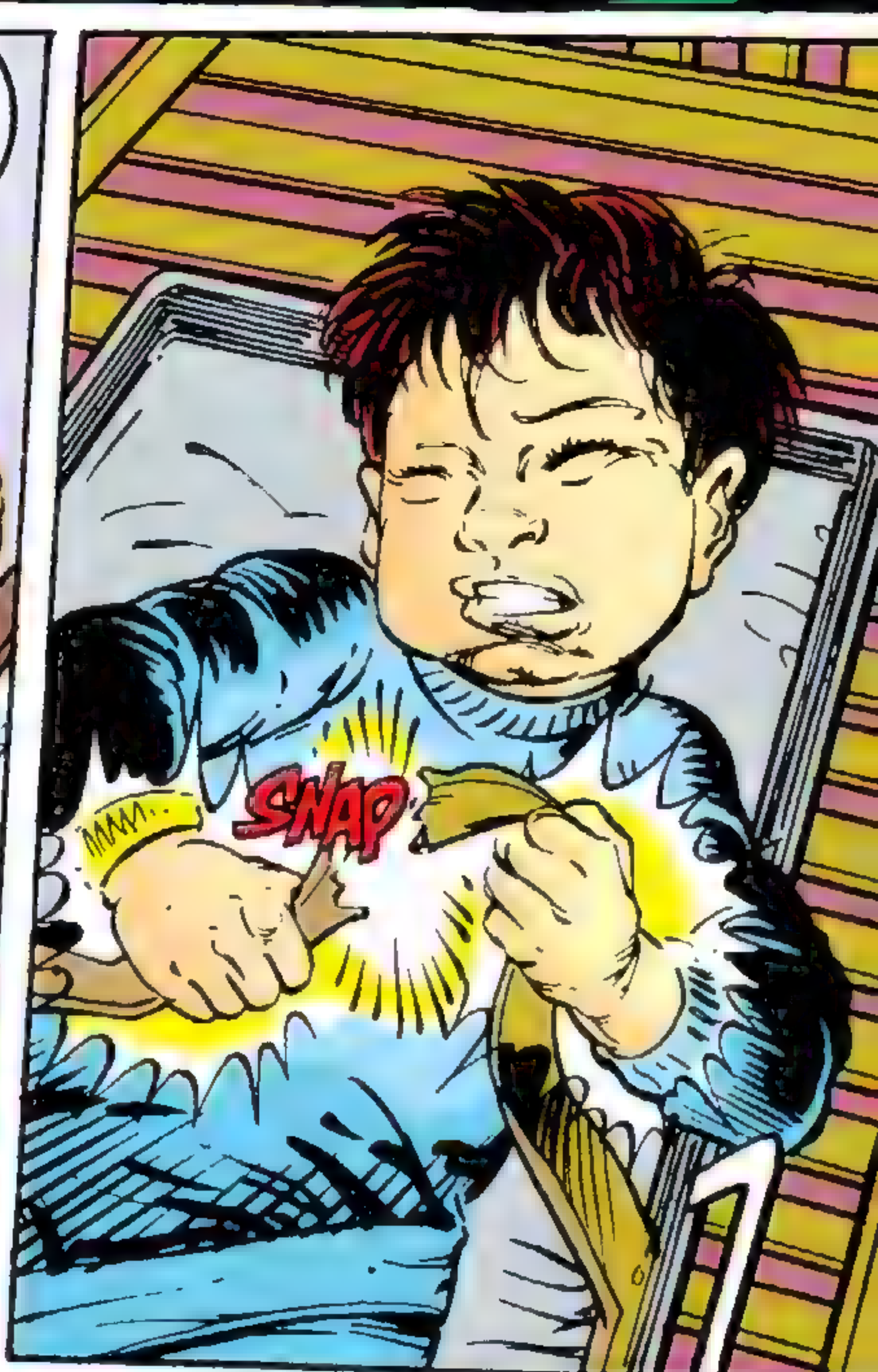
K-KEEP BACK! I TOLD
YOU WHERE THE CHILD
IS!



DADDY!
DADDY!



YOU CAUSED ME AND MY
WIFE A WHOLE LOT OF
HEARTACHE, YOU WORM!
I'M GOING TO SEE THAT
YOU SUFFER--

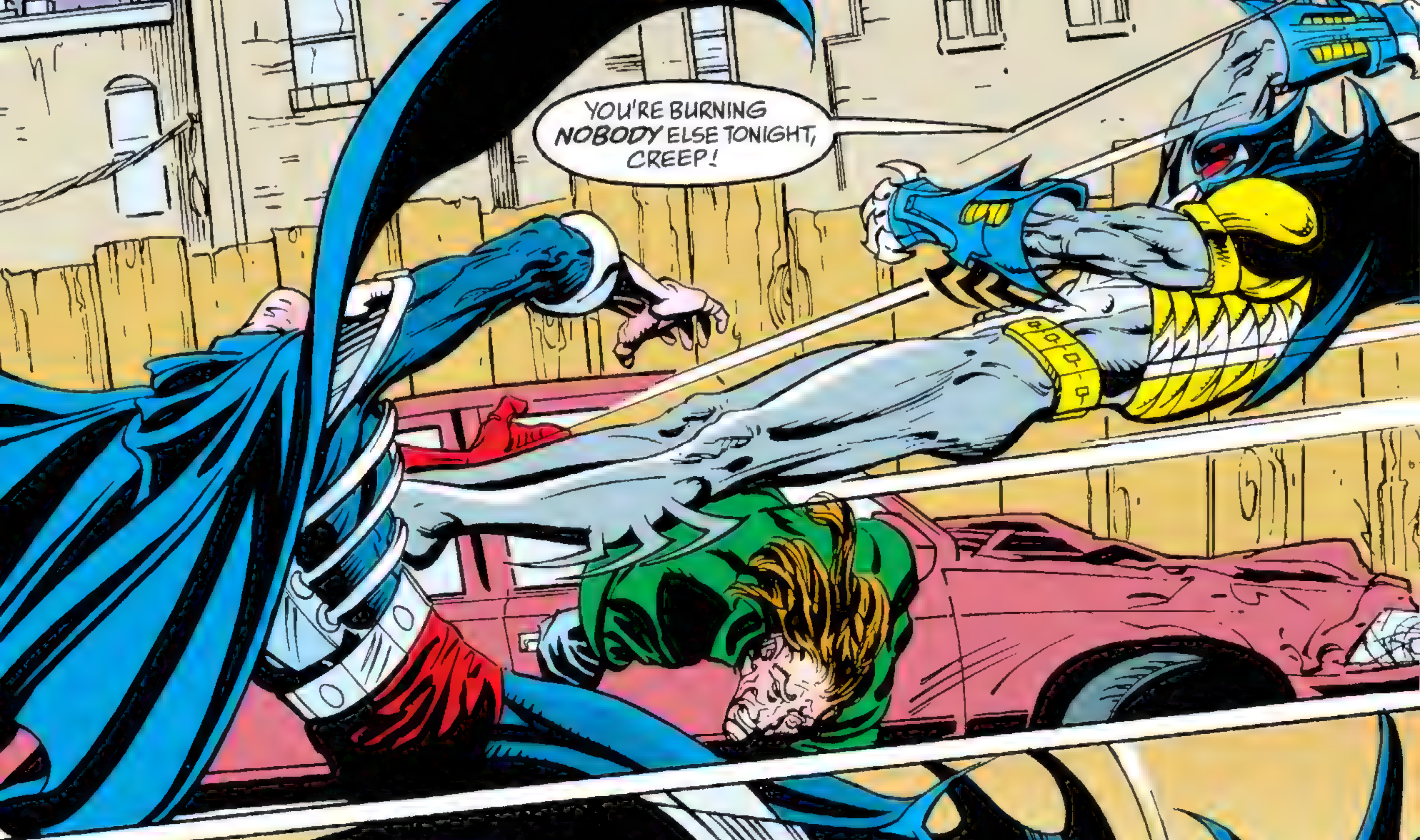


SNAP

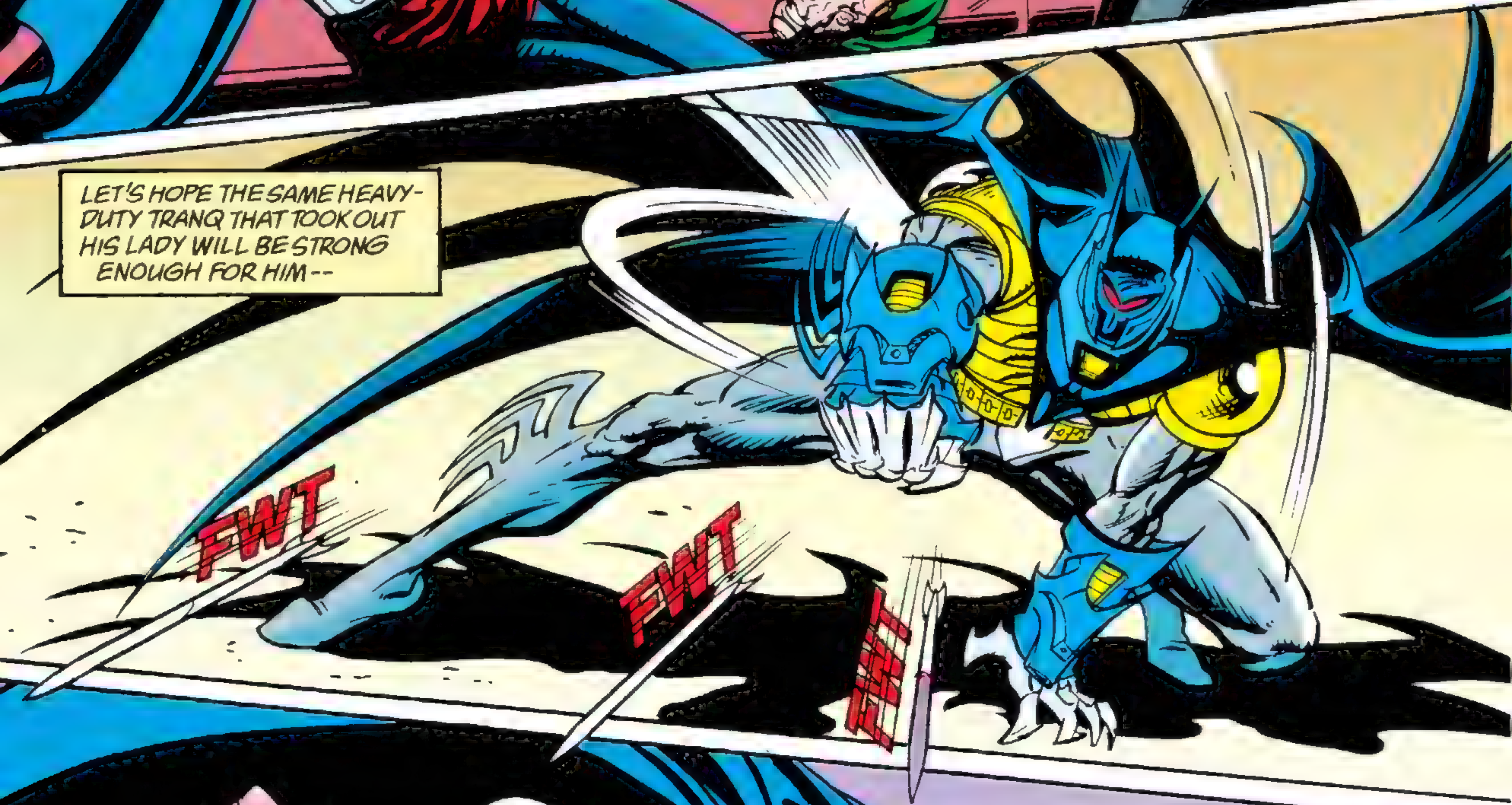


I'M GOING TO SEE
YOU BURN!

NO--!



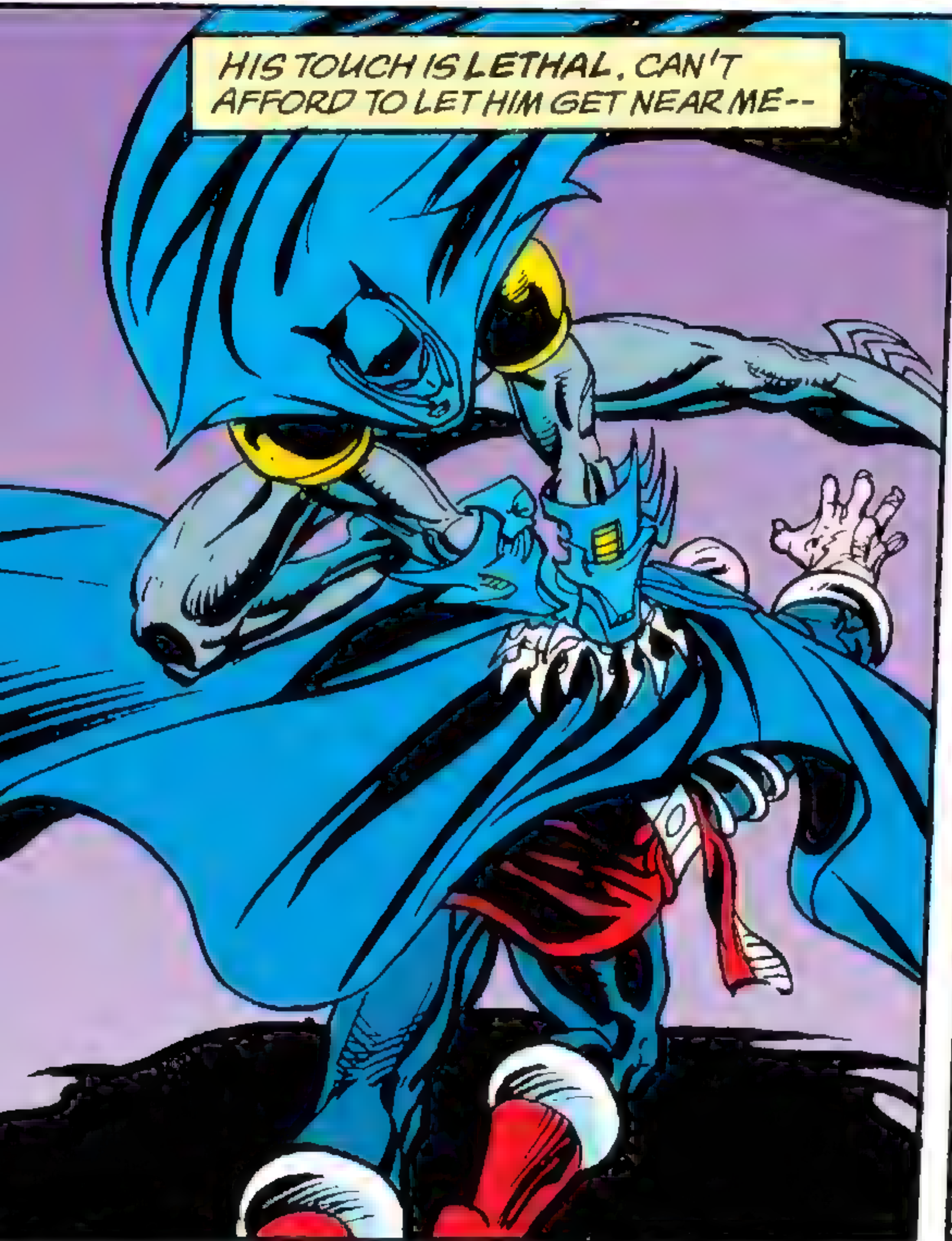
LET'S HOPE THE SAME HEAVY-DUTY TRANQ THAT TOOK OUT HIS LADY WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH FOR HIM--



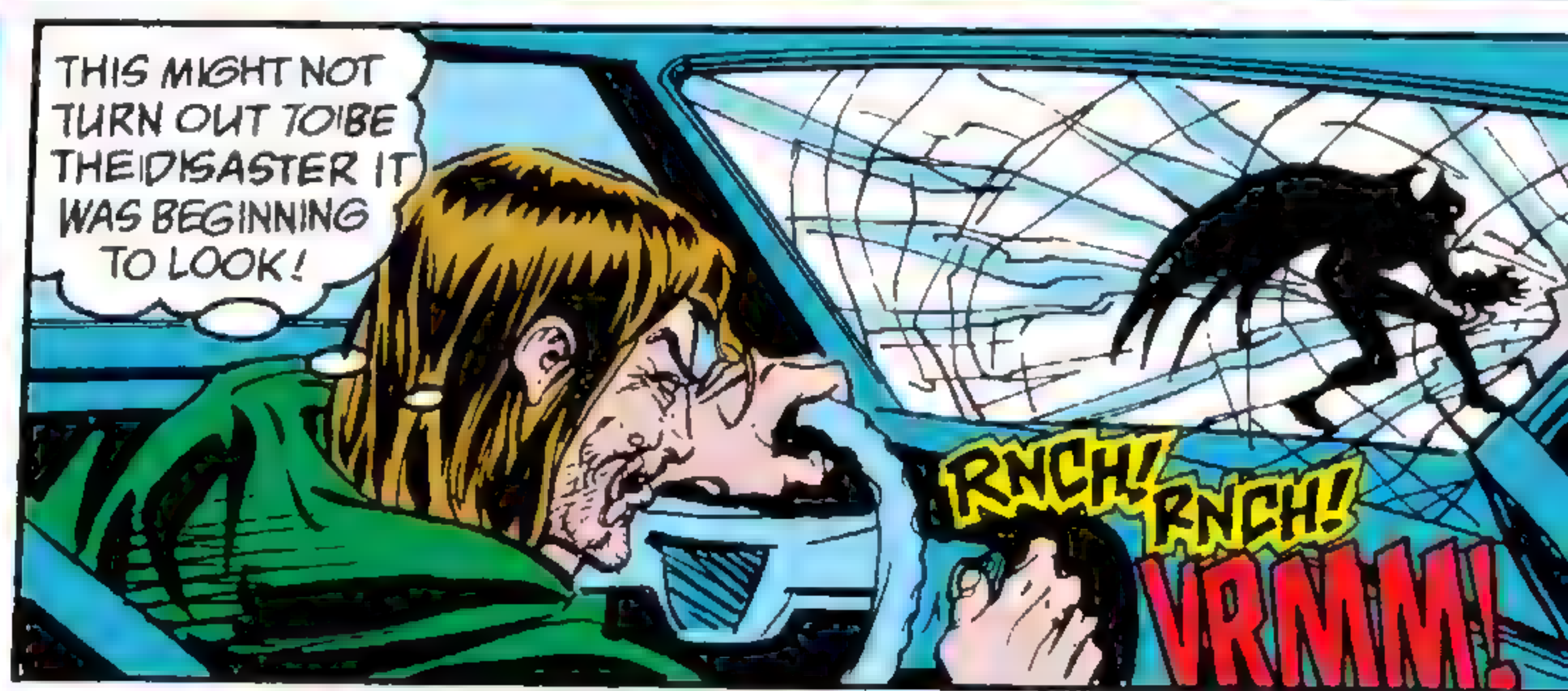


MY WIFE--! WHERE IS SHE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?

SAME AS I'D HOPED TO DO WITH YOU--PUT HER TO SLEEP UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES CAN PICK HER UP!

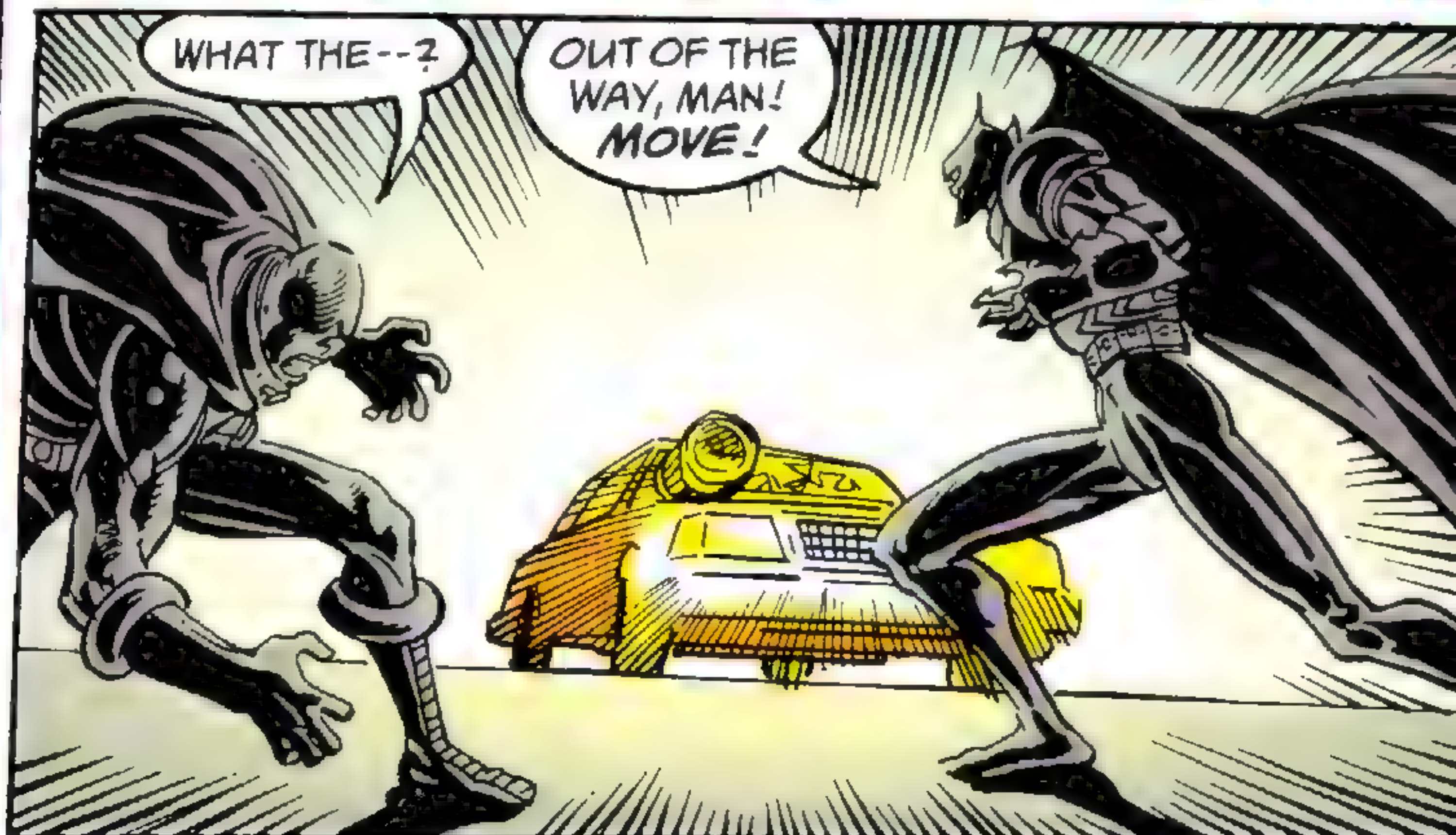


HIS TOUCH IS LETHAL. CAN'T AFFORD TO LET HIM GET NEAR ME--



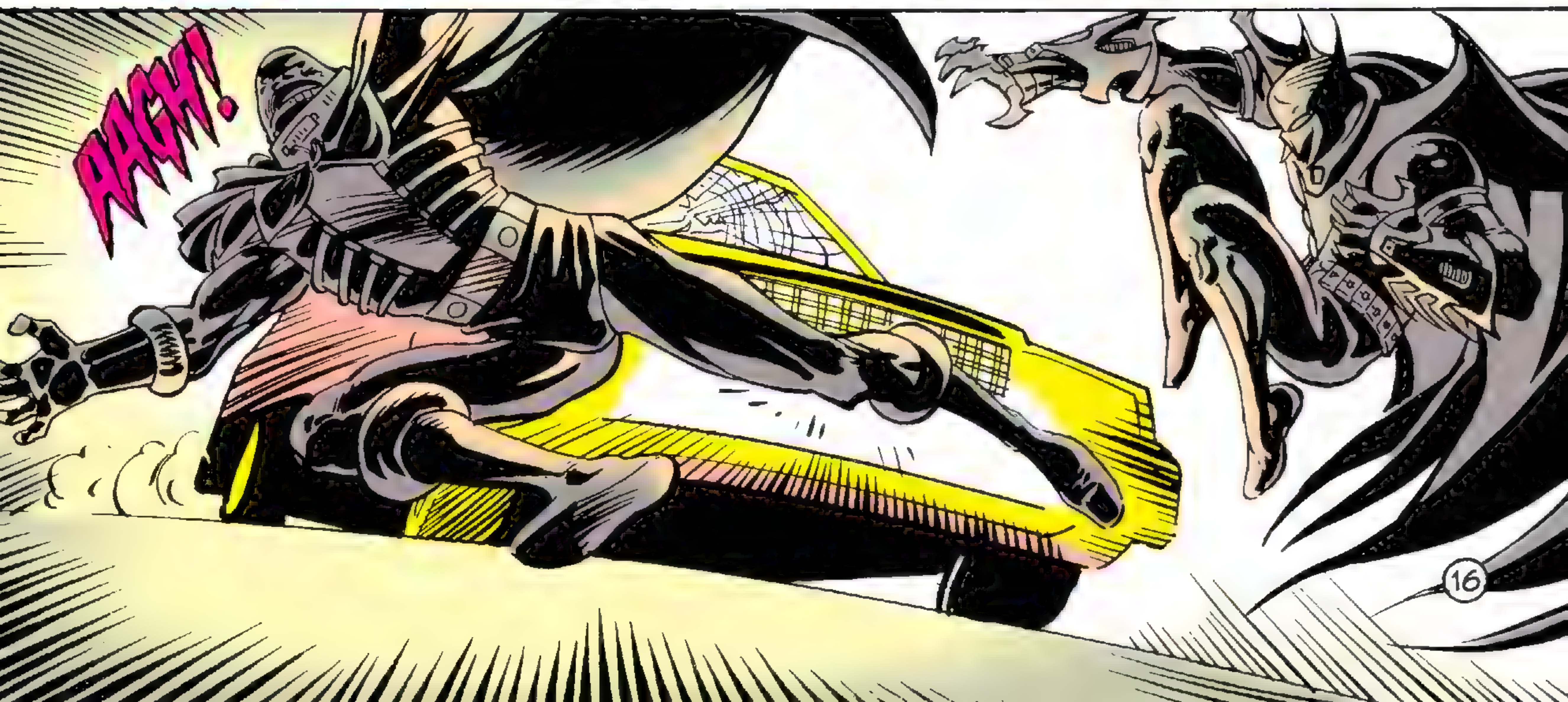
THIS MIGHT NOT TURN OUT TO BE THE DISASTER IT WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK!

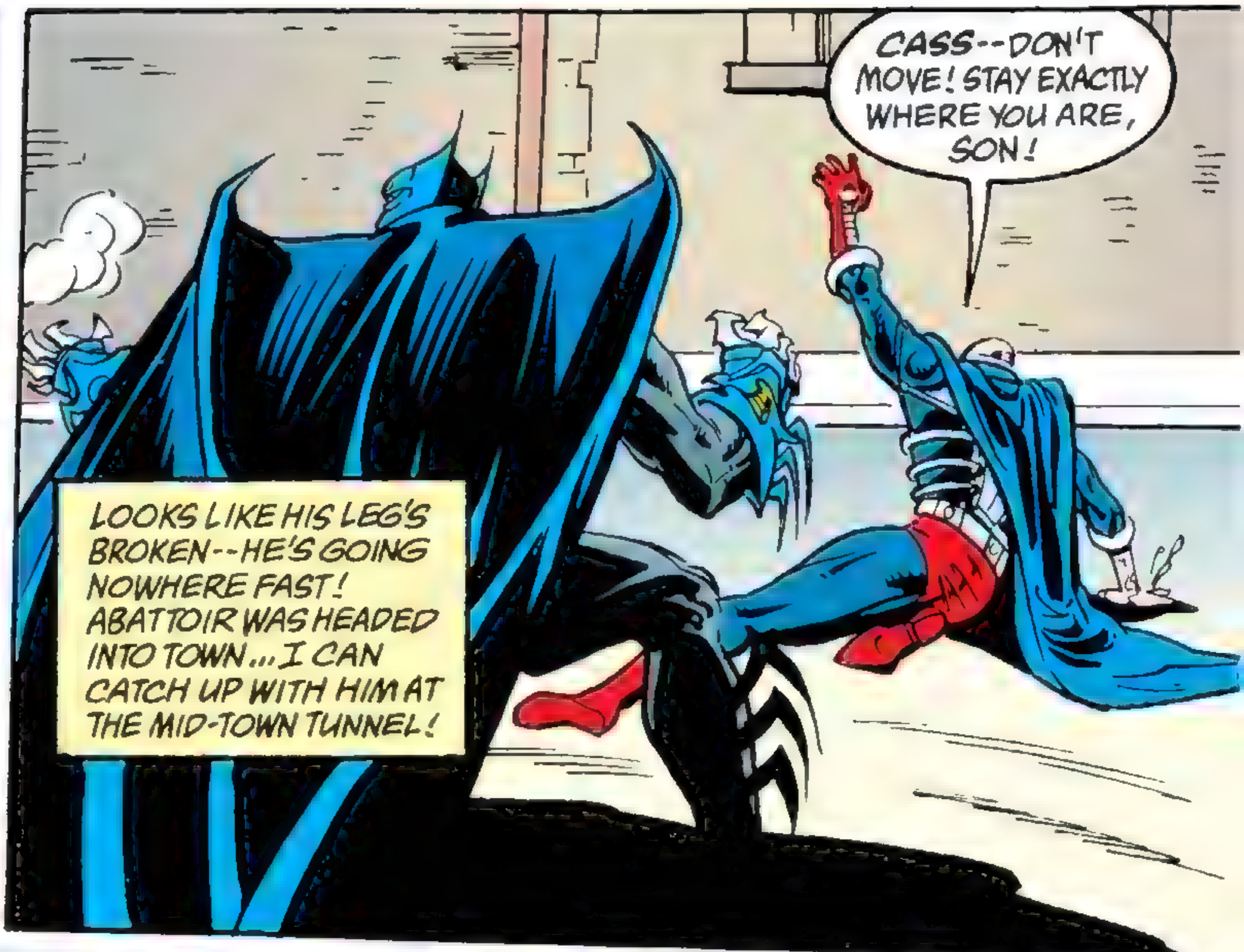
RNCN!
VRMM!



WHAT THE--?

OUT OF THE WAY, MAN! MOVE!



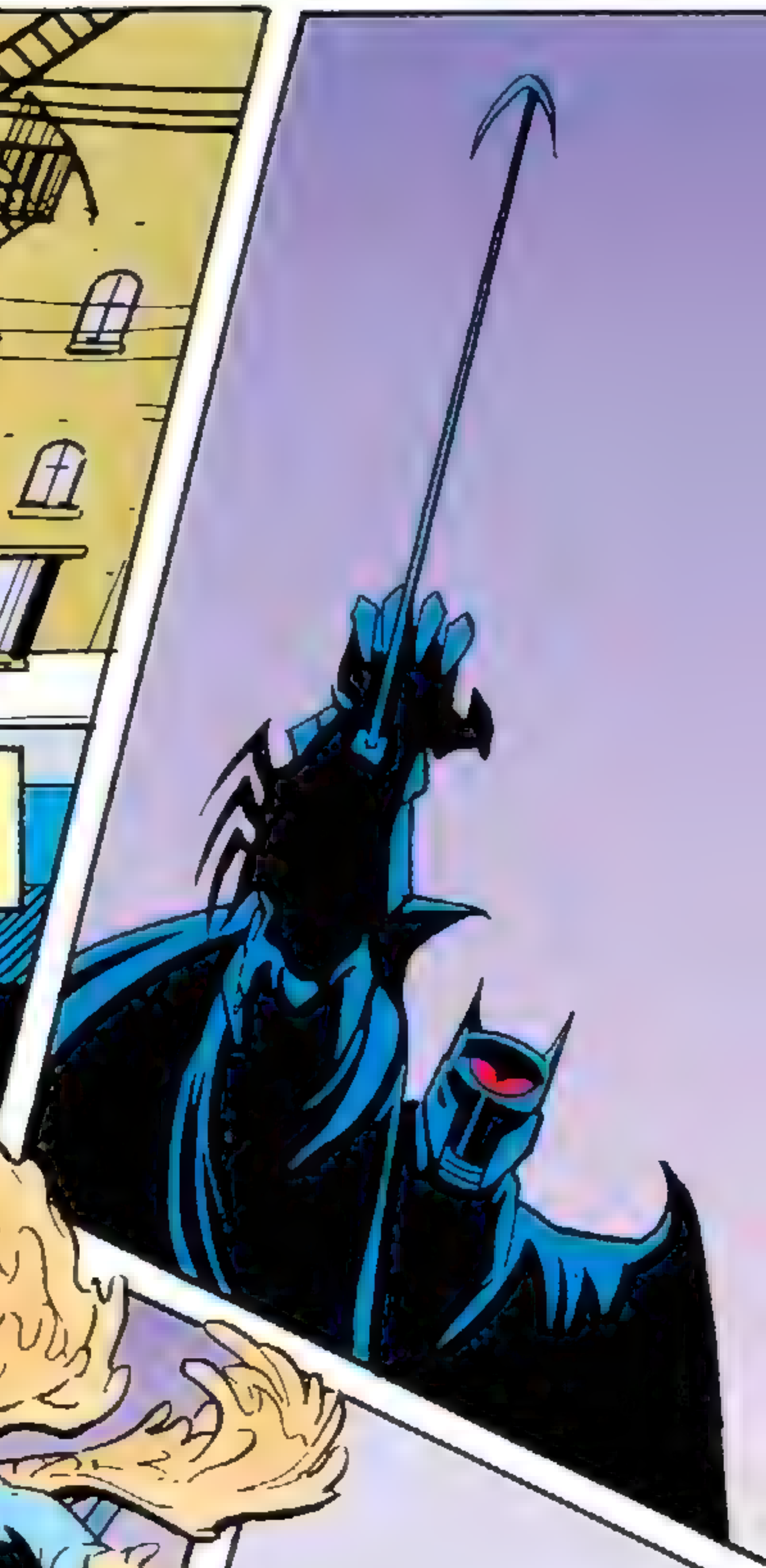


LOOKS LIKE HIS LEG'S
BROKEN--HE'S GOING
NOWHERE FAST!
ABATTOIR WAS HEADED
INTO TOWN...I CAN
CATCH UP WITH HIM AT
THE MID-TOWN TUNNEL!





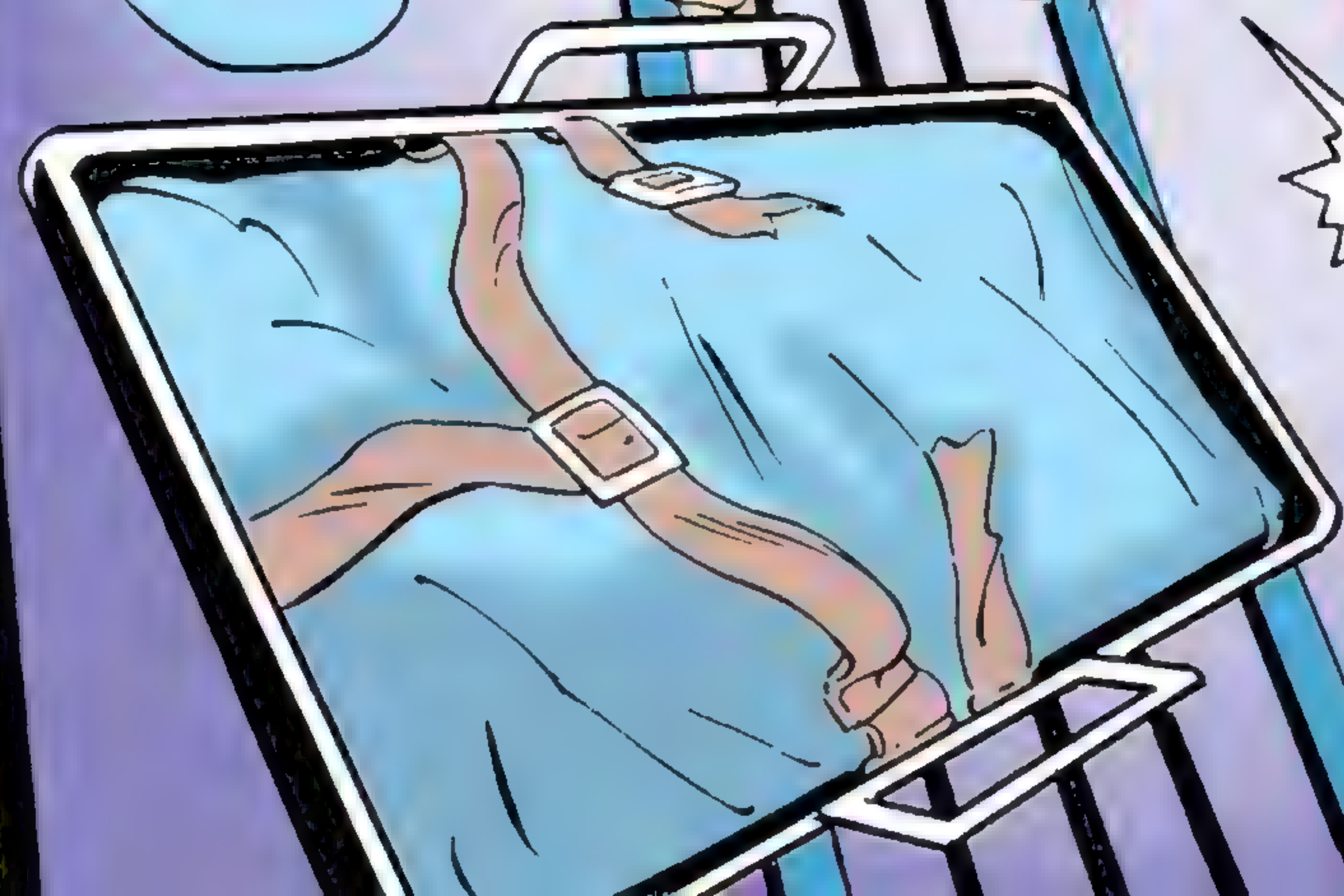
CLAYFACE'LL NEVER
MAKE IT IN TIME. THE
KID'S GOING TO JUMP--!



SEE?
LIKE MOMMY--
FLY!



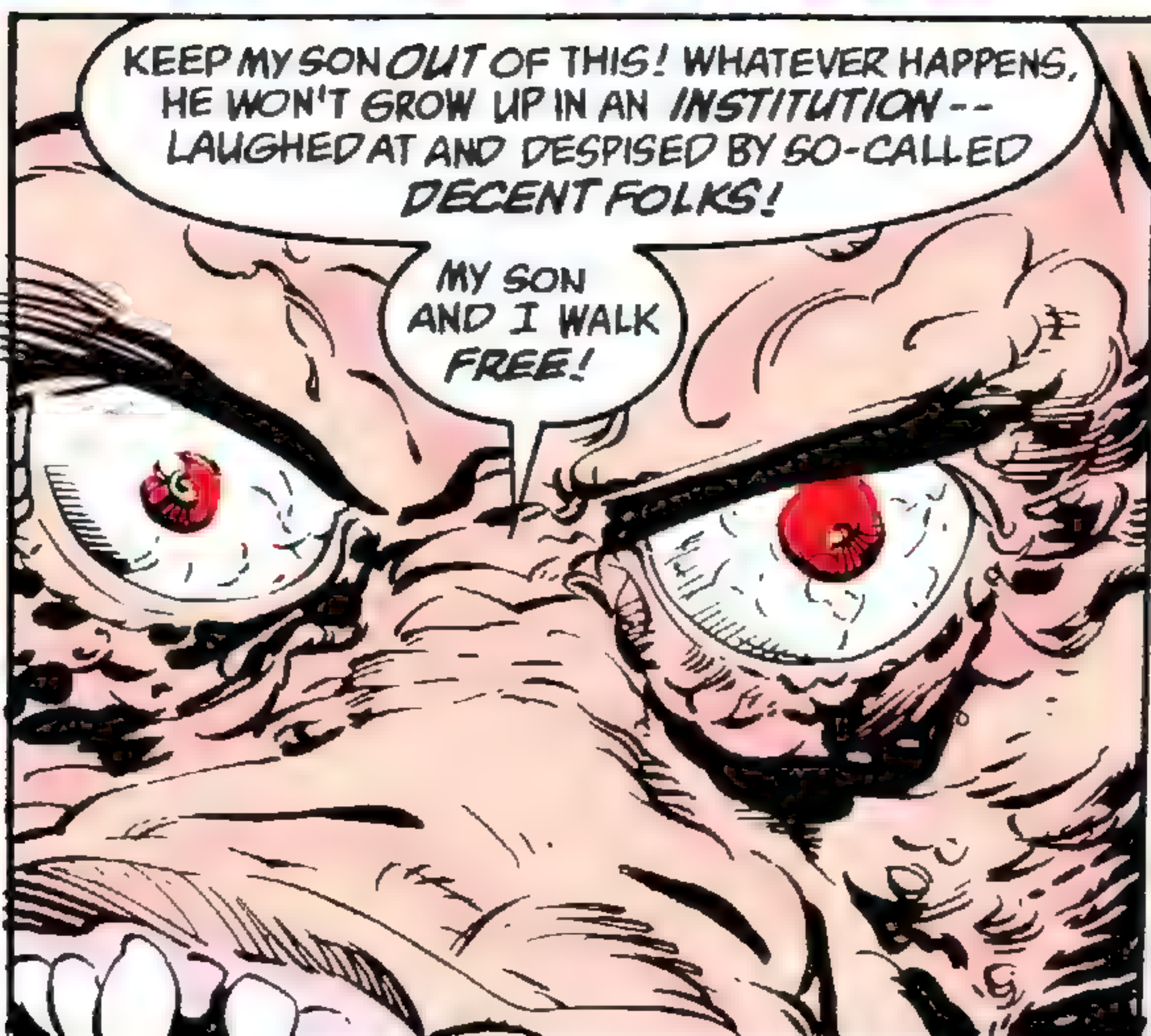
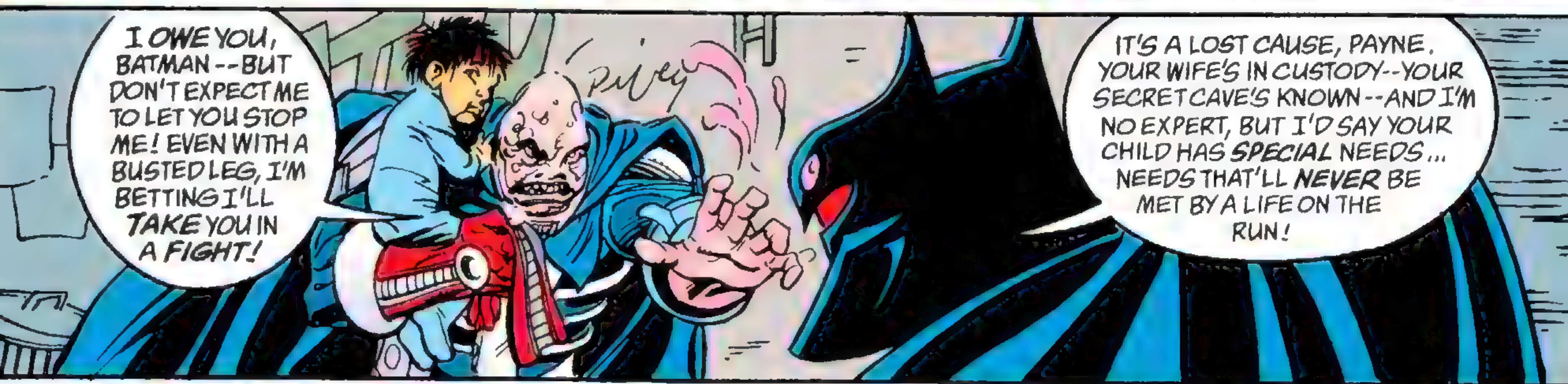
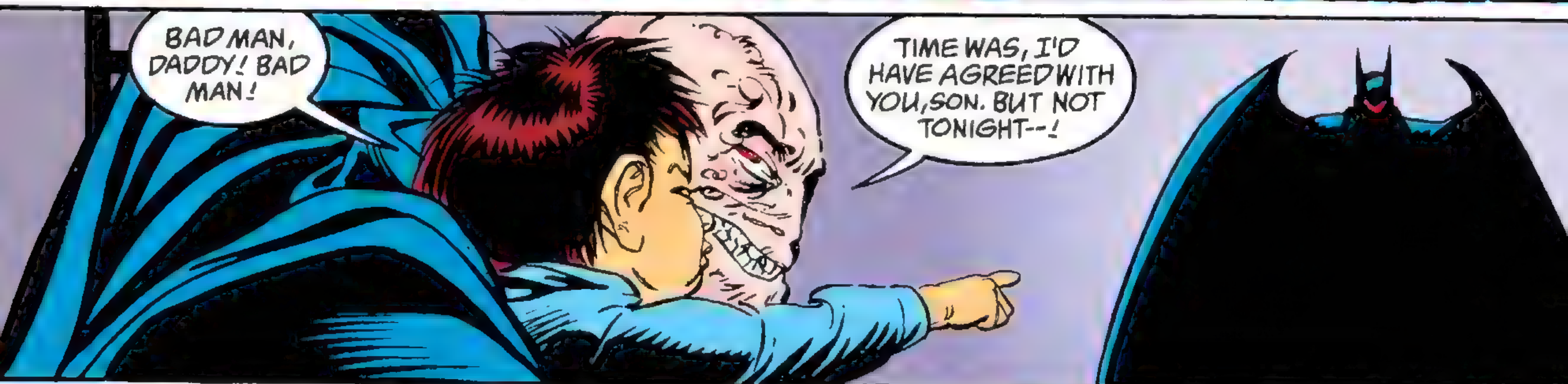
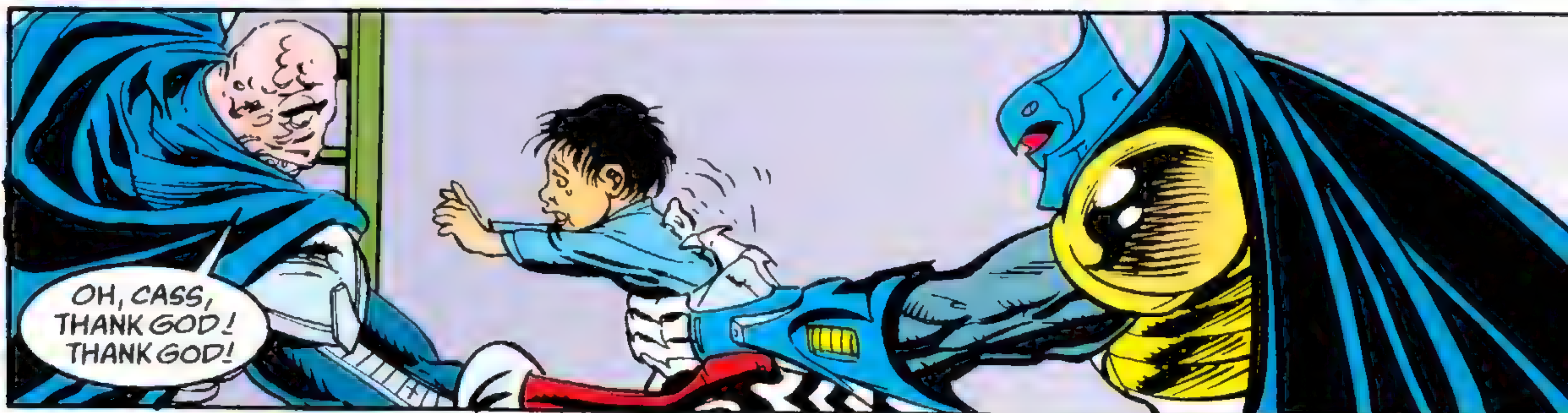
DADDY--!

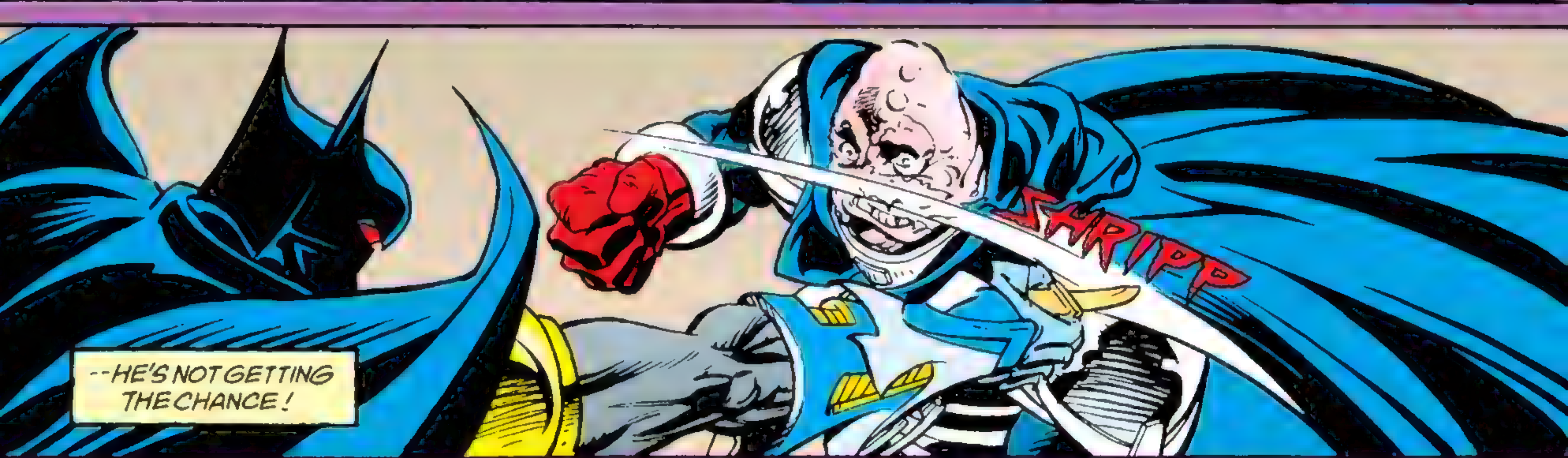


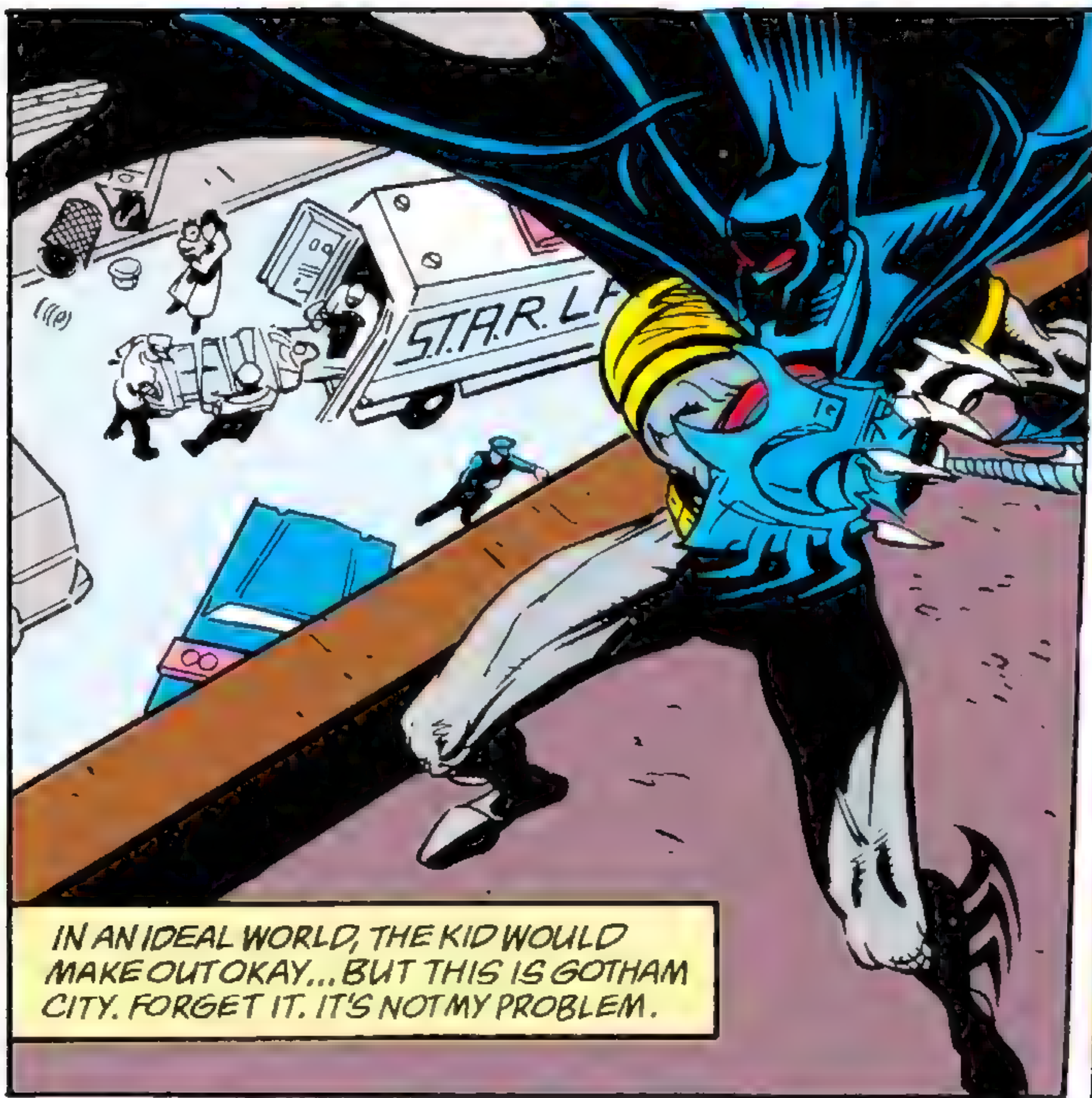


WAAAAA!

KZAKK!





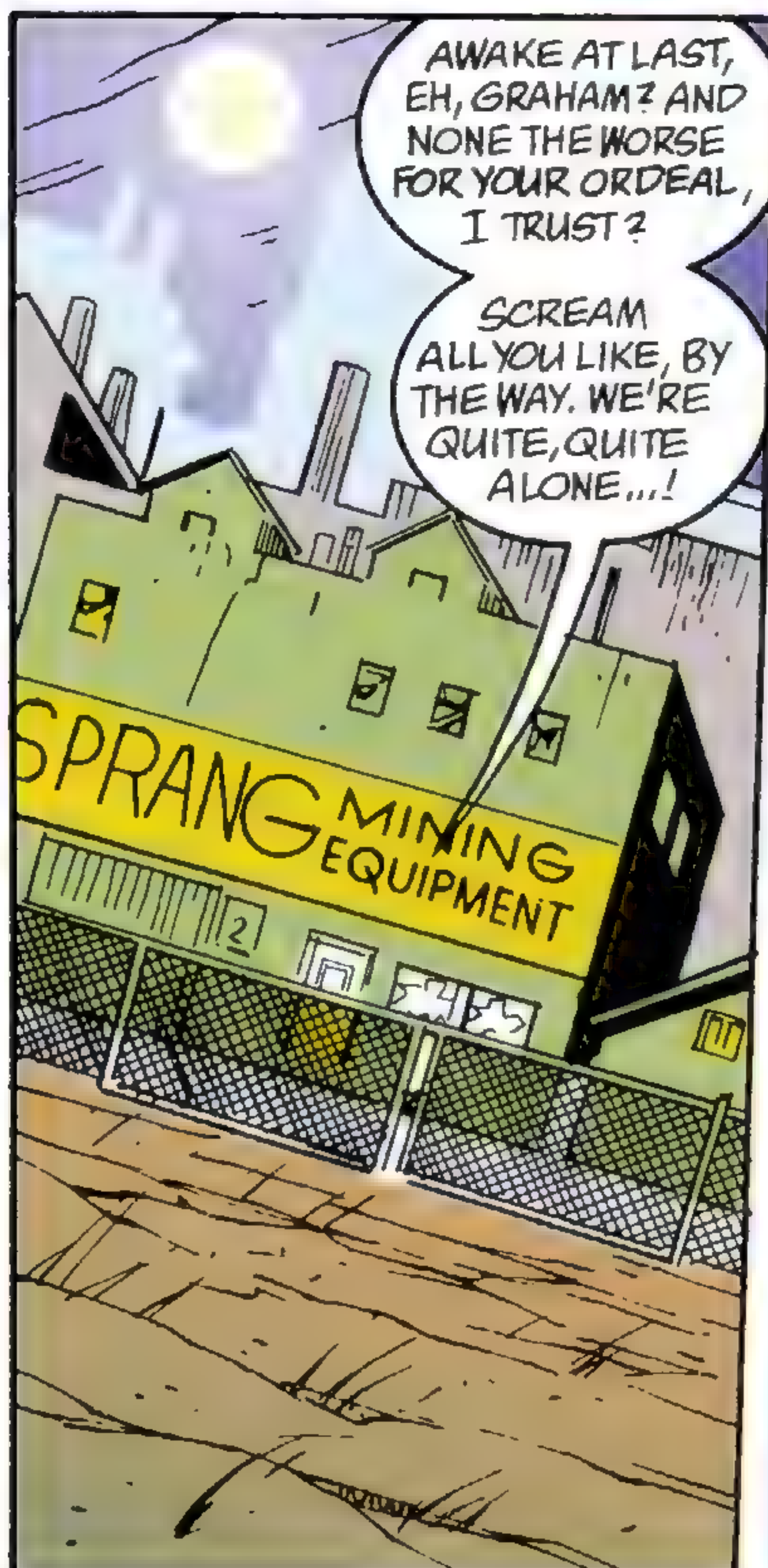


IN AN IDEAL WORLD, THE KID WOULD MAKE OUT OKAY... BUT THIS IS GOTHAM CITY. FORGET IT. IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM.



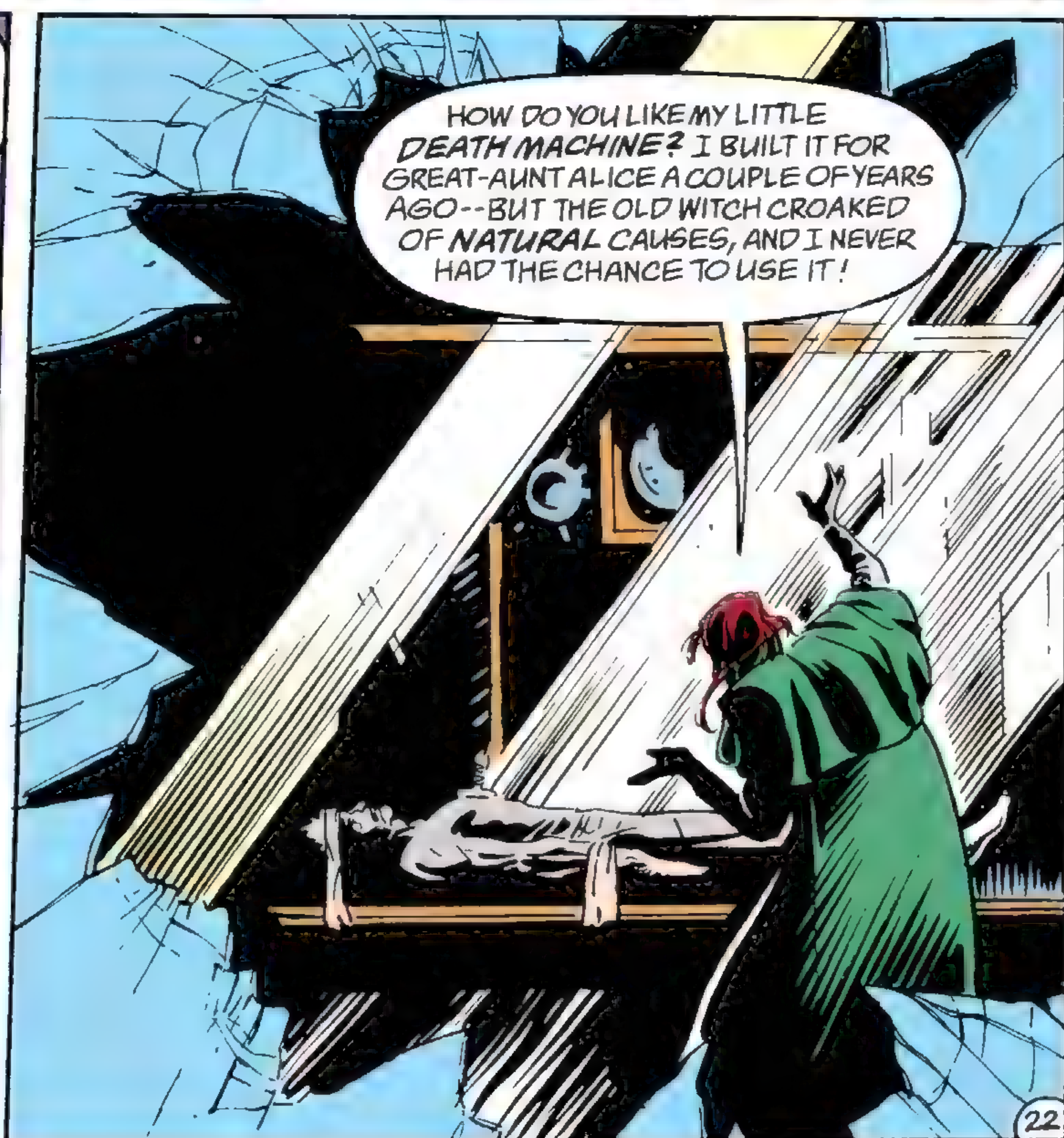
AND AS FOR GRAHAM ETCHISON--

-- I SHUDDER TO THINK WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM!

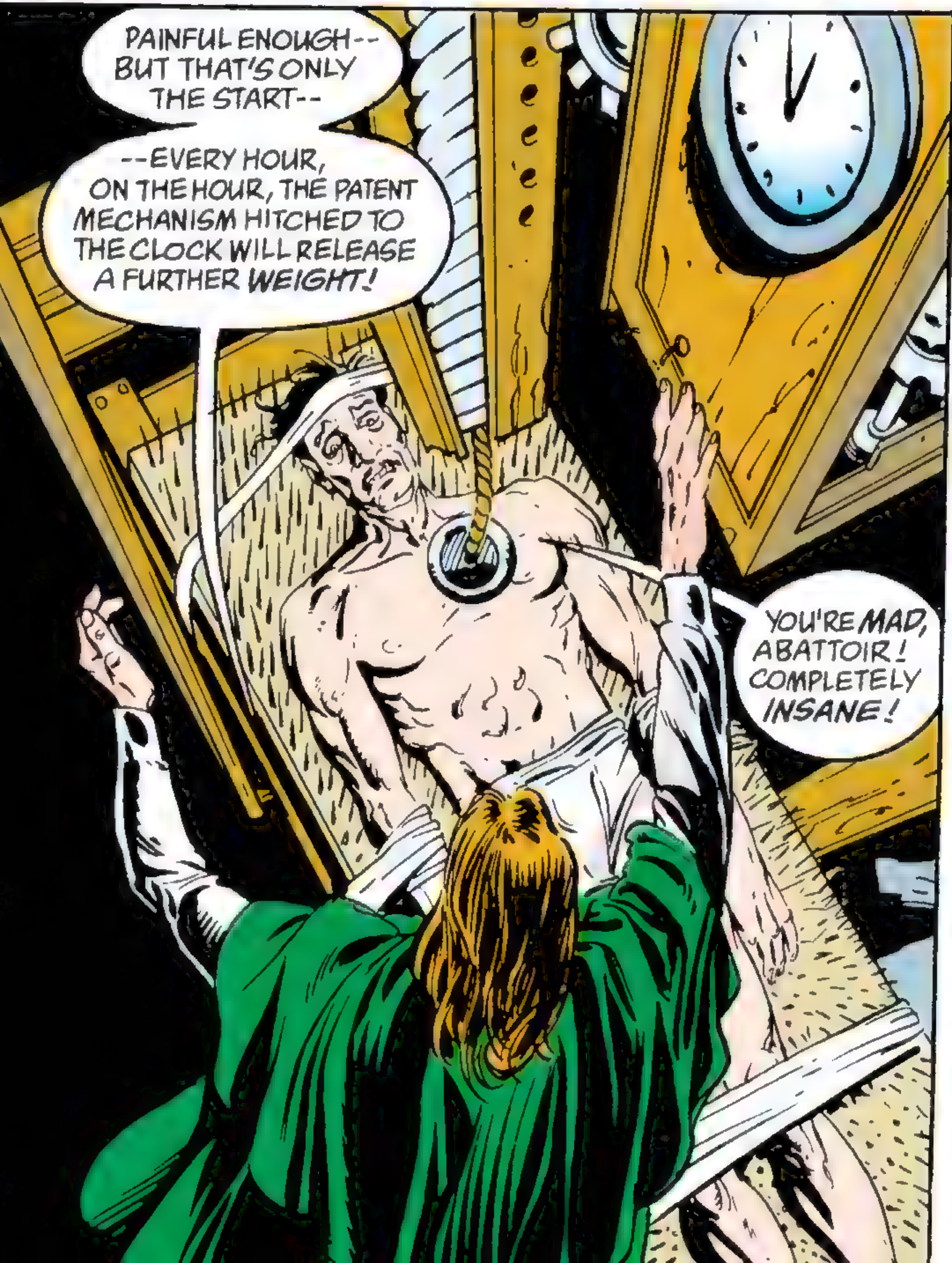
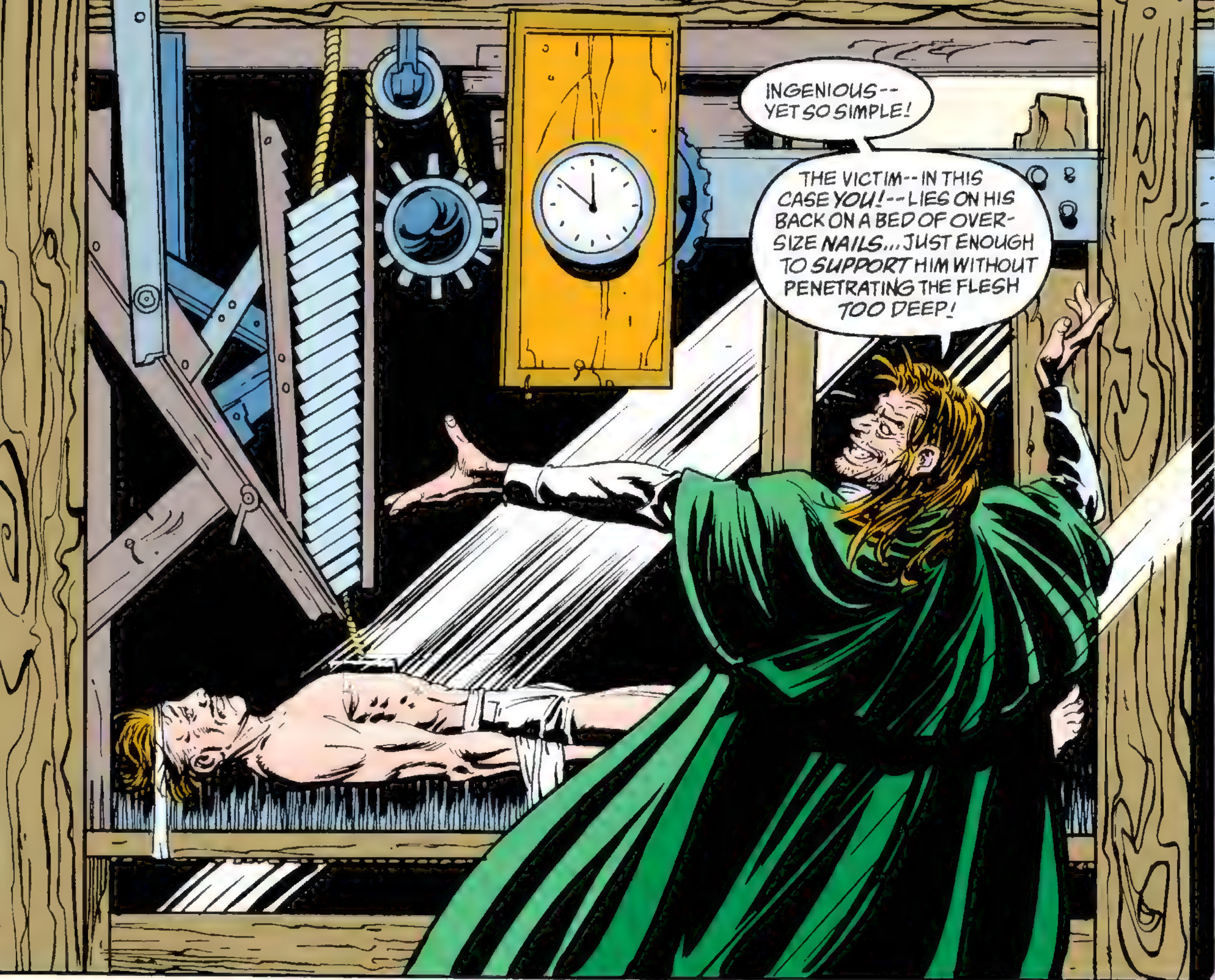


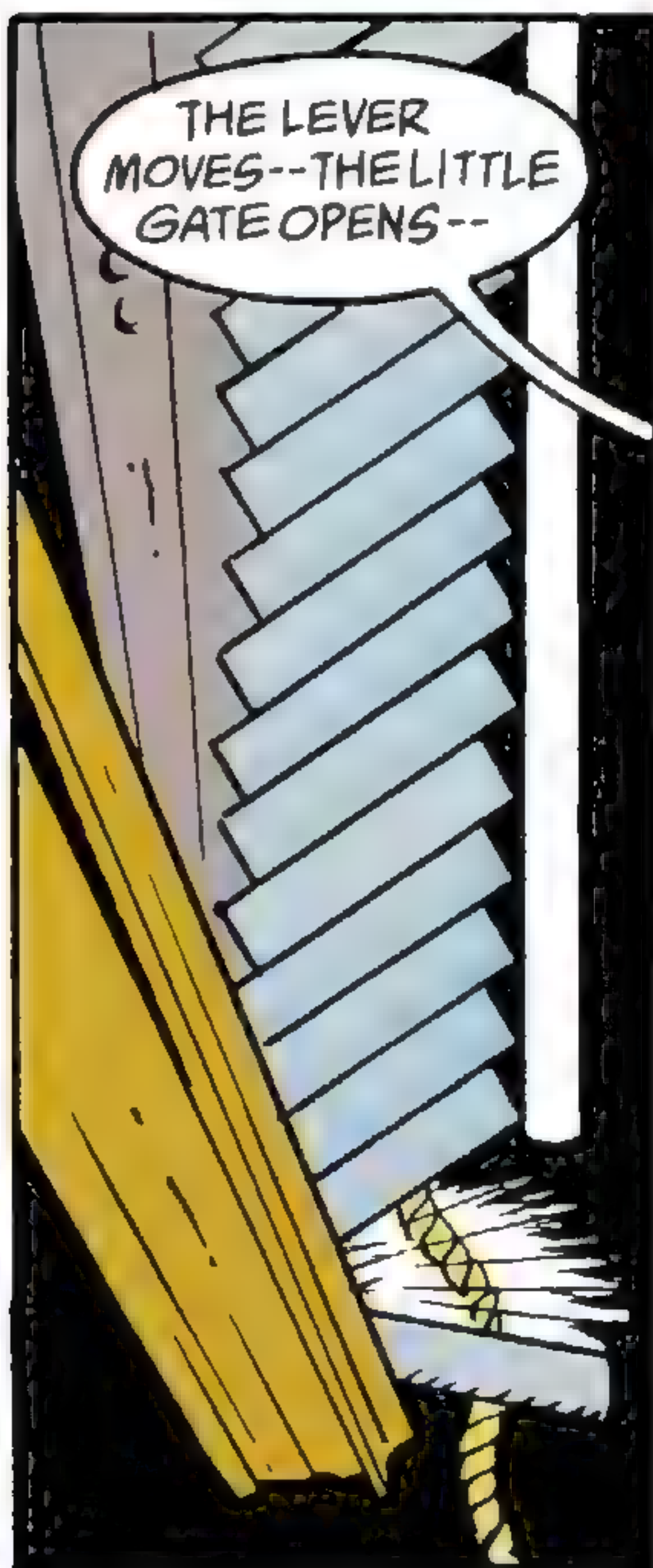
AWAKE AT LAST, EH, GRAHAM? AND NONE THE WORSE FOR YOUR ORDEAL, I TRUST?

SCREAM ALL YOU LIKE, BY THE WAY. WE'RE QUITE, QUITE ALONE....!



HOW DO YOU LIKE MY LITTLE DEATH MACHINE? I BUILT IT FOR GREAT-AUNT ALICE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO-- BUT THE OLD WITCH CROAKED OF NATURAL CAUSES, AND I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO USE IT!





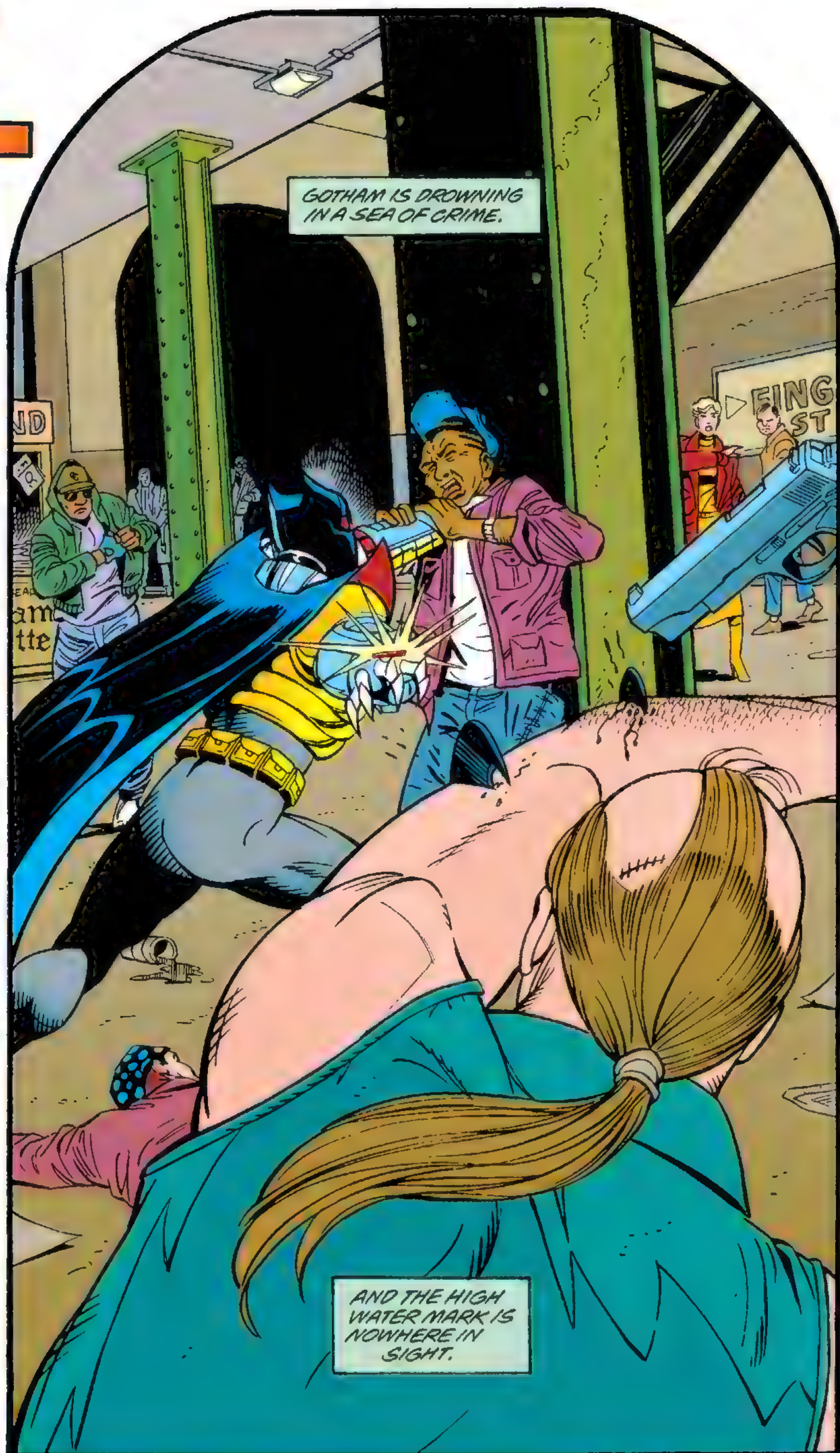
Cover art by KELLEY JONES AND JOHN BEATTY

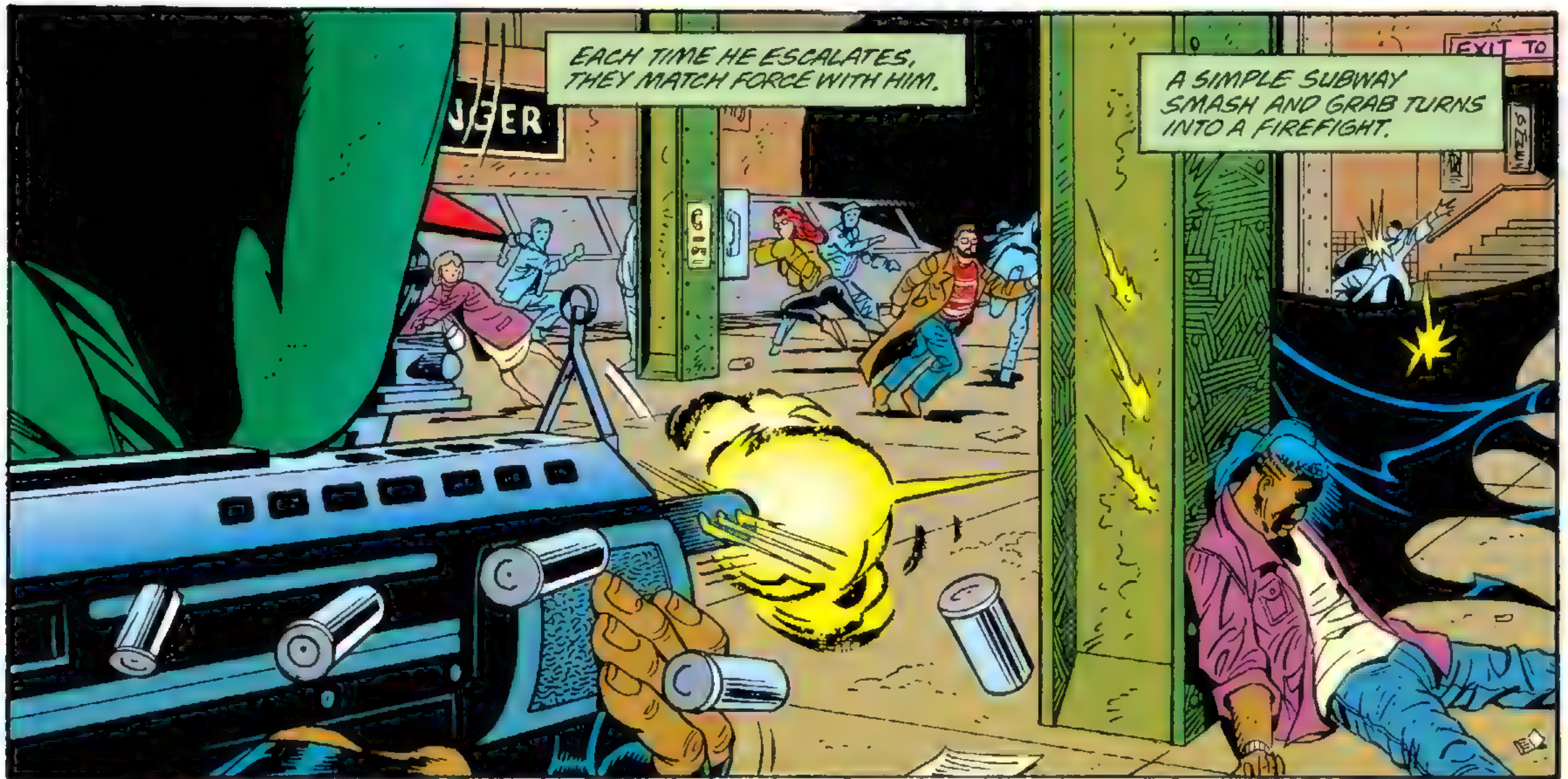


OUT- GUN- N- N- E- D

CHUCK DIXON • *Writer*
 GRAHAM NOLAN • *penciller*
 SCOTT HANNA • *inker*
 ADRIENNE ROY • *colorist*
 JOHN COSTANZA • *letterer*
 DARREN VINCENZO • *asst editor*
 SCOTT PETERSON • *editor*

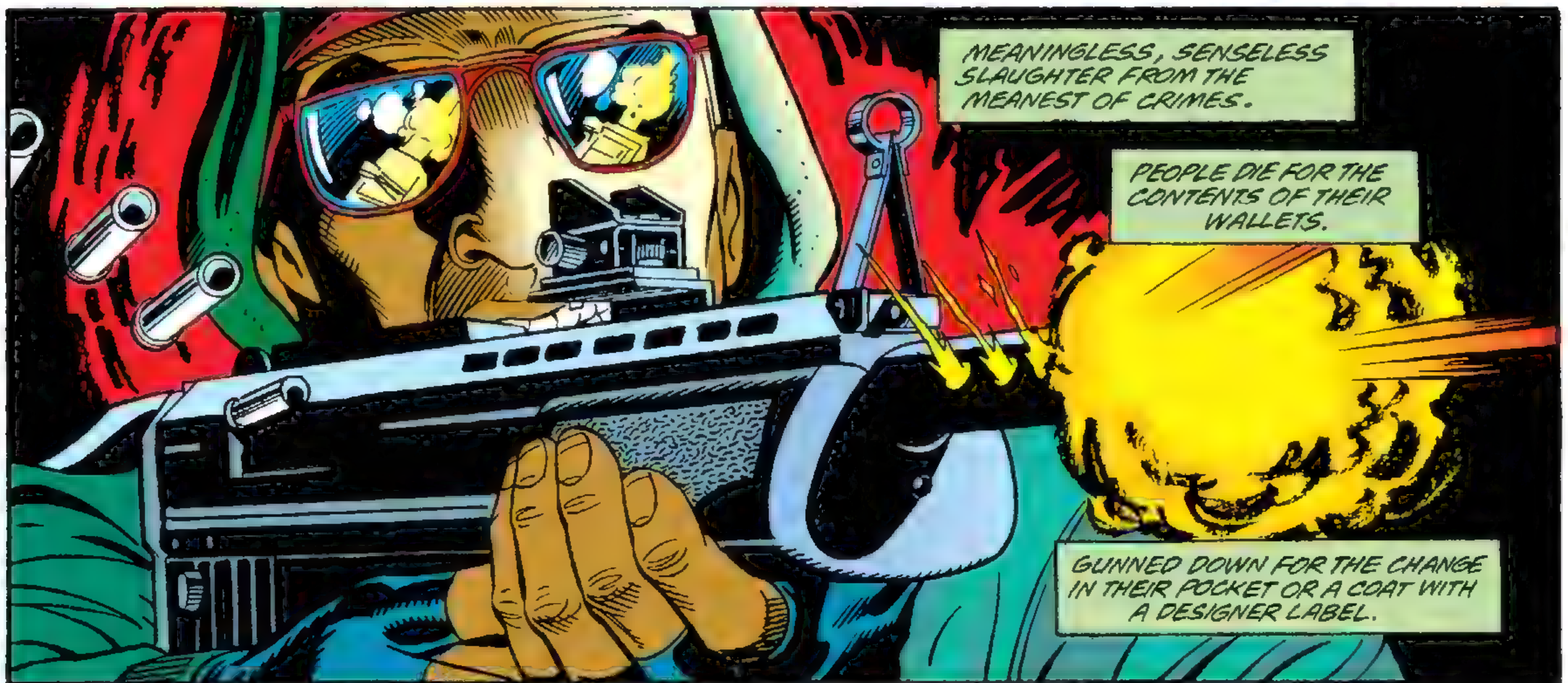
BATMAN created by
 BOB KANE





EACH TIME HE ESCALATES,
THEY MATCH FORCE WITH HIM.

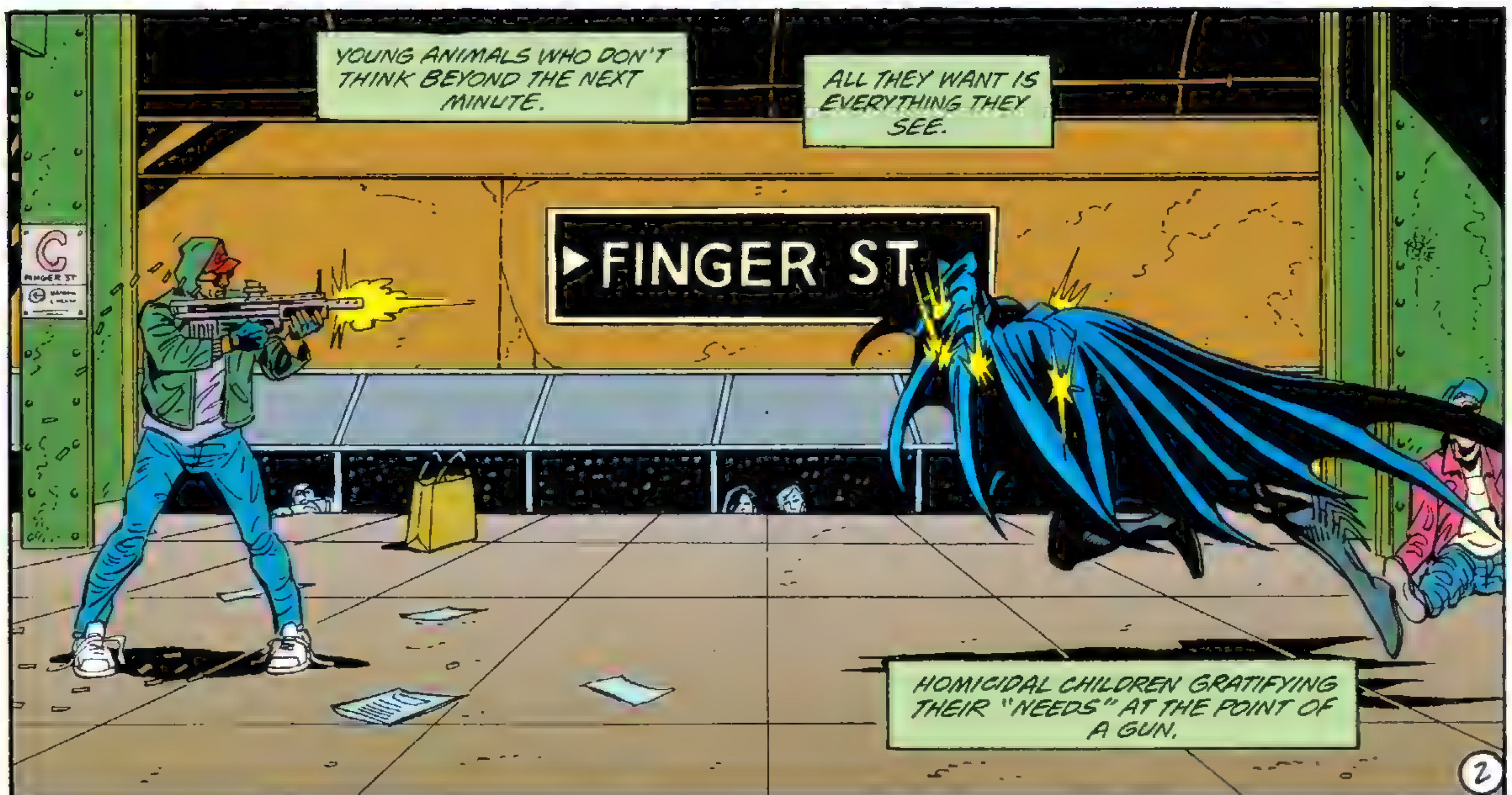
A SIMPLE SUBWAY
SMASH AND GRAB TURNS
INTO A FIREFIGHT.



MEANINGLESS, SENSELESS
SLAUGHTER FROM THE
MEANEST OF CRIMES.

PEOPLE DIE FOR THE
CONTENTS OF THEIR
WALLETS.

GUNNED DOWN FOR THE CHANGE
IN THEIR POCKET OR A COAT WITH
A DESIGNER LABEL.

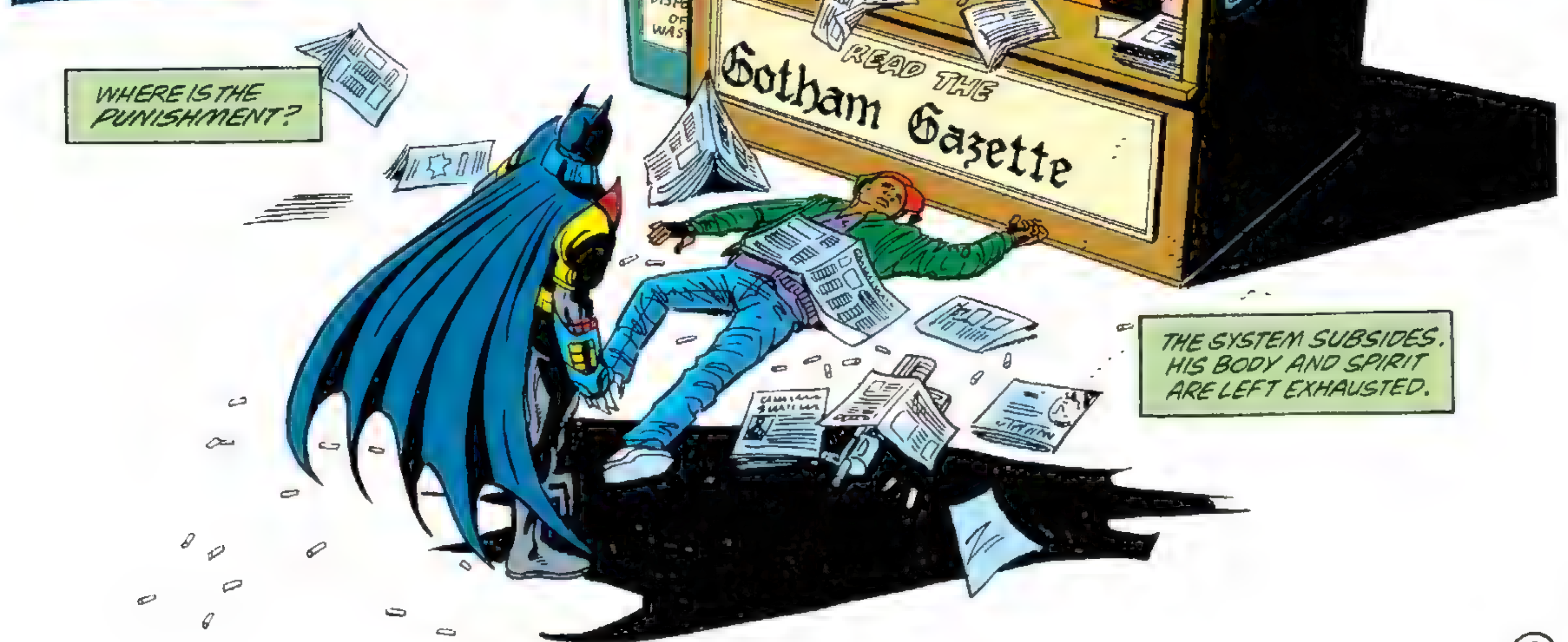
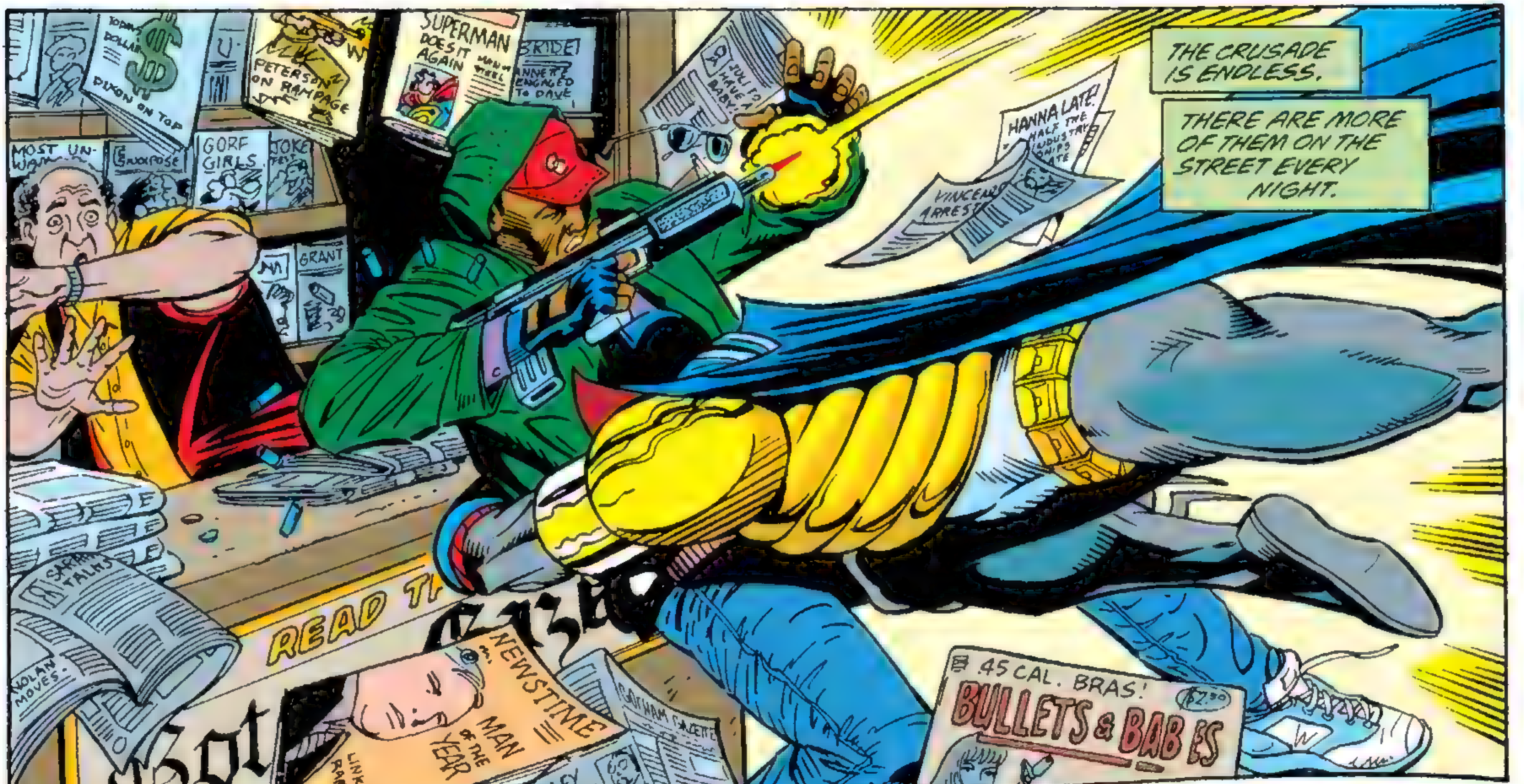


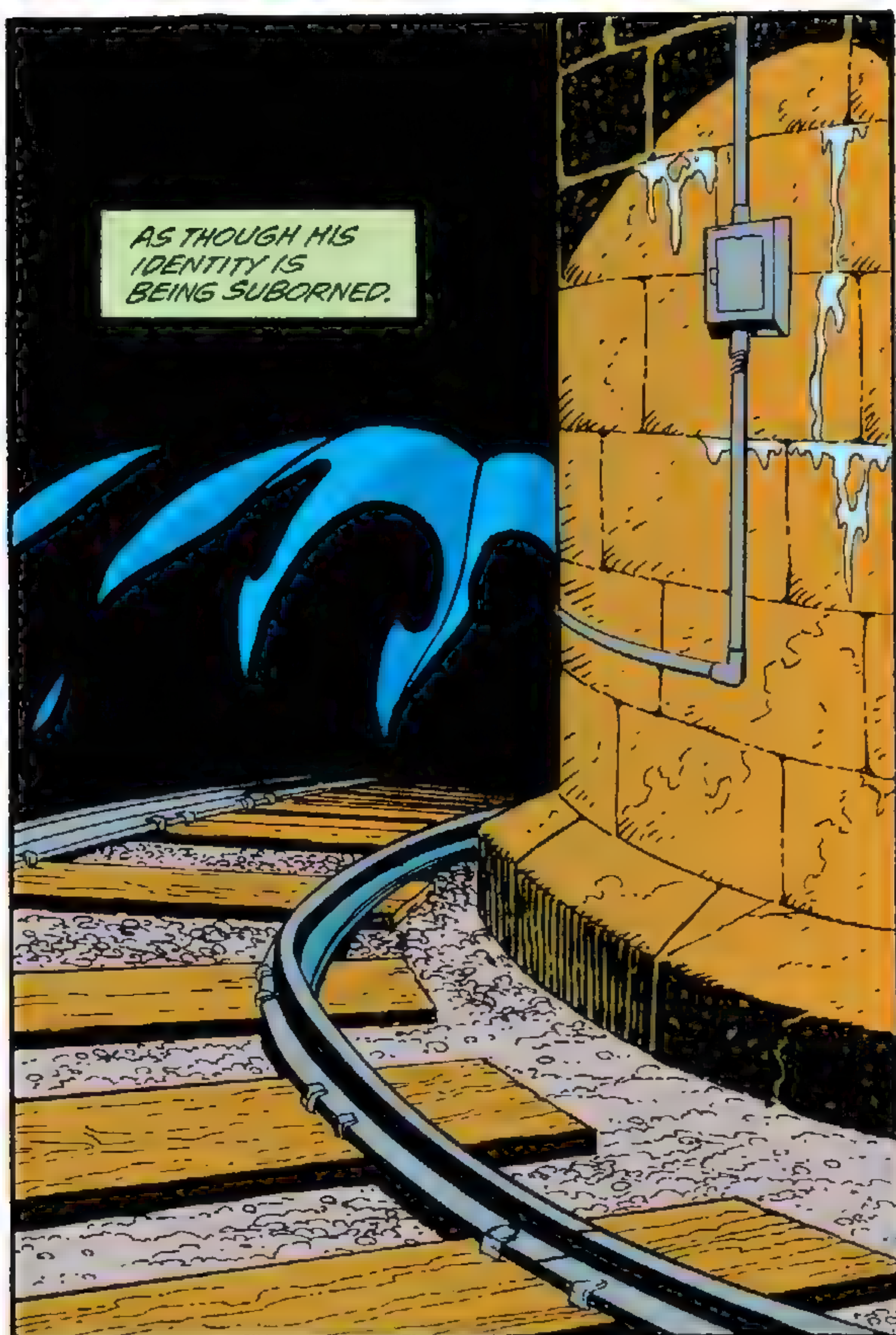
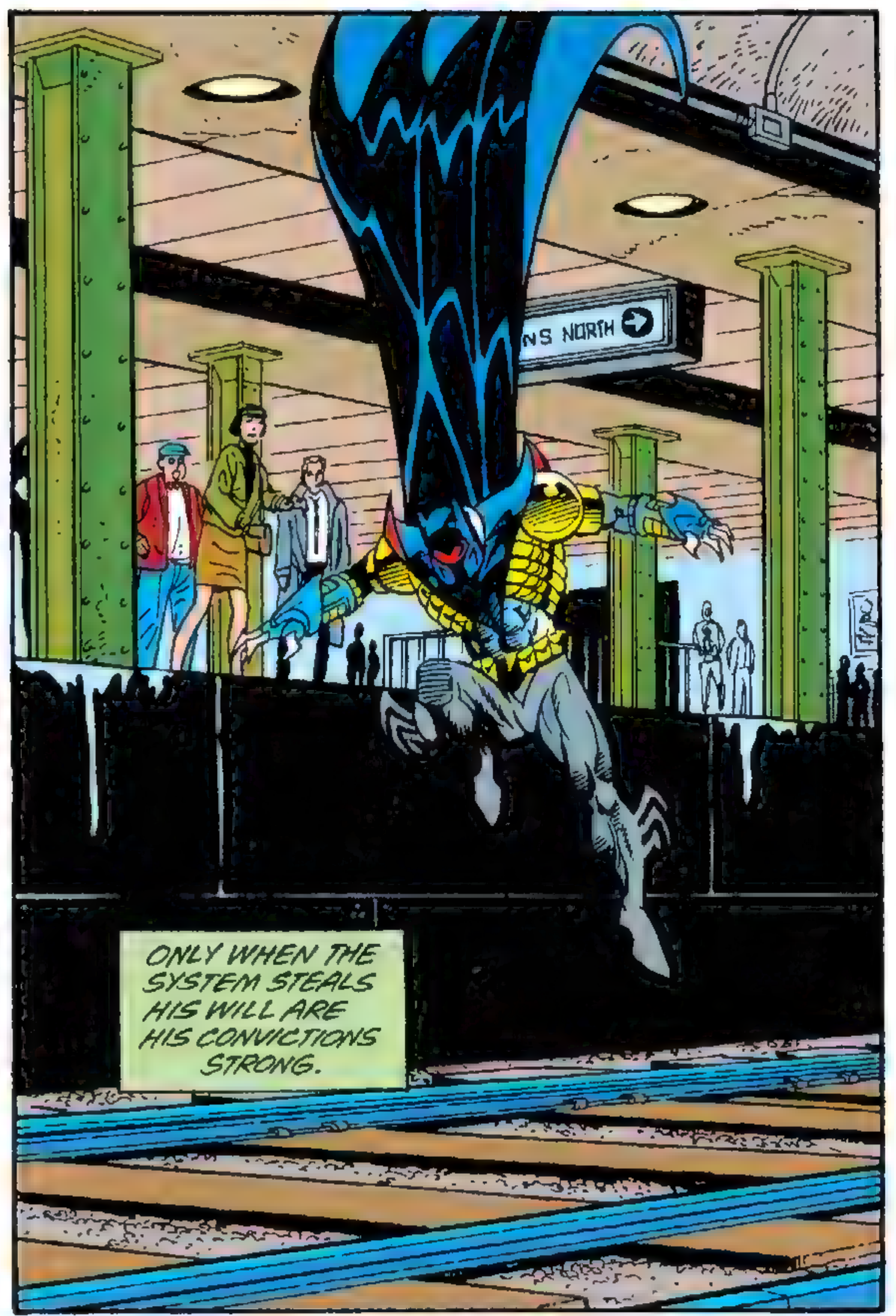
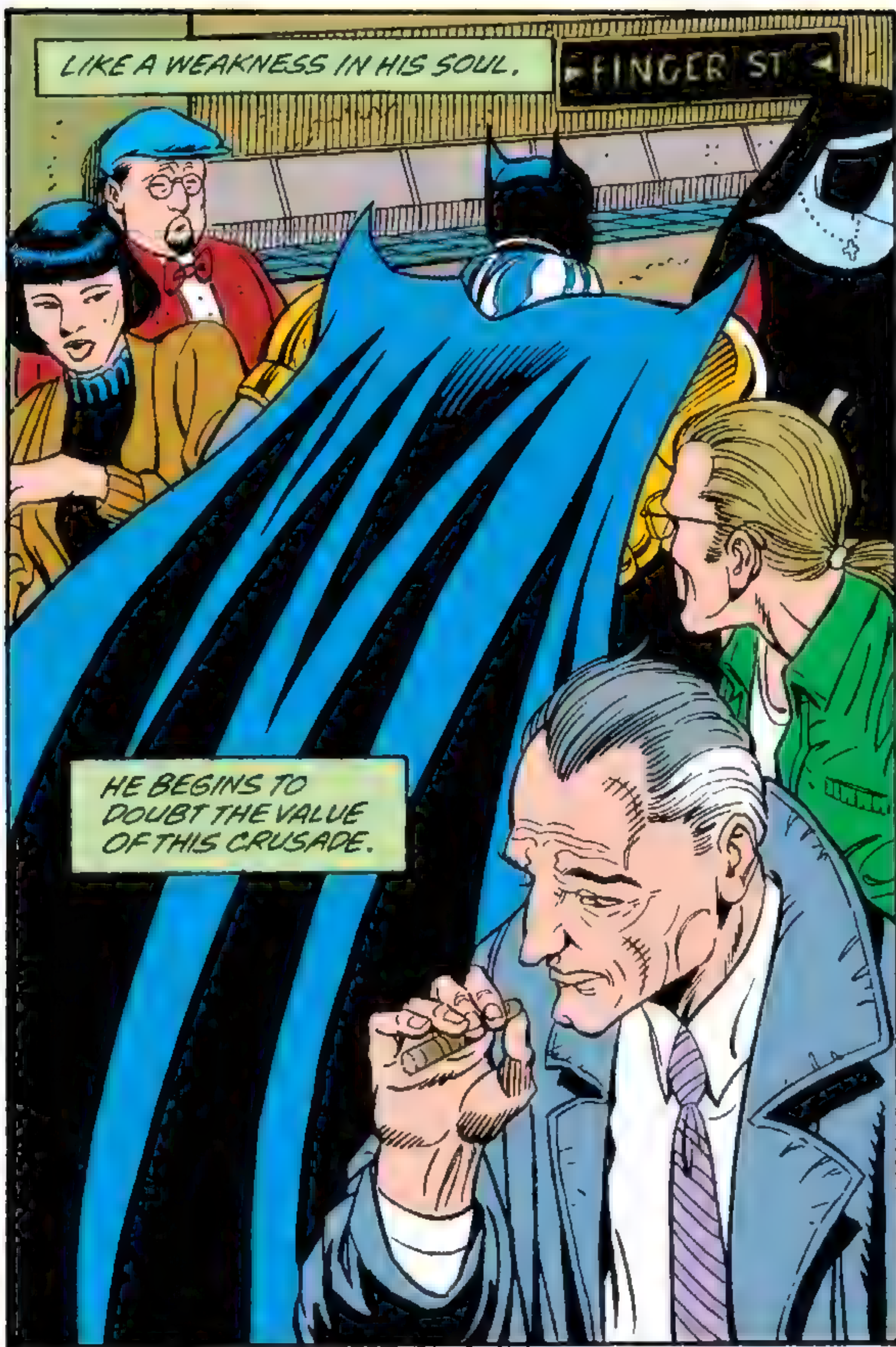
YOUNG ANIMALS WHO DON'T
THINK BEYOND THE NEXT
MINUTE.

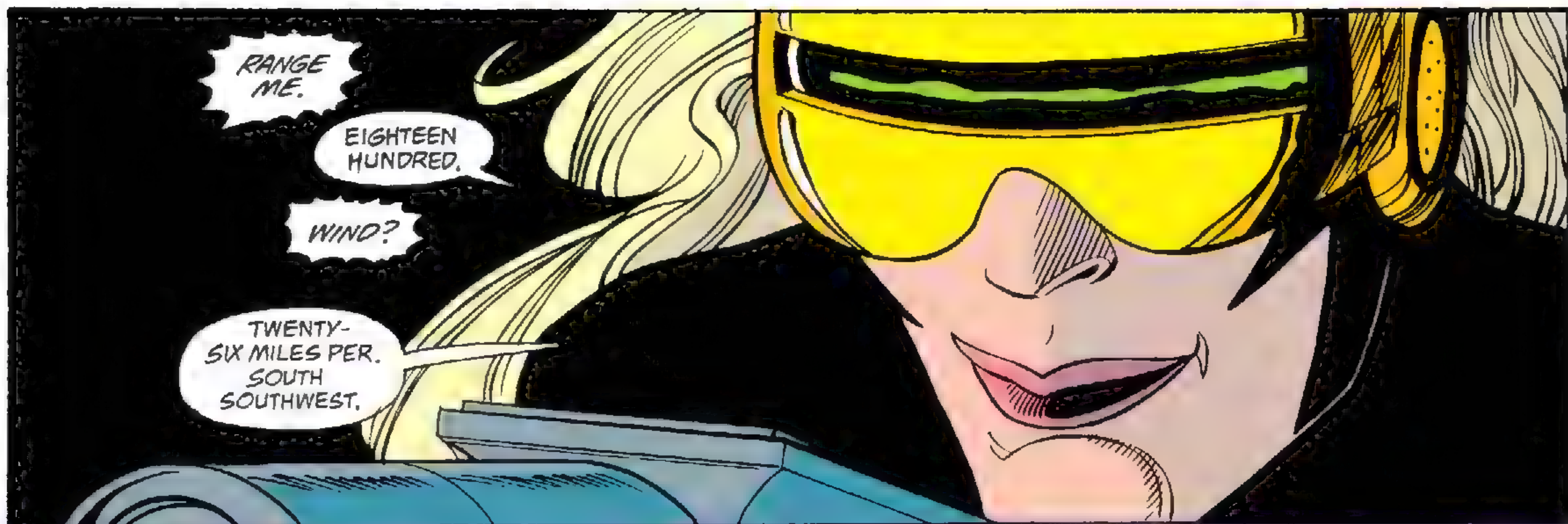
ALL THEY WANT IS
EVERYTHING THEY
SEE.

► FINGER ST

HOMICIDAL CHILDREN GRATIFYING
THEIR "NEEDS" AT THE POINT OF
A GUN.







RANGE
ME.

EIGHTEEN
HUNDRED.

WIND?

TWENTY-
SIX MILES PER.
SOUTH
SOUTHWEST.



TEMP?

FIFTY-
TWO DEGREES.
STEADY.

HUMIDITY.

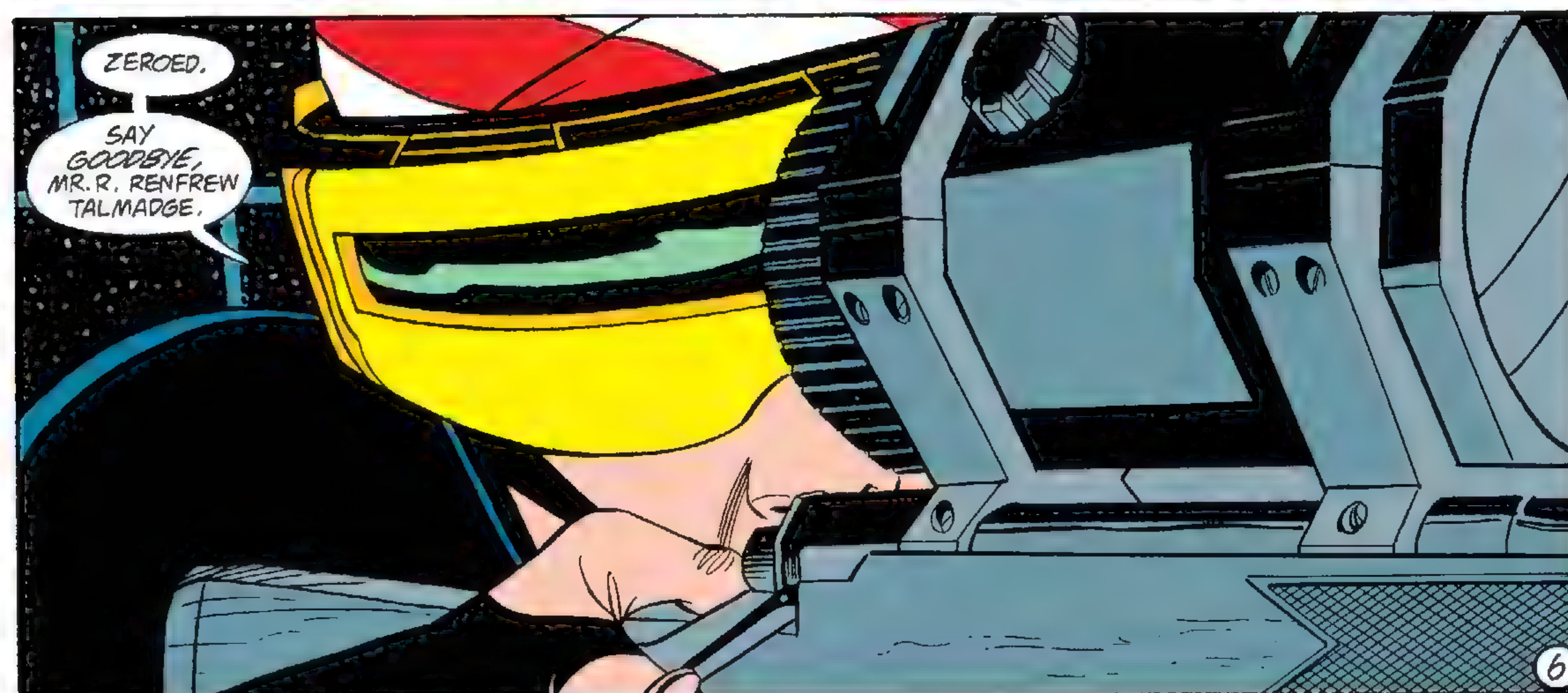
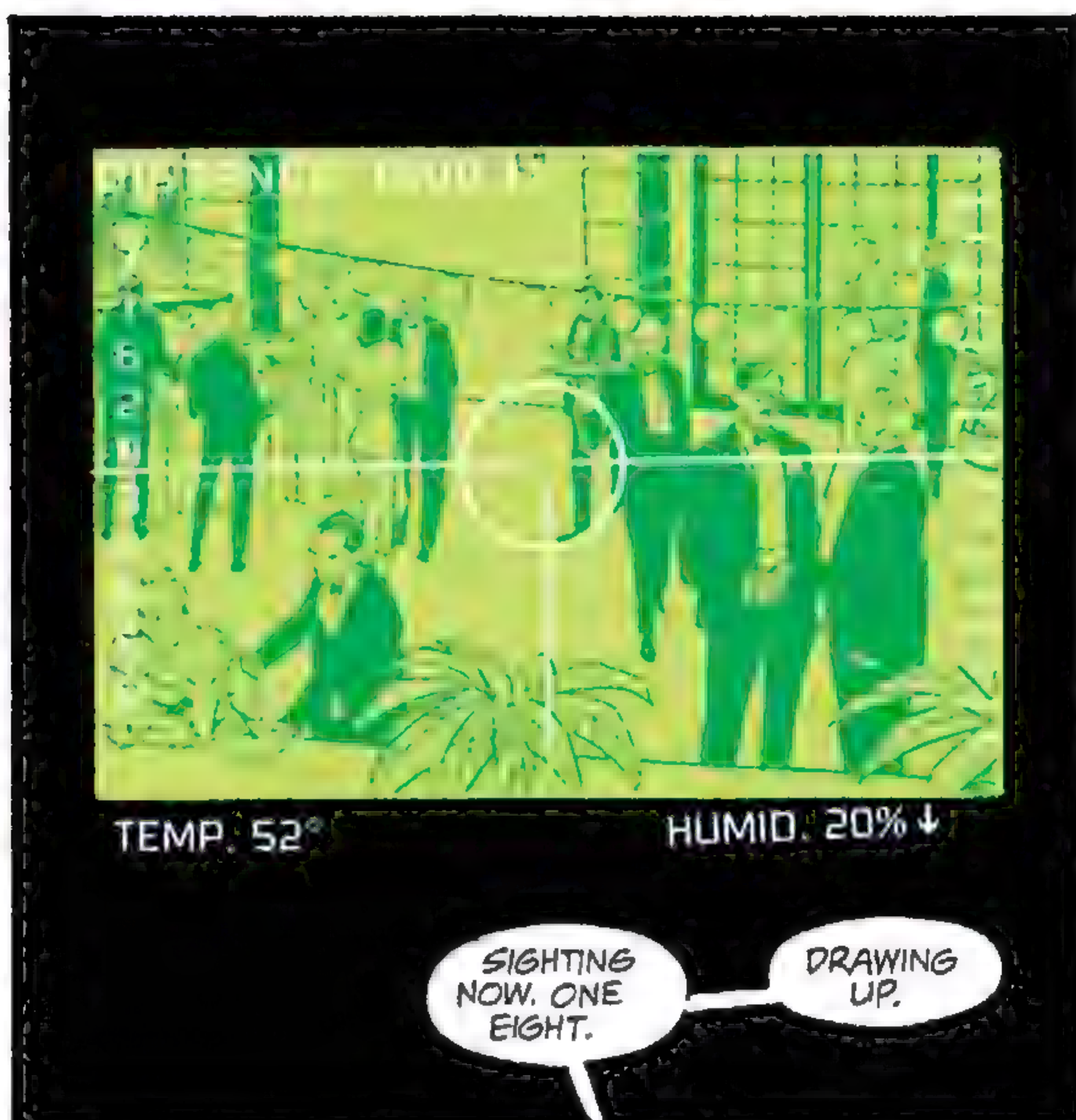
TWENTY
PERCENT,
FALLING.

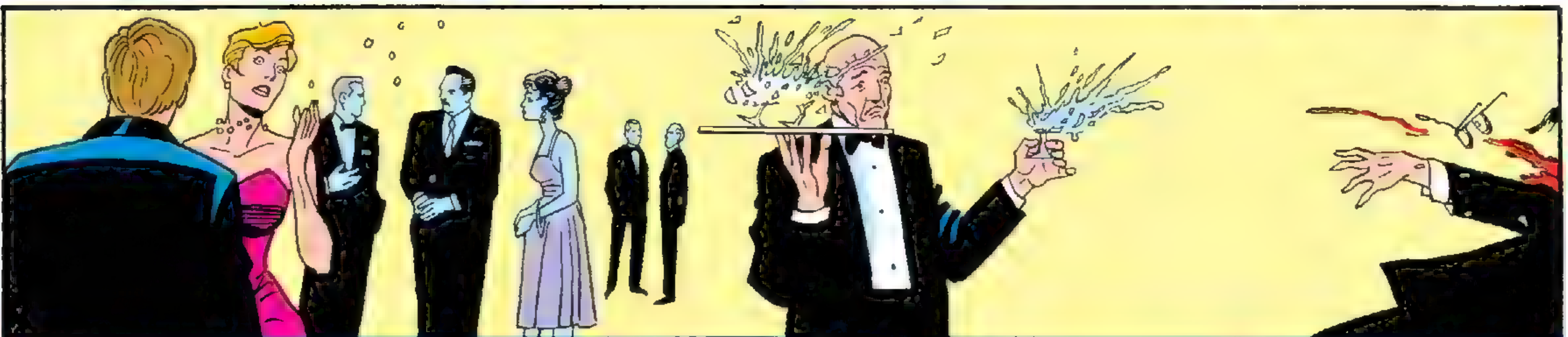
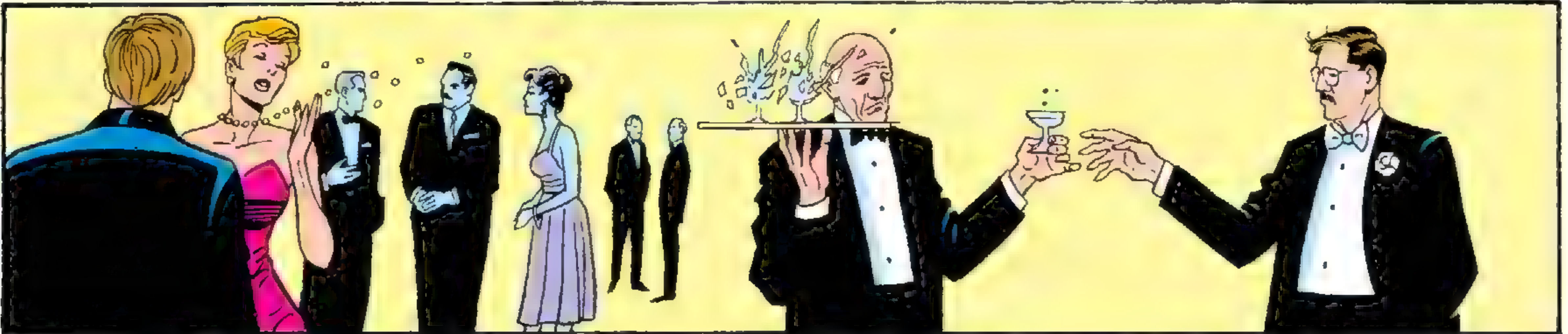
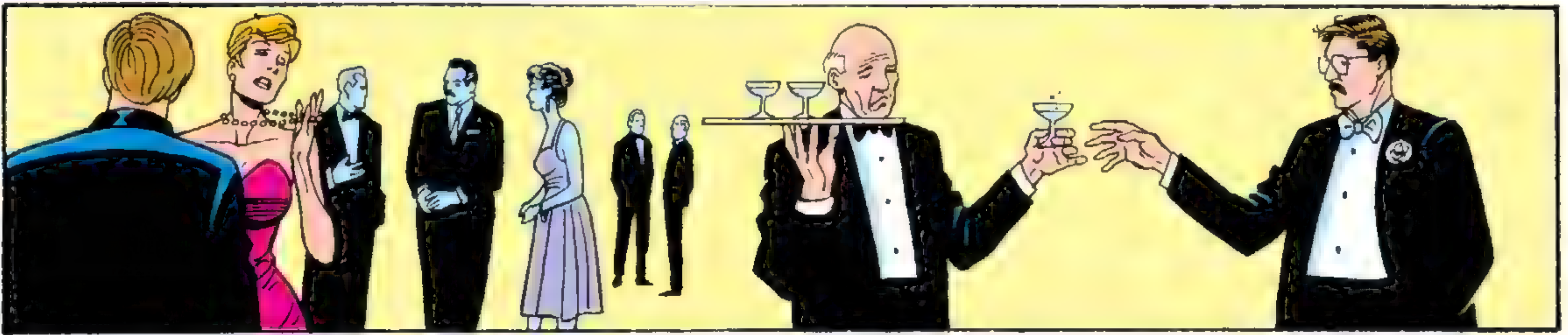
AND A BEAUTIFUL
FULL MOON. A SNIPER'S
MOON, GUNHAWK.

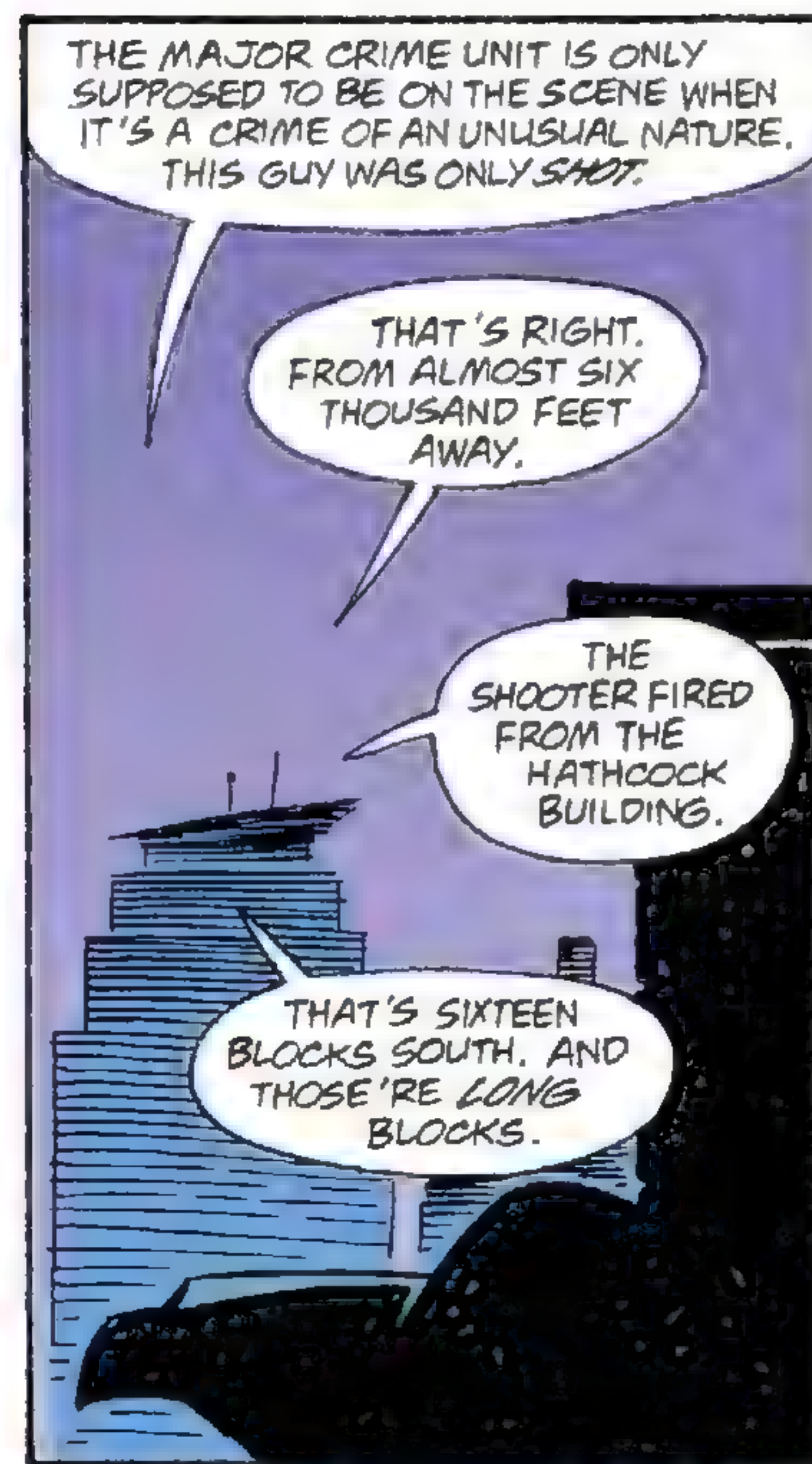
CAN THE
CHATTER,
BUNNY.

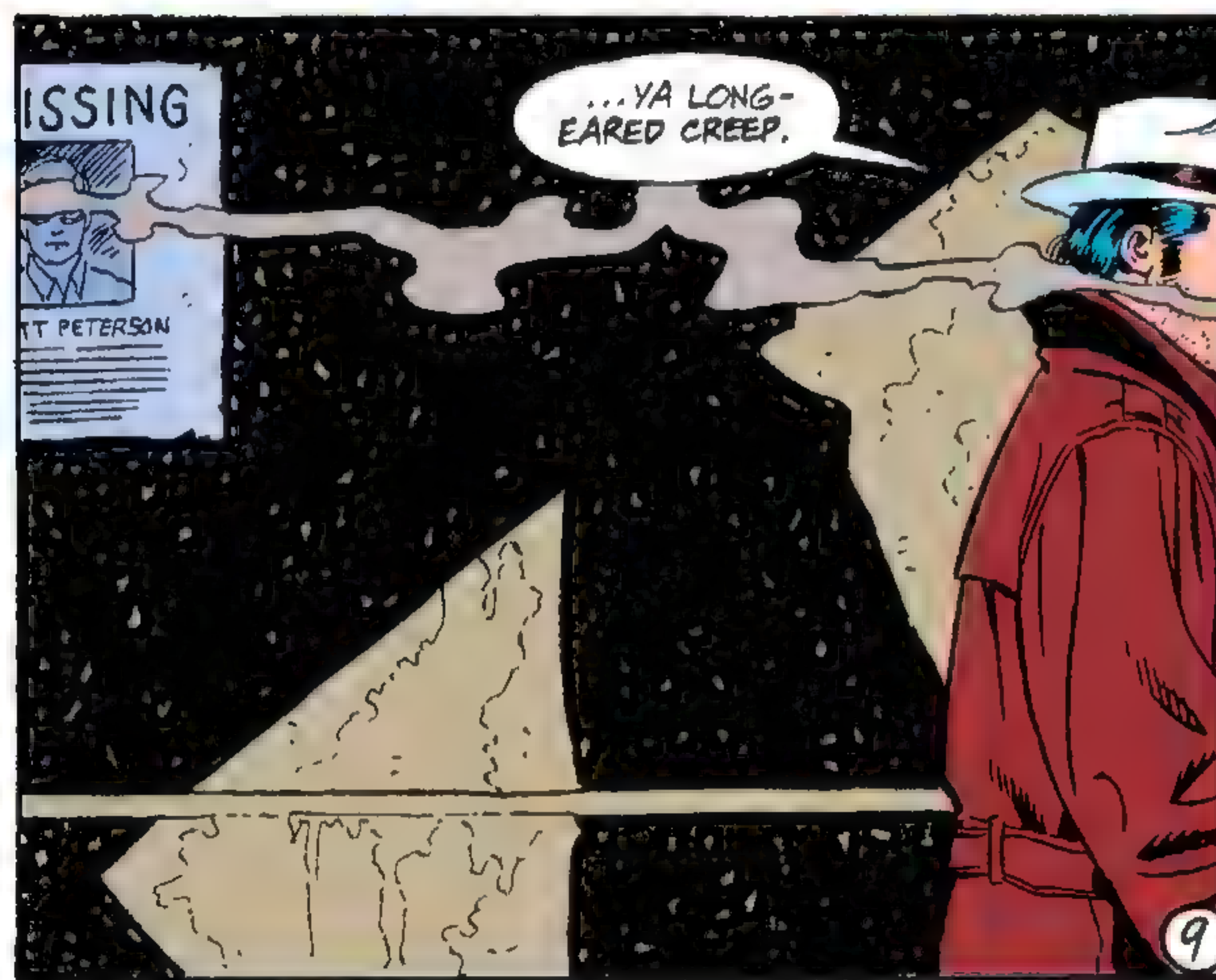
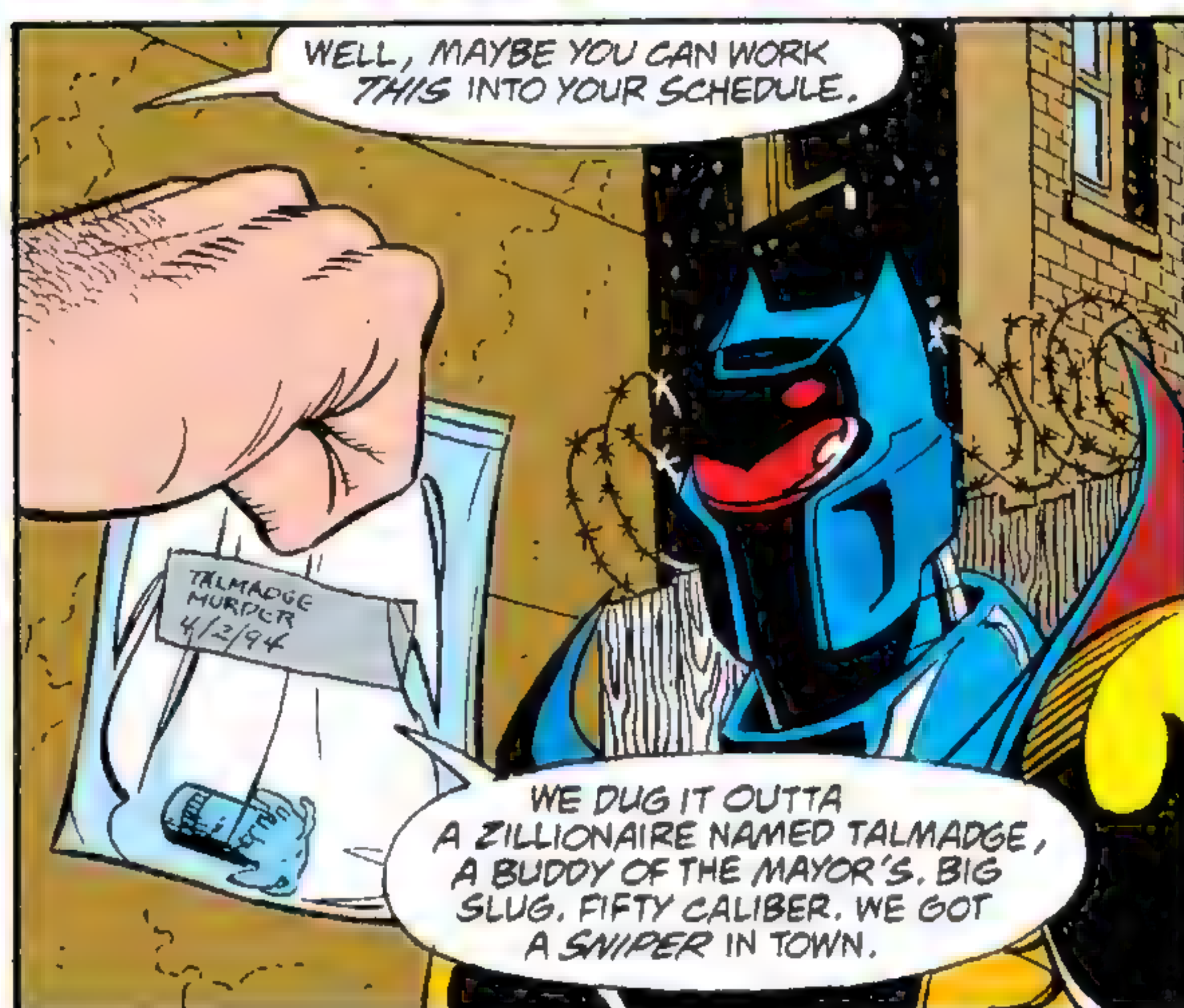
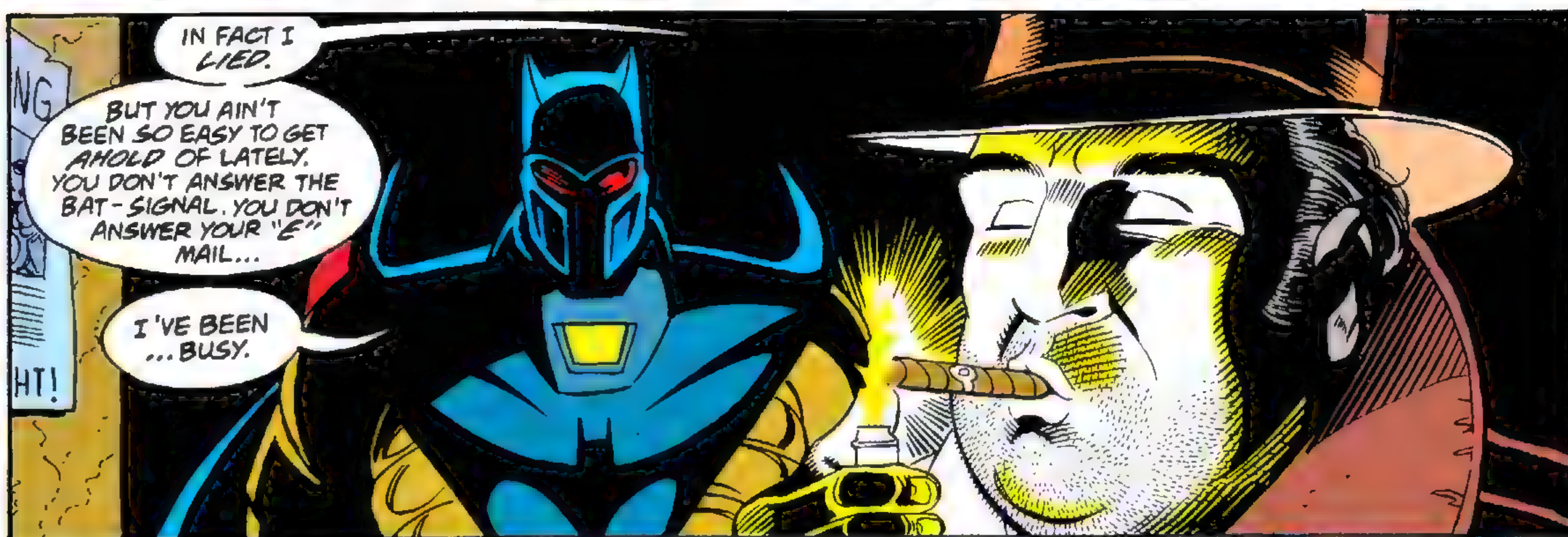
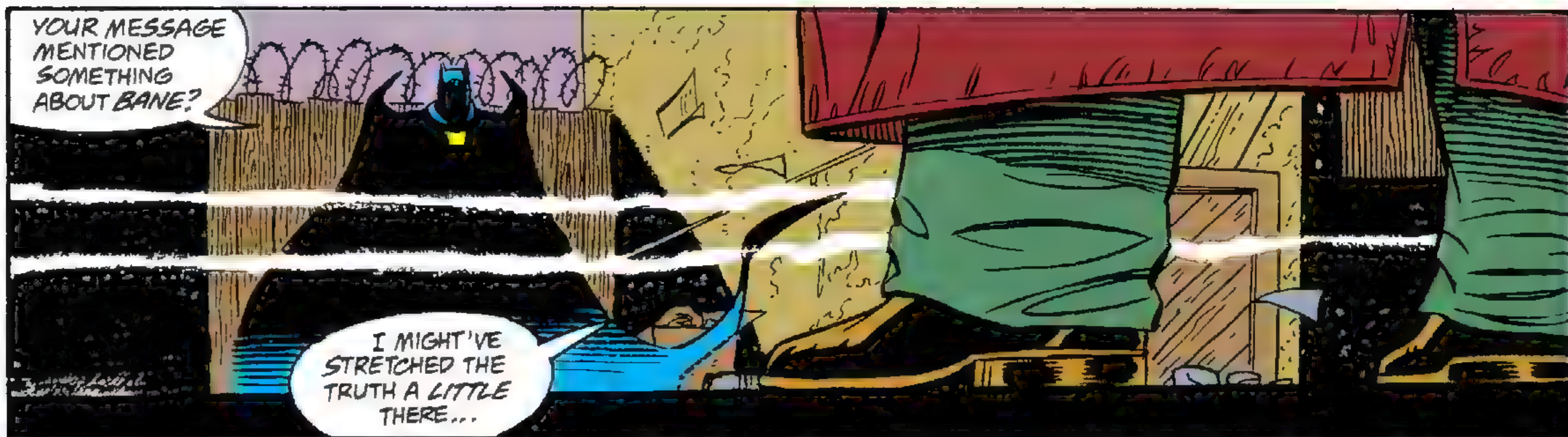
YOU
SIGHTED?

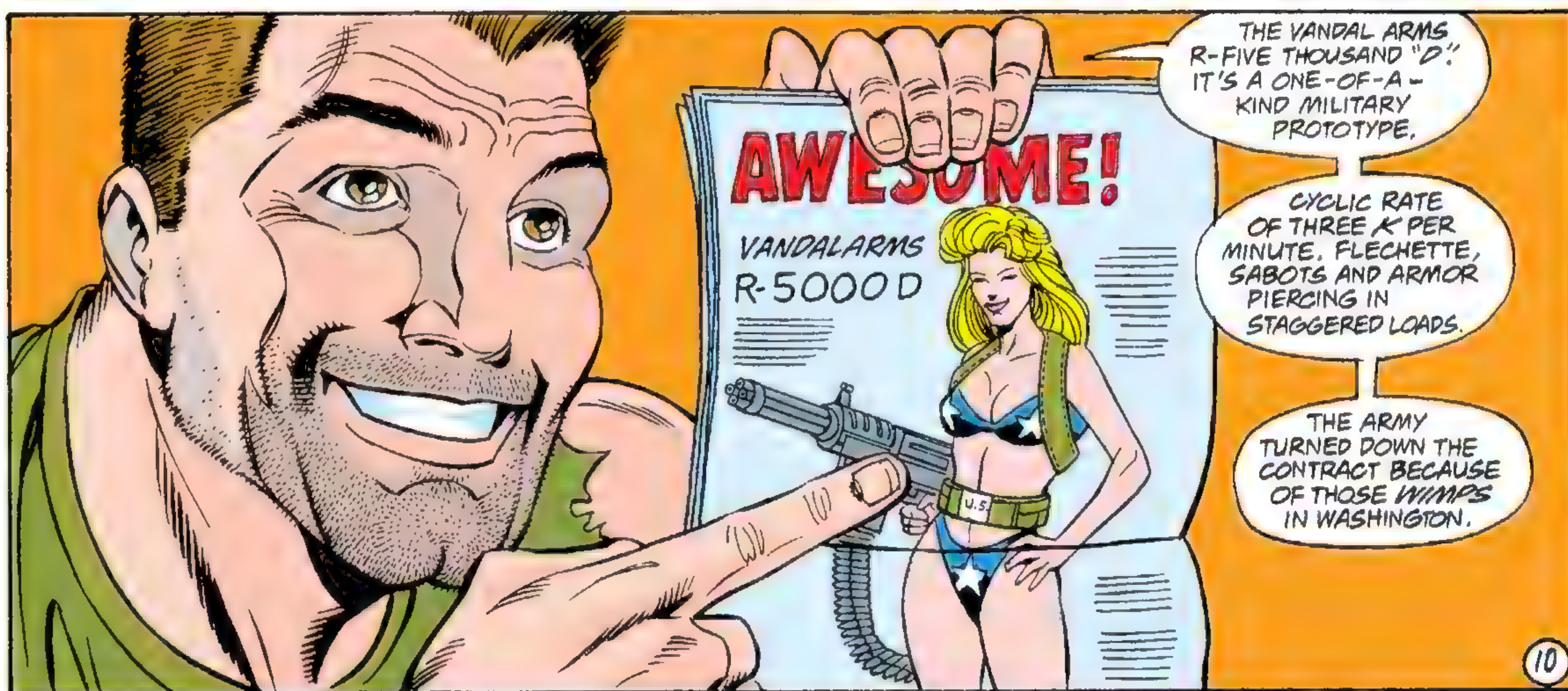
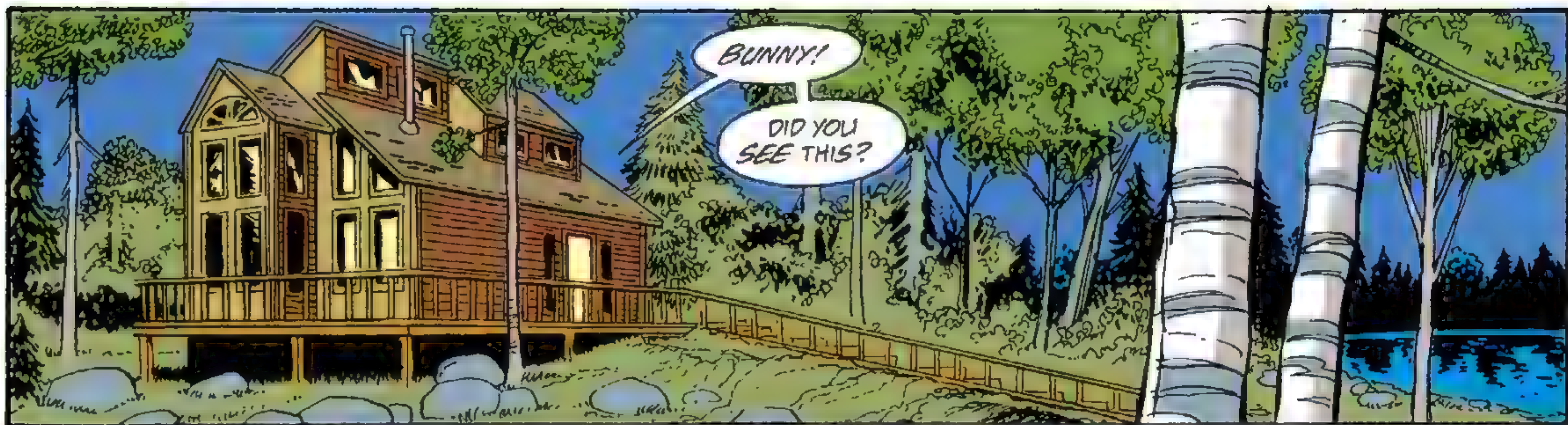
5

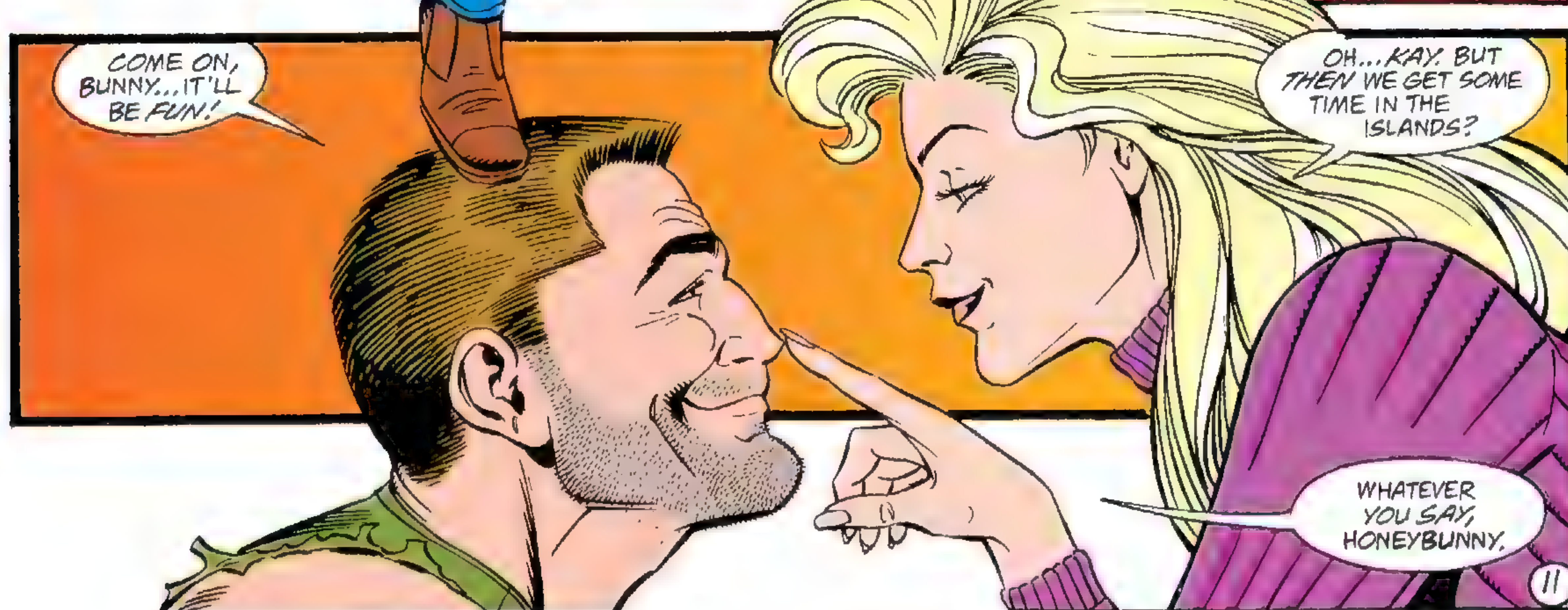
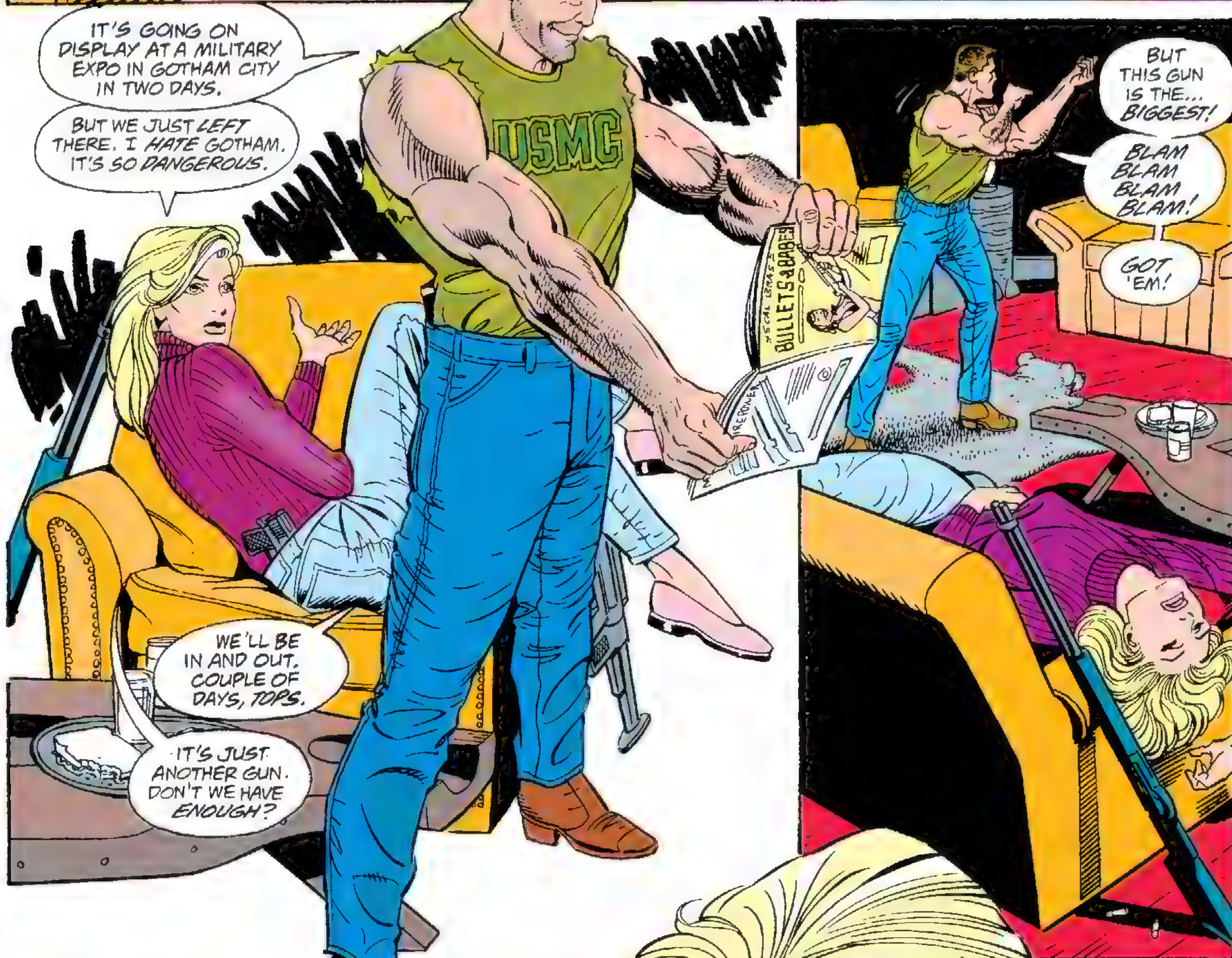
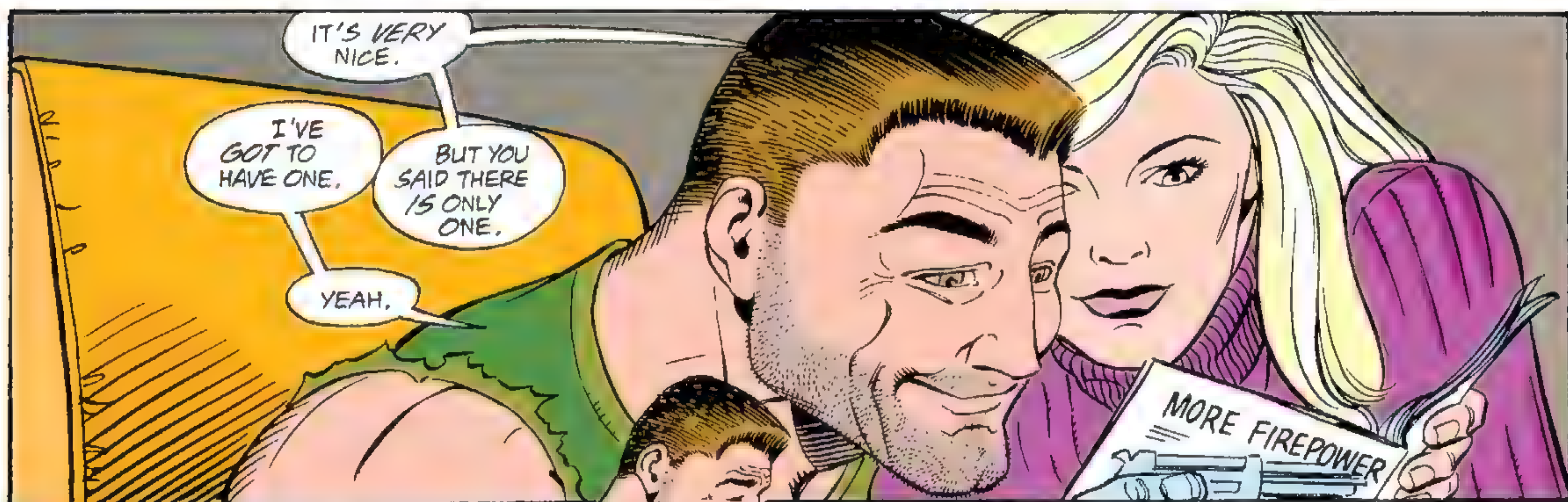


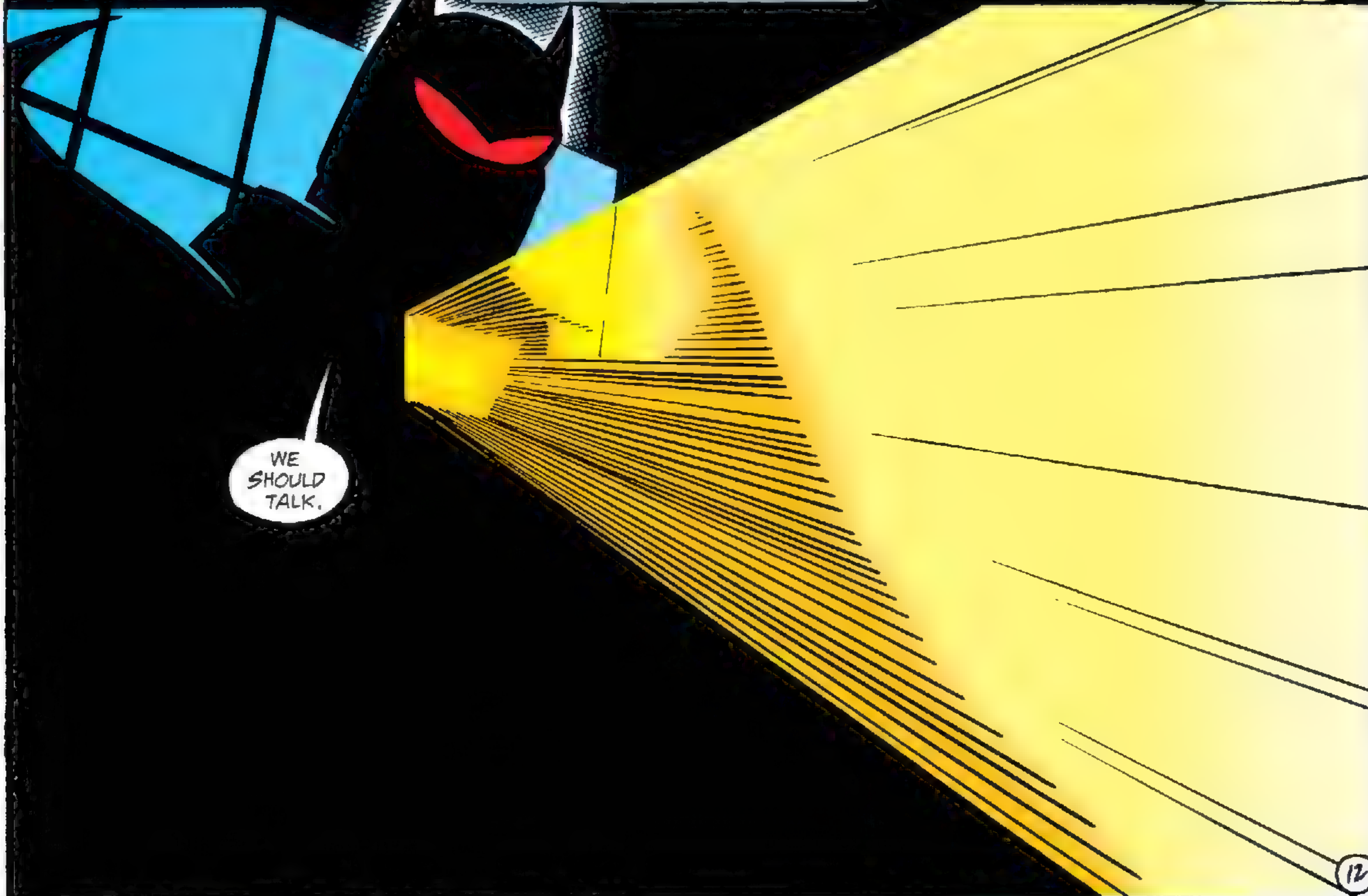
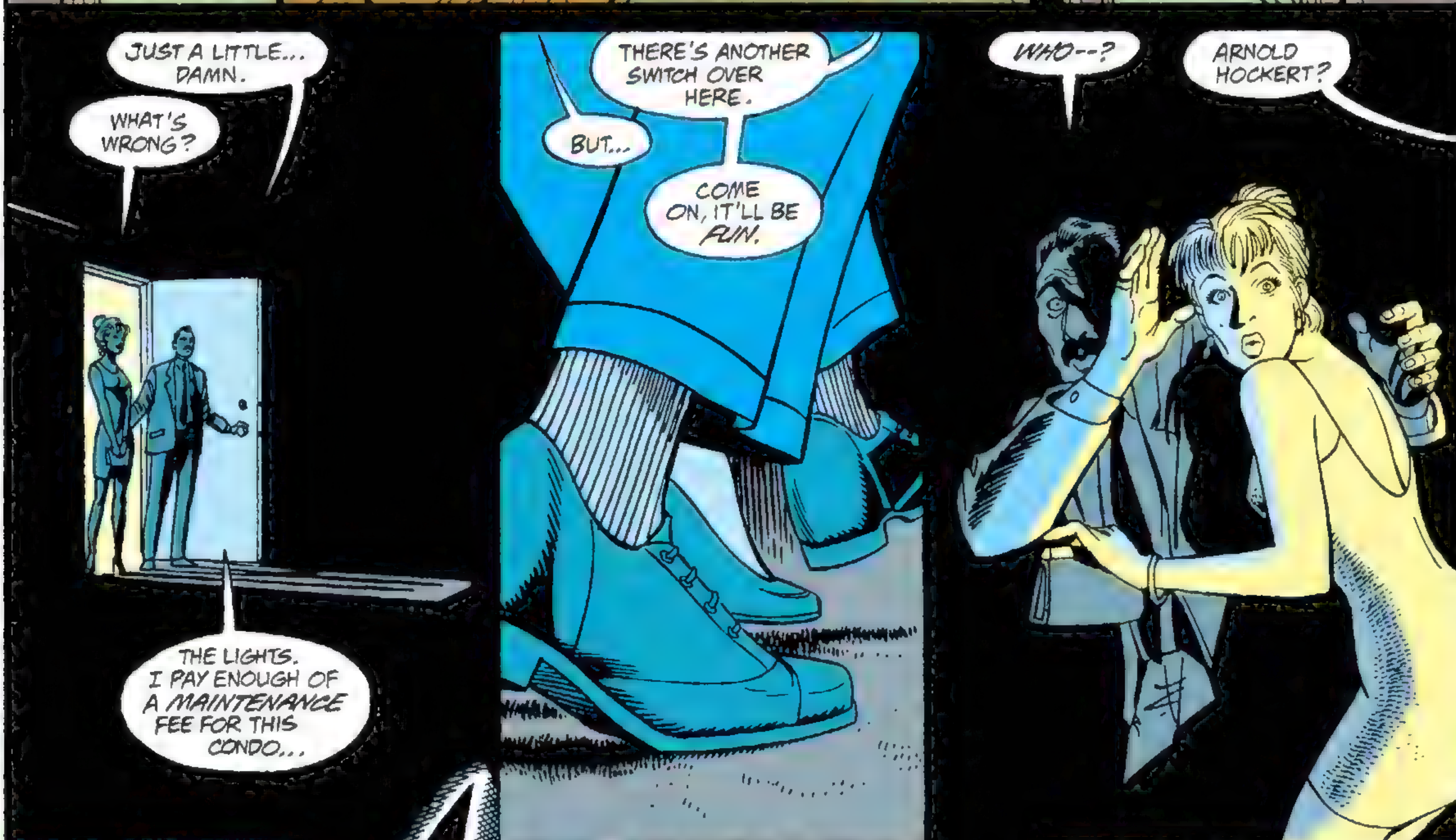
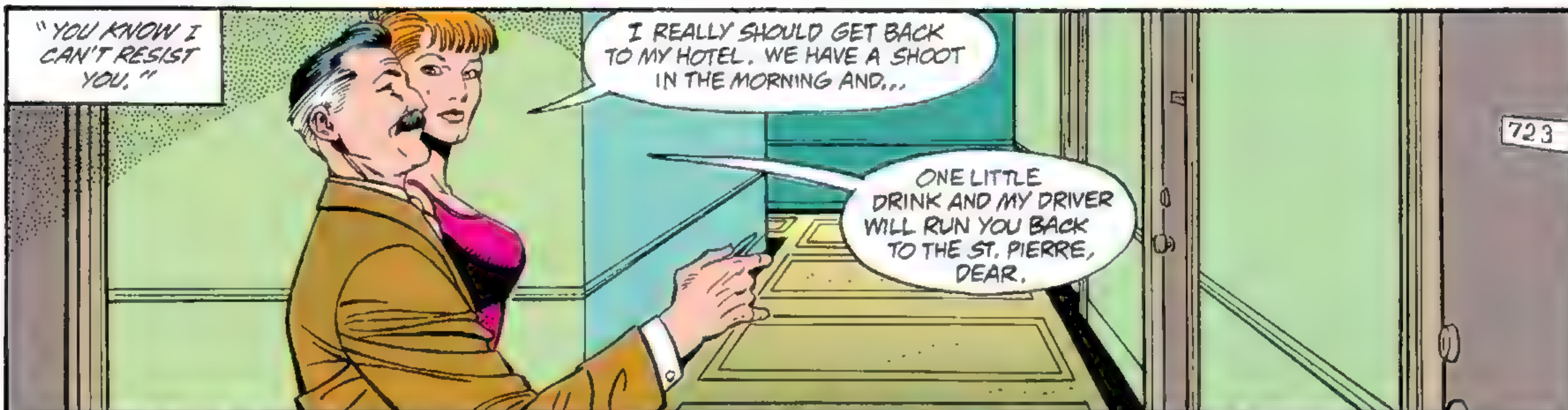




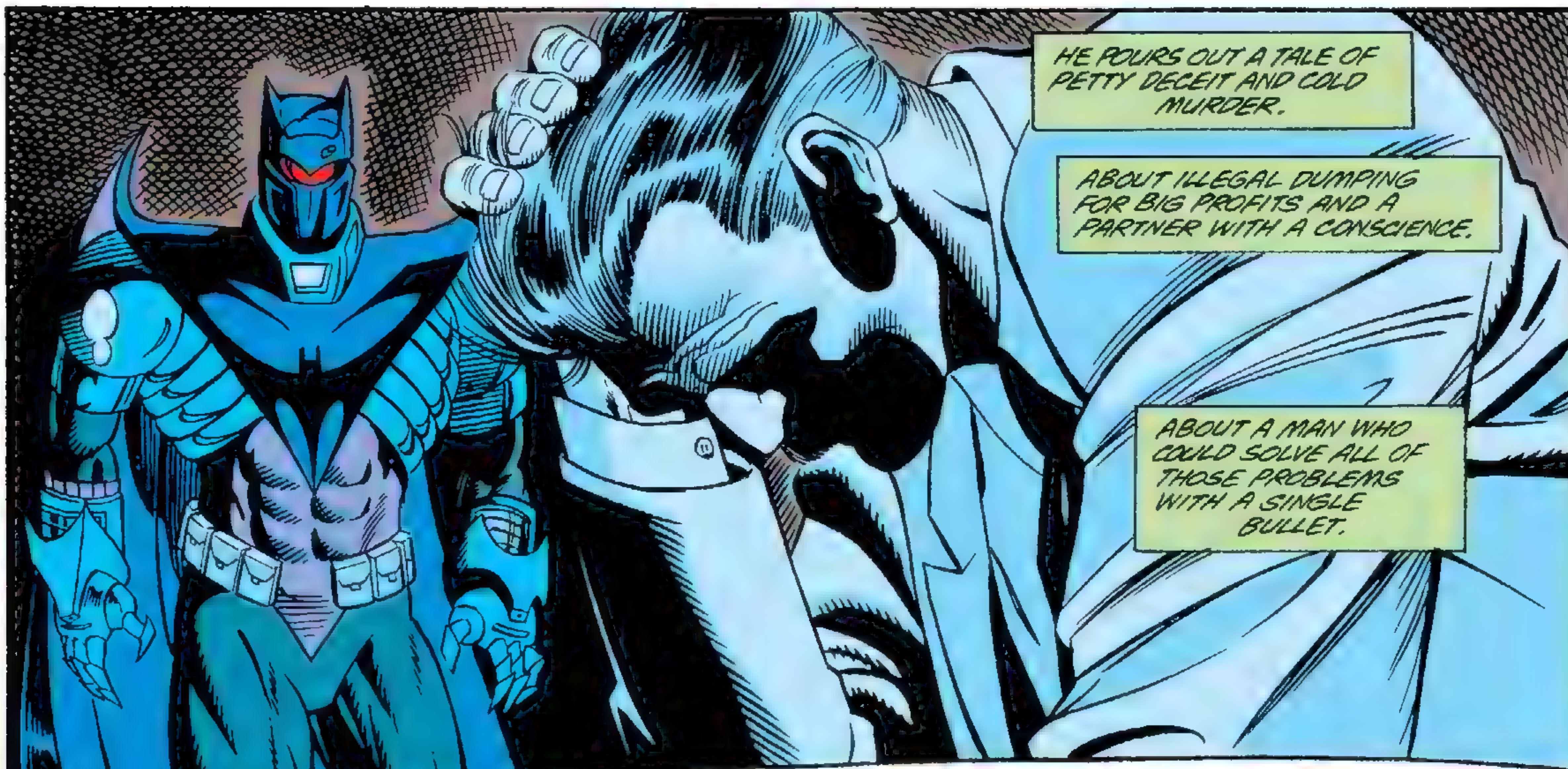








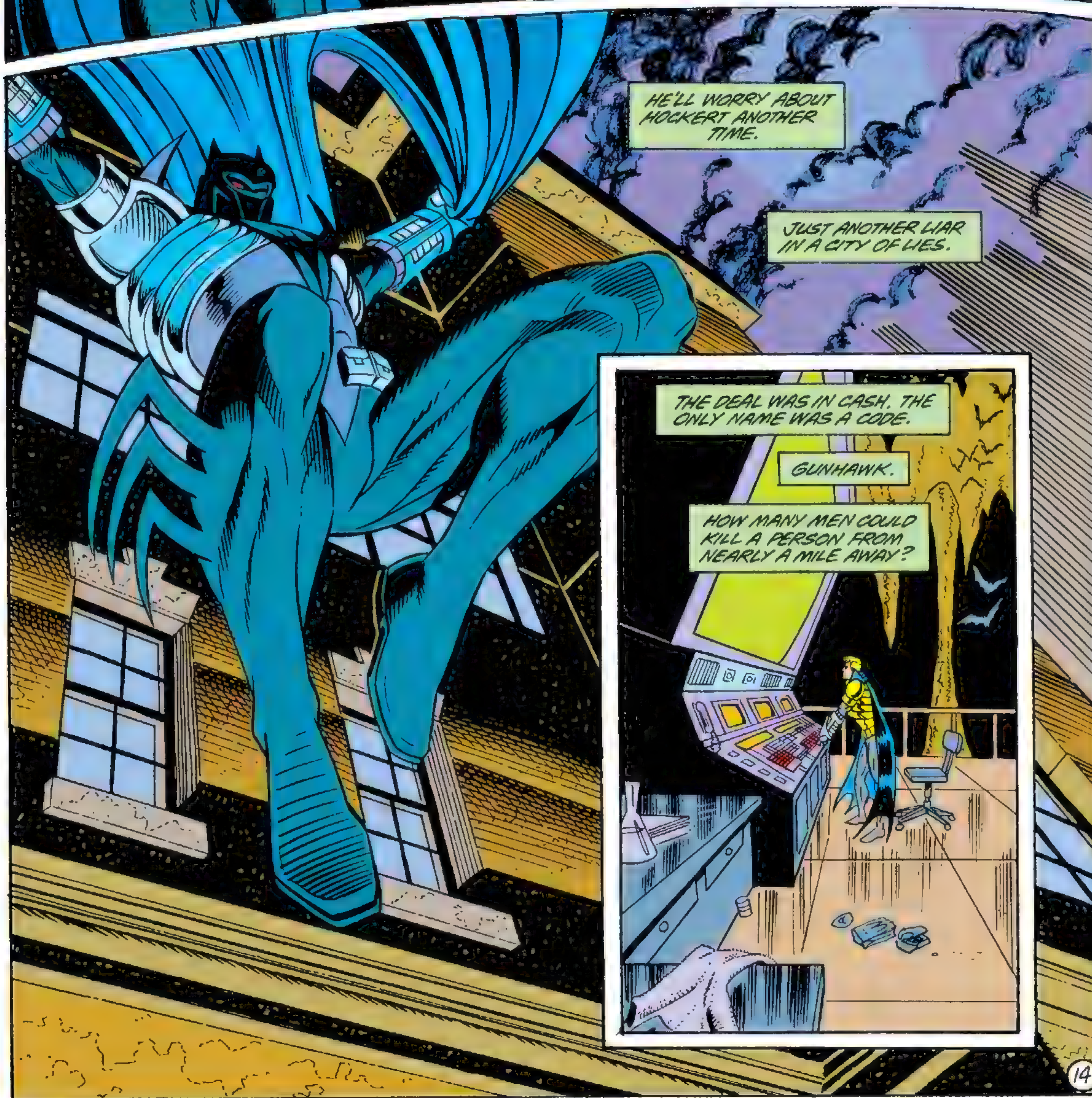




HE POURS OUT A TALE OF
PETTY DECEIT AND COLD
MURDER.

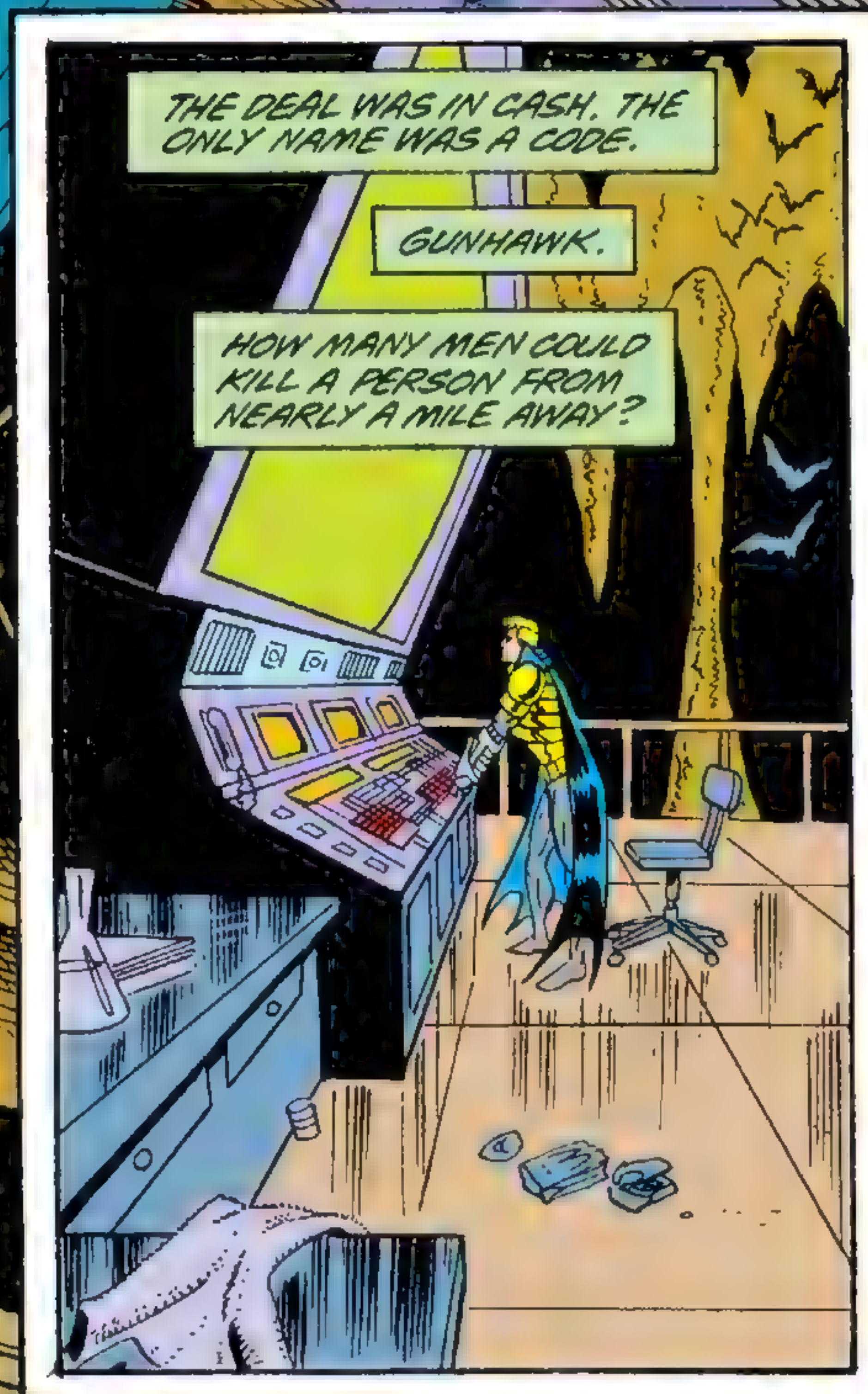
ABOUT ILLEGAL DUMPING
FOR BIG PROFITS AND A
PARTNER WITH A CONSCIENCE.

ABOUT A MAN WHO
COULD SOLVE ALL OF
THOSE PROBLEMS
WITH A SINGLE
BULLET.



HE'LL WORRY ABOUT
HOCKERT ANOTHER
TIME.

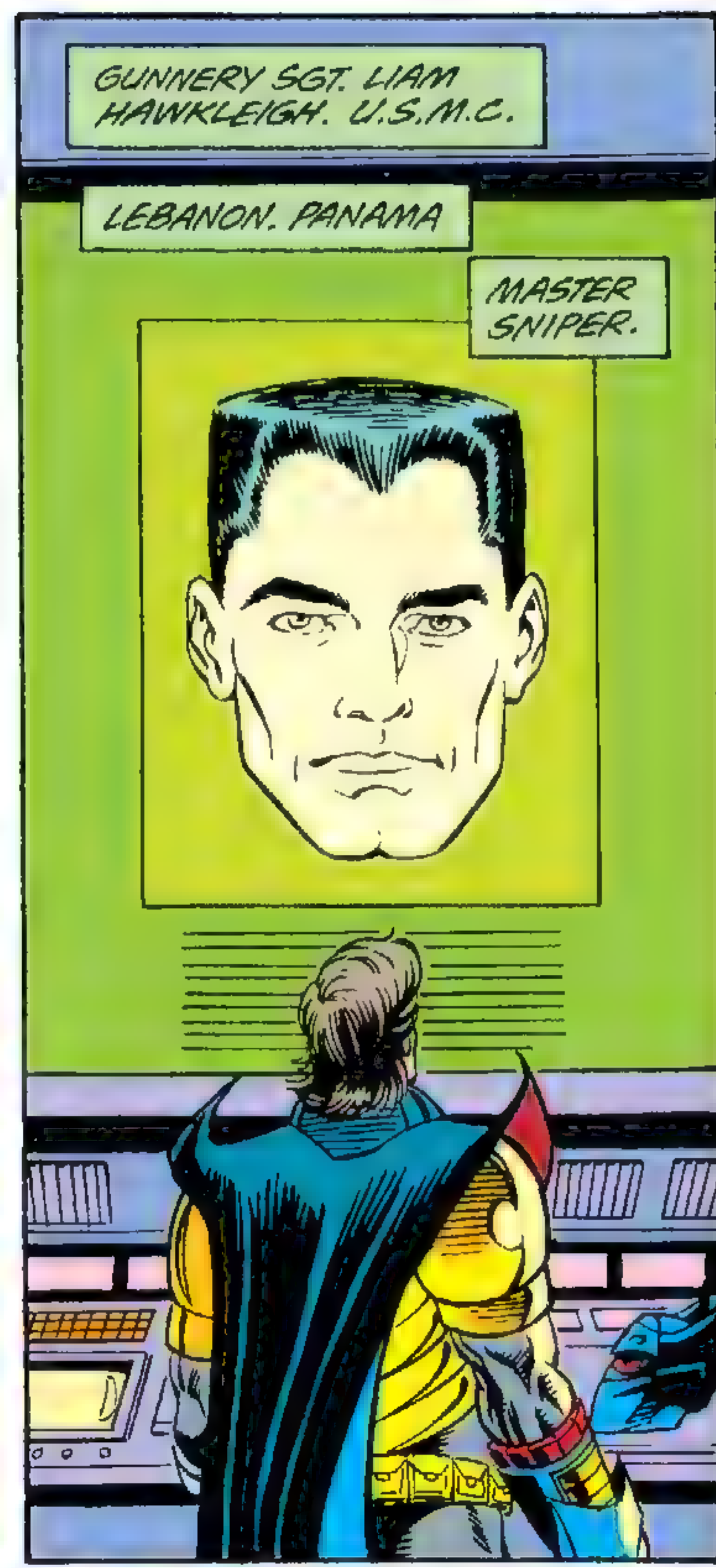
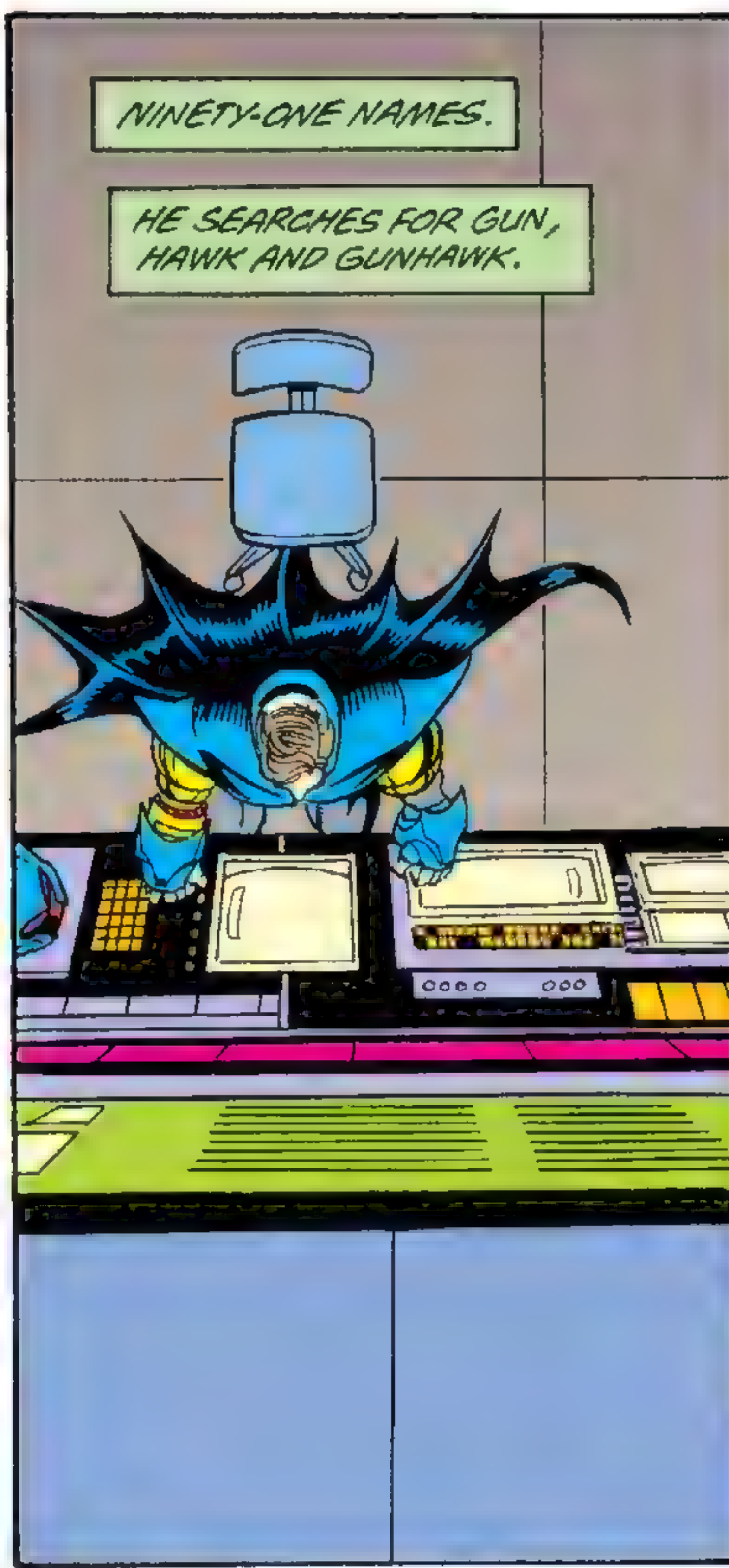
JUST ANOTHER WAR
IN A CITY OF LIES.

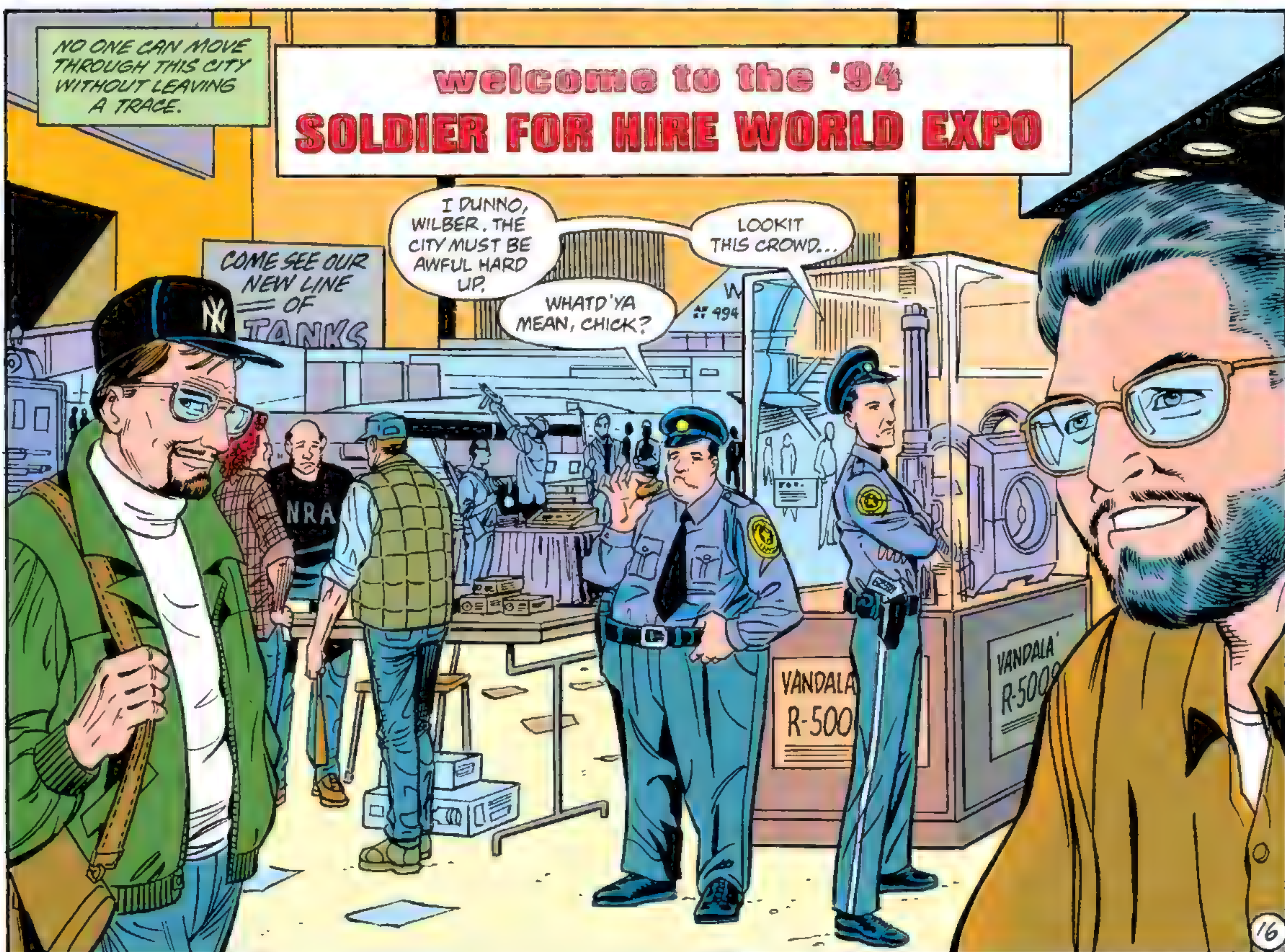


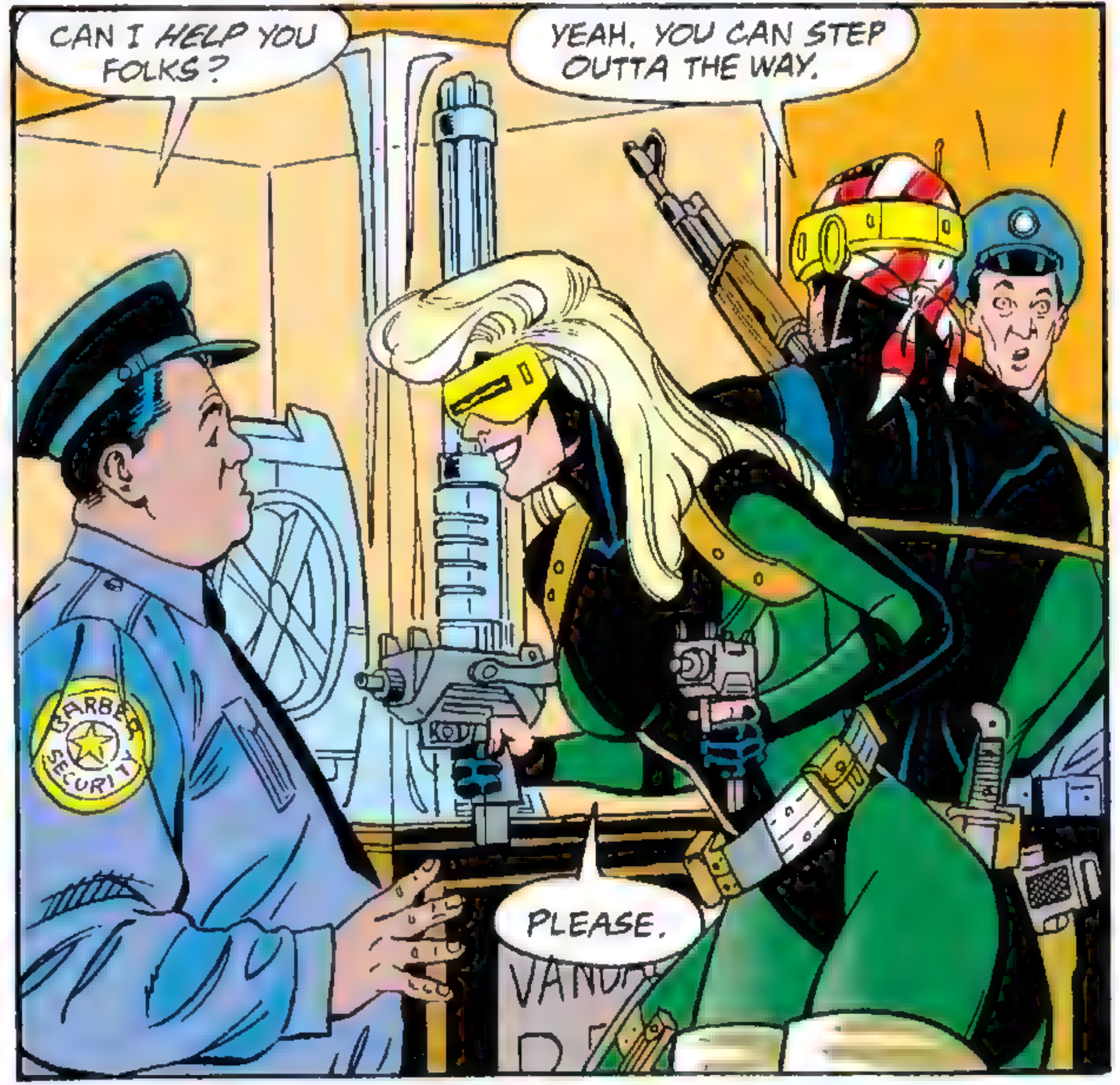
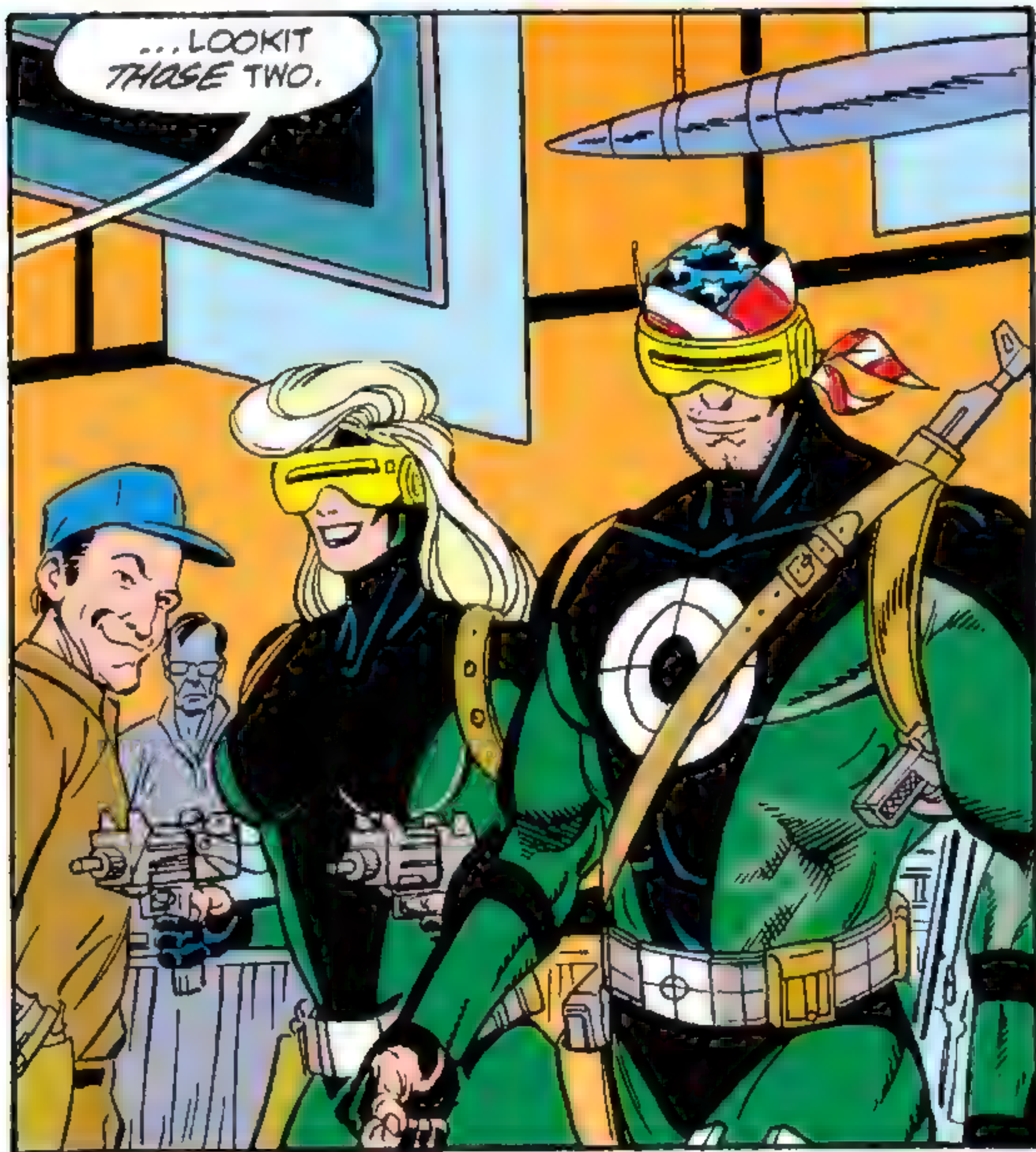
THE DEAL WAS IN CASH. THE
ONLY NAME WAS A CODE.

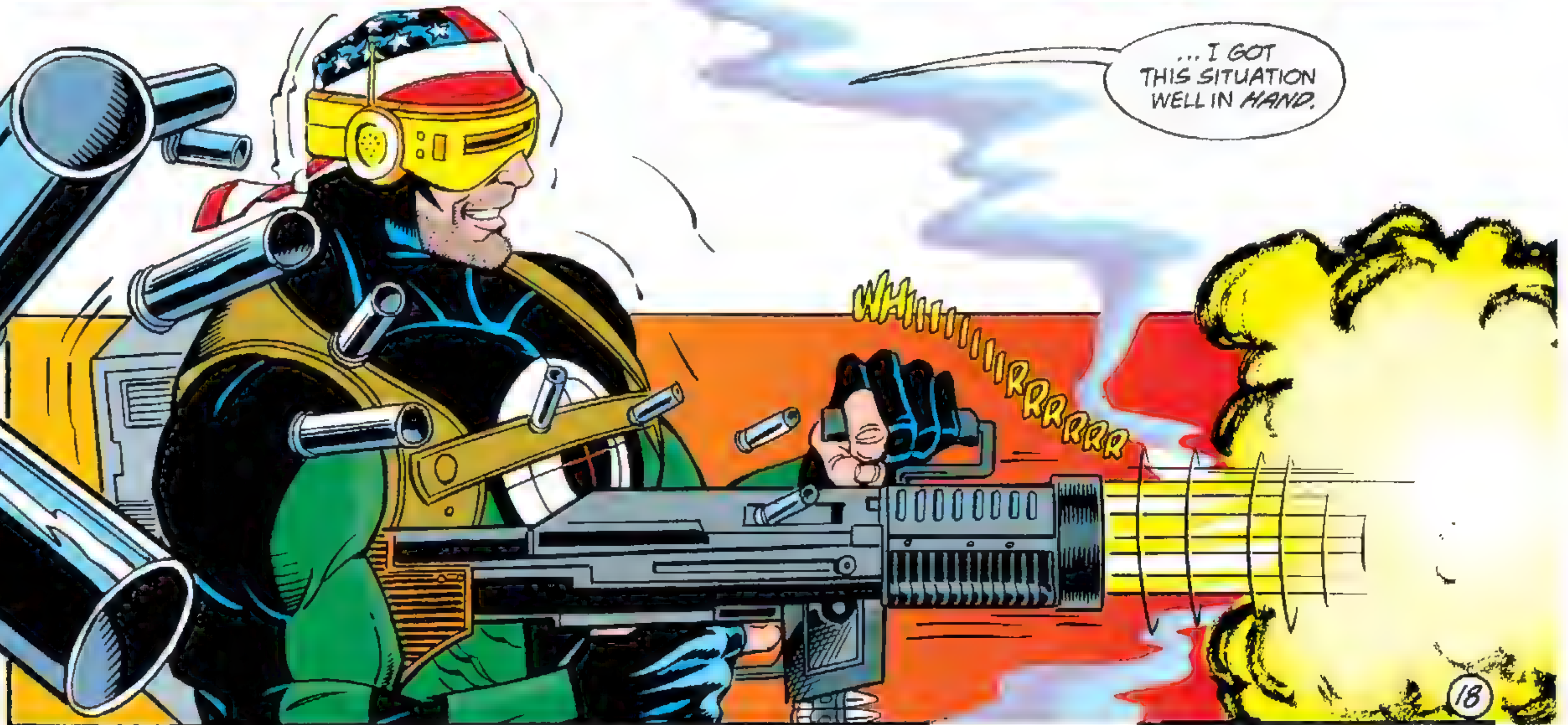
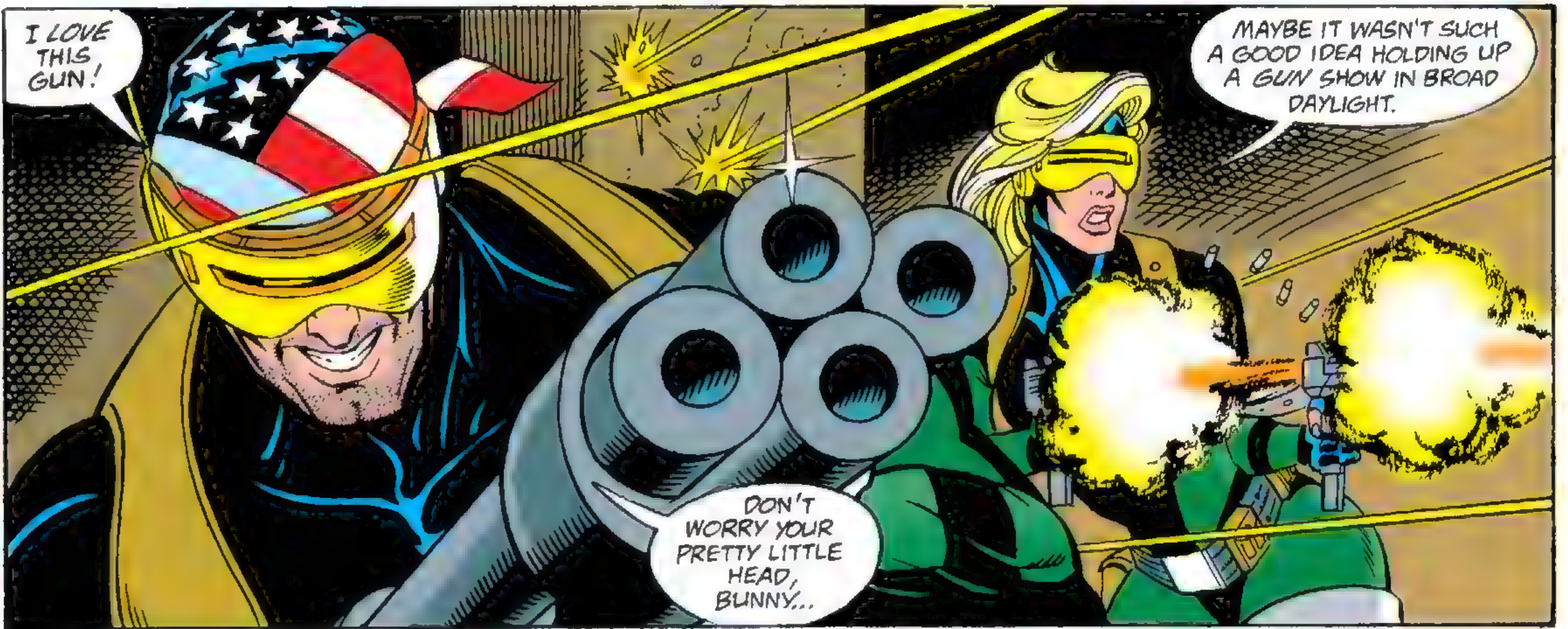
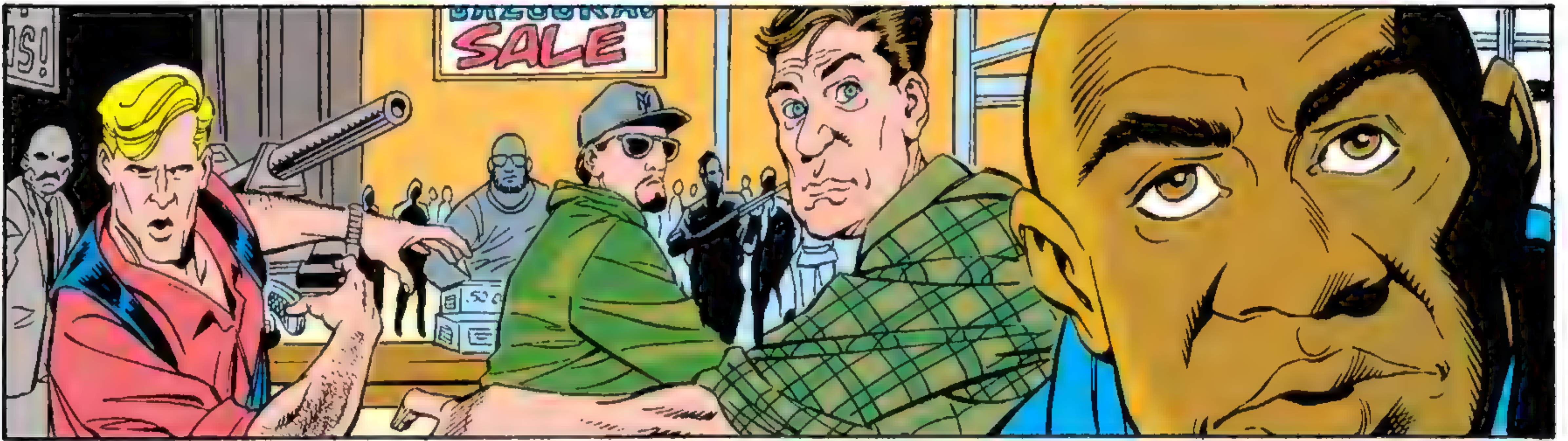
GUNHAWK.

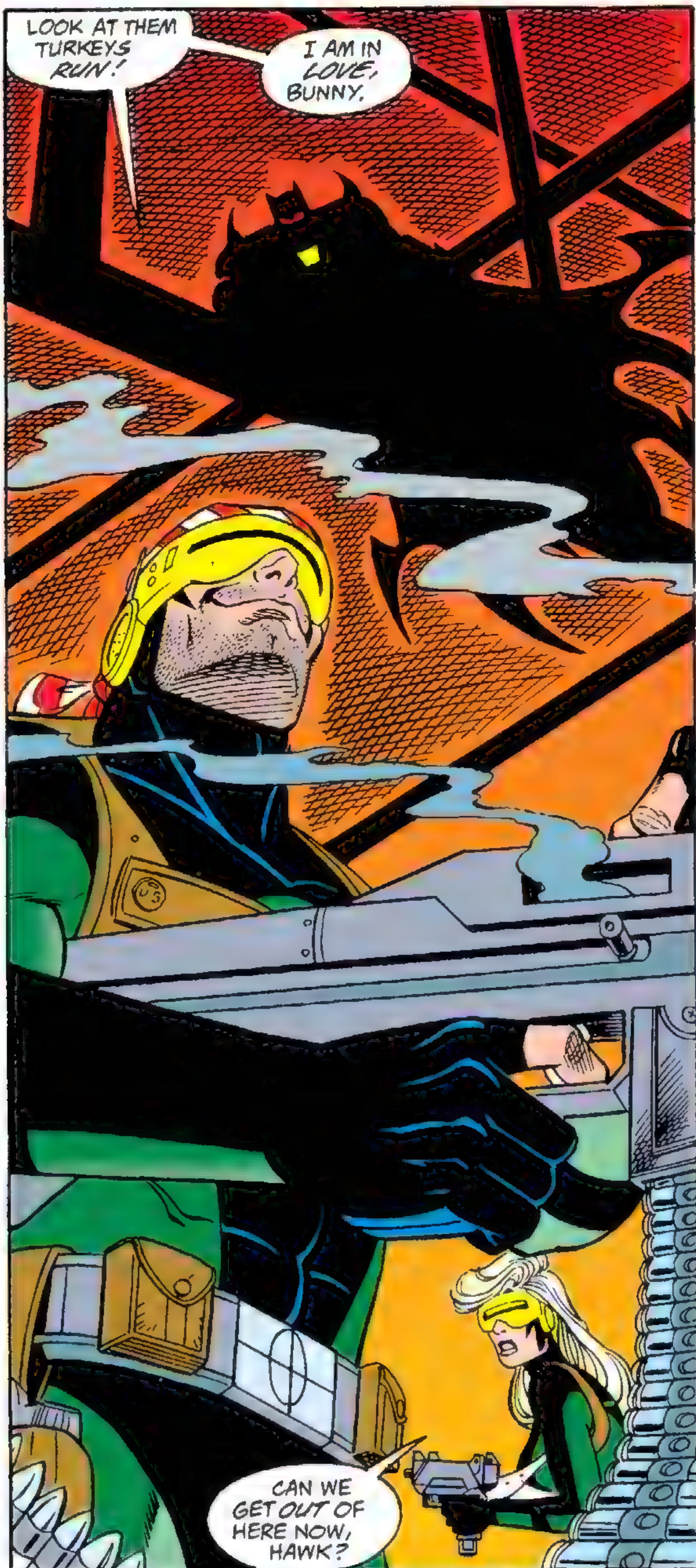
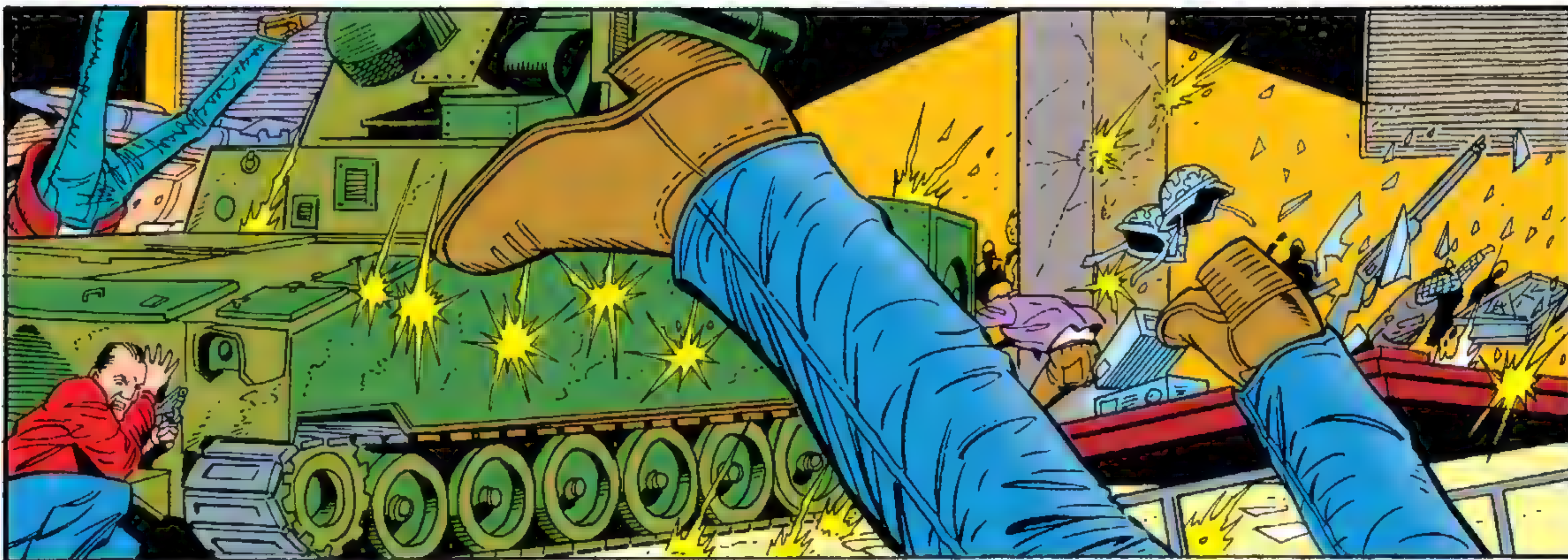
HOW MANY MEN COULD
KILL A PERSON FROM
NEARLY A MILE AWAY?

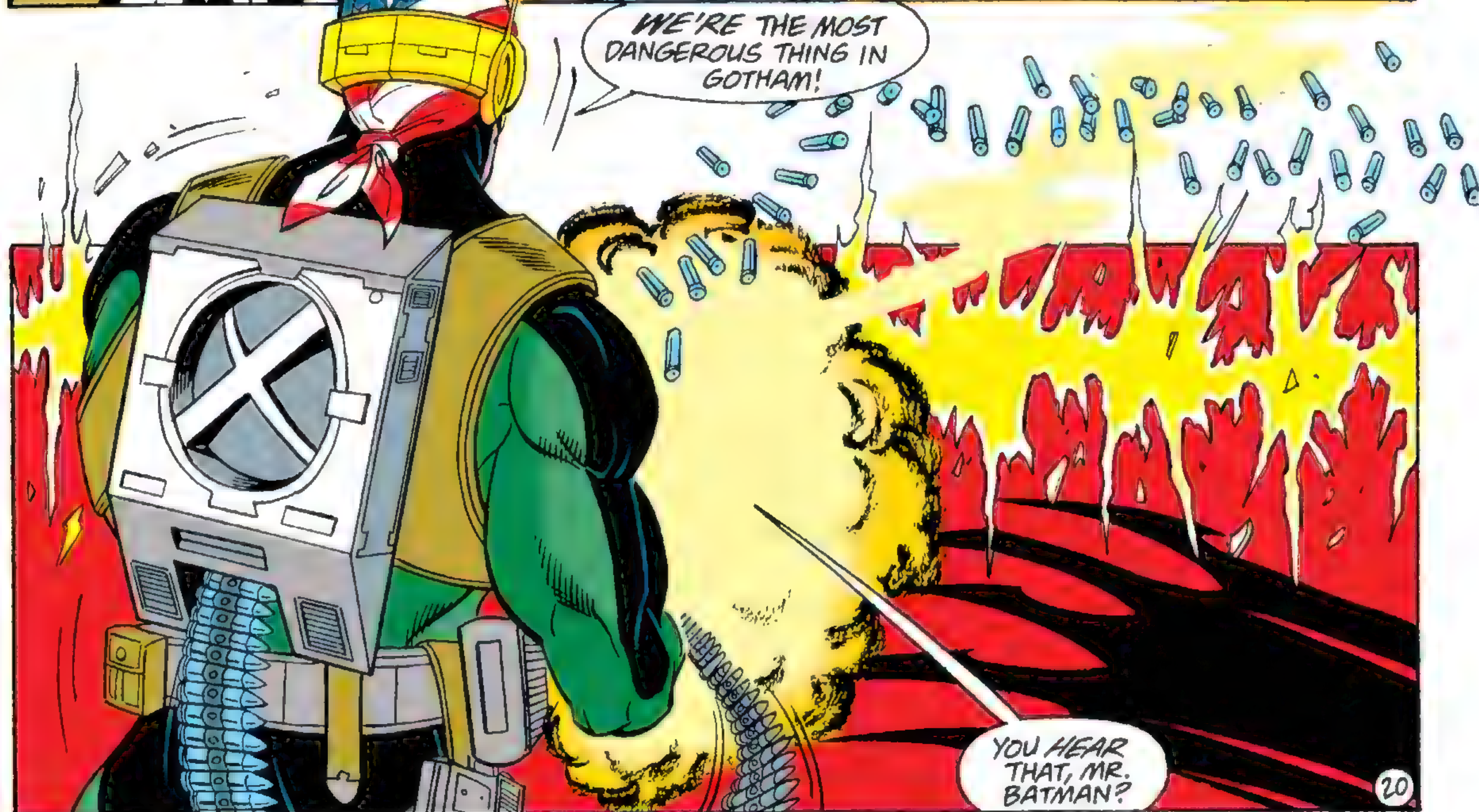
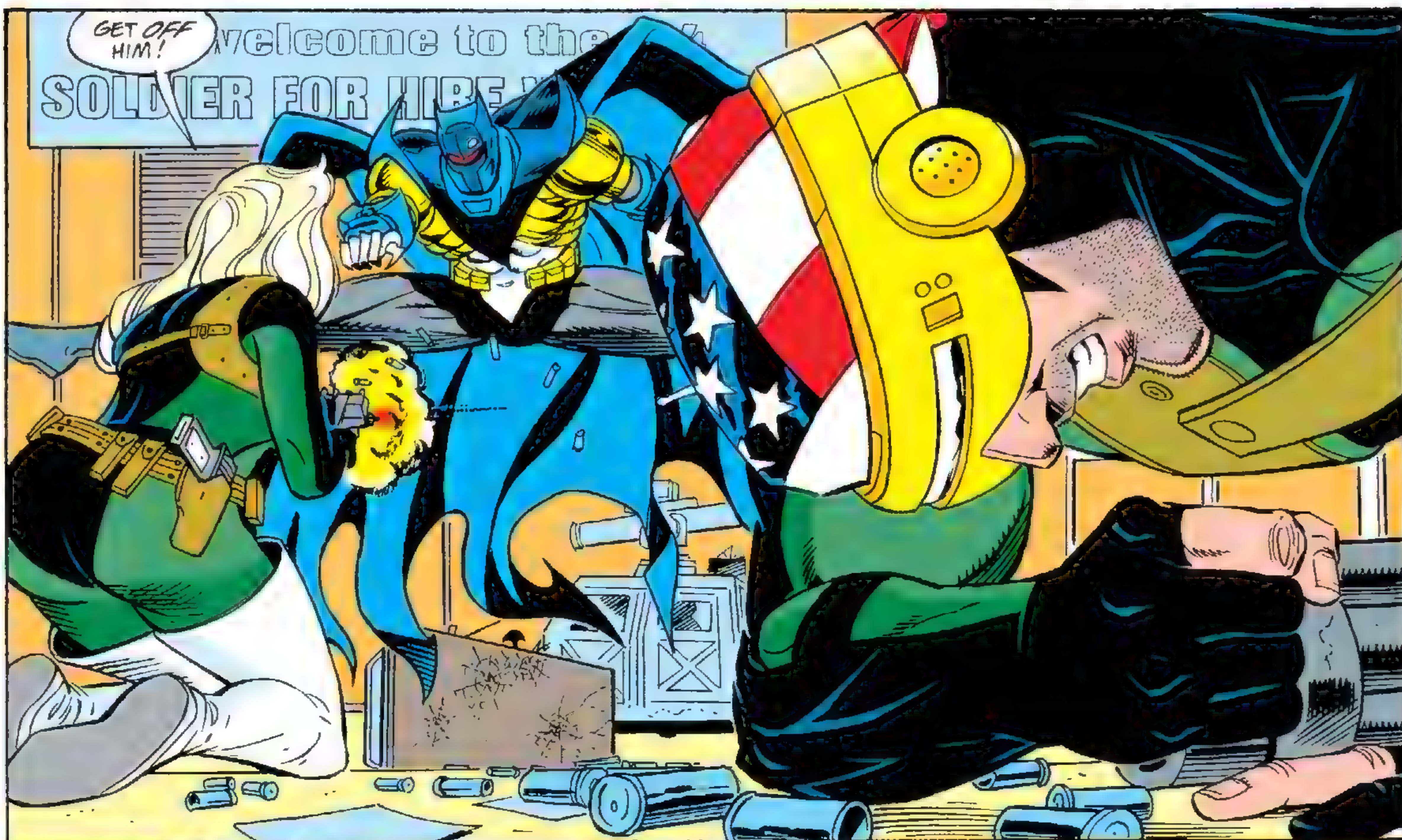


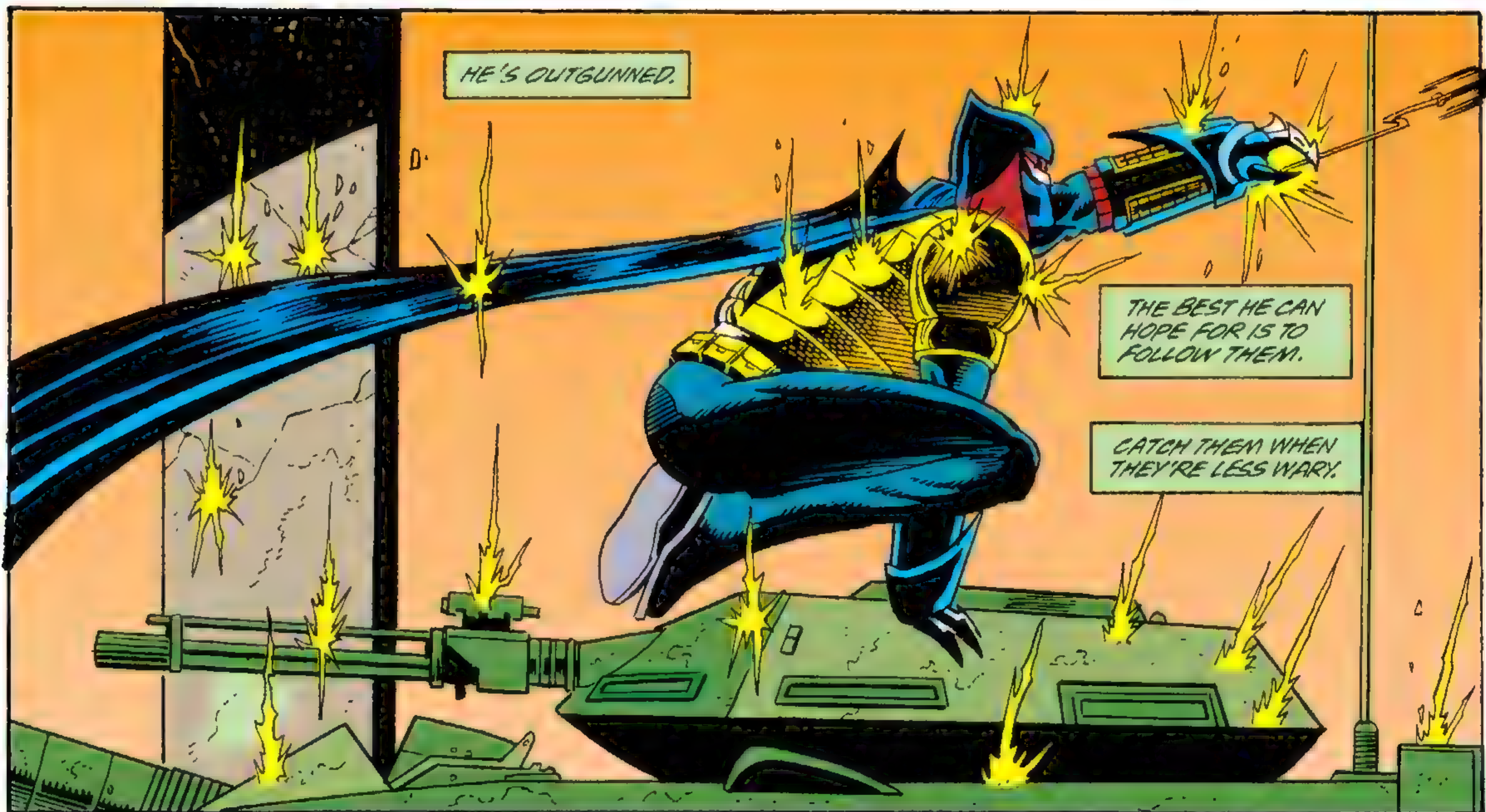












HE'S OUTGUNNED.

THE BEST HE CAN
HOPE FOR IS TO
FOLLOW THEM.

CATCH THEM WHEN
THEY'RE LESS WARY.



THERE HE
IS! TRYING TO
GET OUT OF
RANGE!

HA!

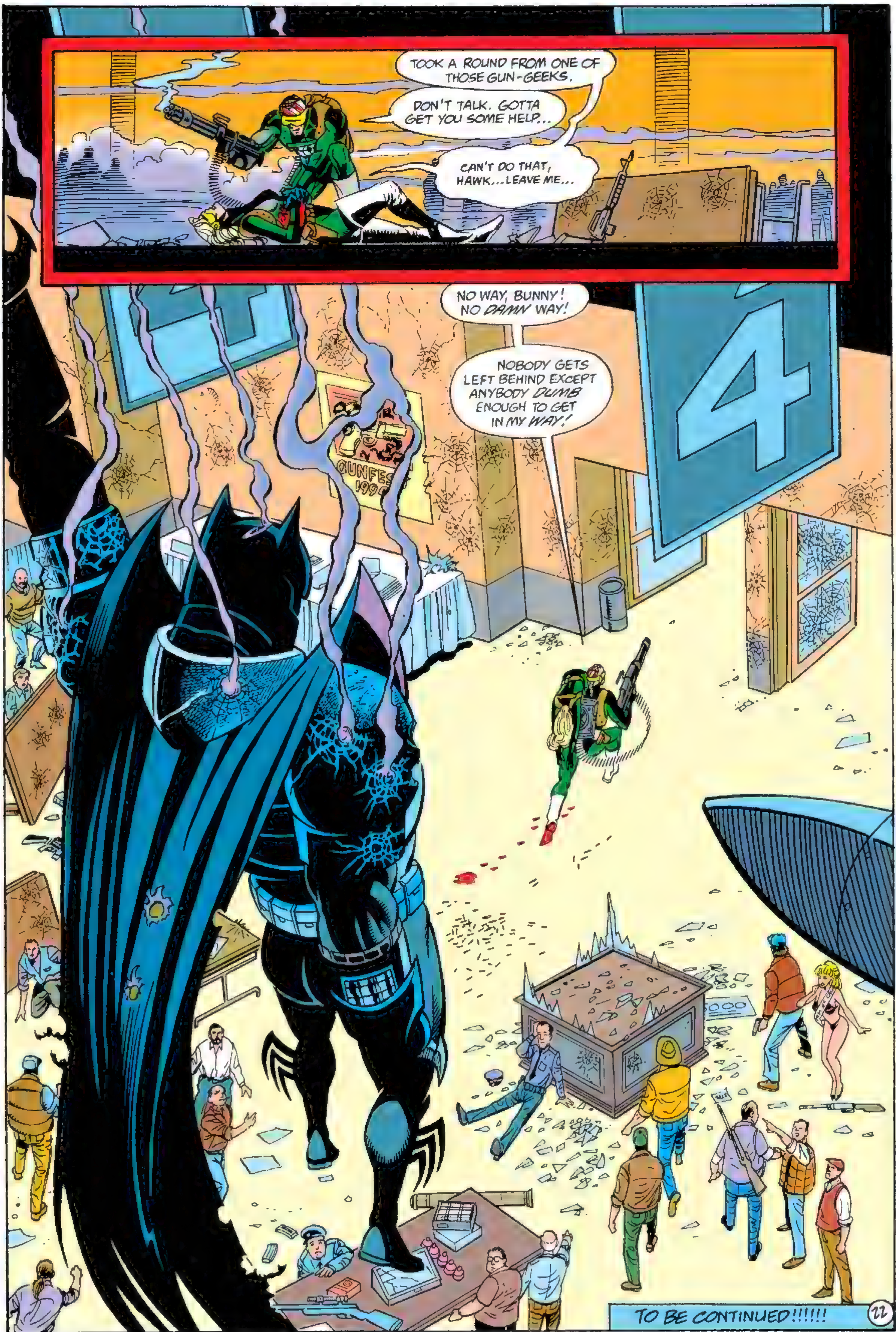
LEAD
HIM, HAWK!



COME ON. WE
GOT WHAT WE --

BUNNY!

OHHHH...



TOOK A ROUND FROM ONE OF
THOSE GUN-GEES.

DON'T TALK. GOTTA
GET YOU SOME HELP...

CAN'T DO THAT,
HAWK...LEAVE ME...

NO WAY, BUNNY!
NO DAMN WAY!

NOBODY GETS
LEFT BEHIND EXCEPT
ANYBODY DUMB
ENOUGH TO GET
IN MY WAY!

TO BE CONTINUED!!!!!!

22

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



DC

BATMAN

508

\$1.50 US
\$2.00 CAN
70p UK

JUN 94



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

MOENCH
MANLEY
RUBINSTEIN

Kelley Jones 94

Mortal Remains

ABATTOIR, KILLER OF
BLOOD KIN, STILL
STALKS THE DARK.

HIS COUSIN, GRAHAM
ETCHISON, REMAINS
MISSING.

AND JEAN PAUL
VALLEY, THE NEW
BATMAN, REFUSES
TO REST.

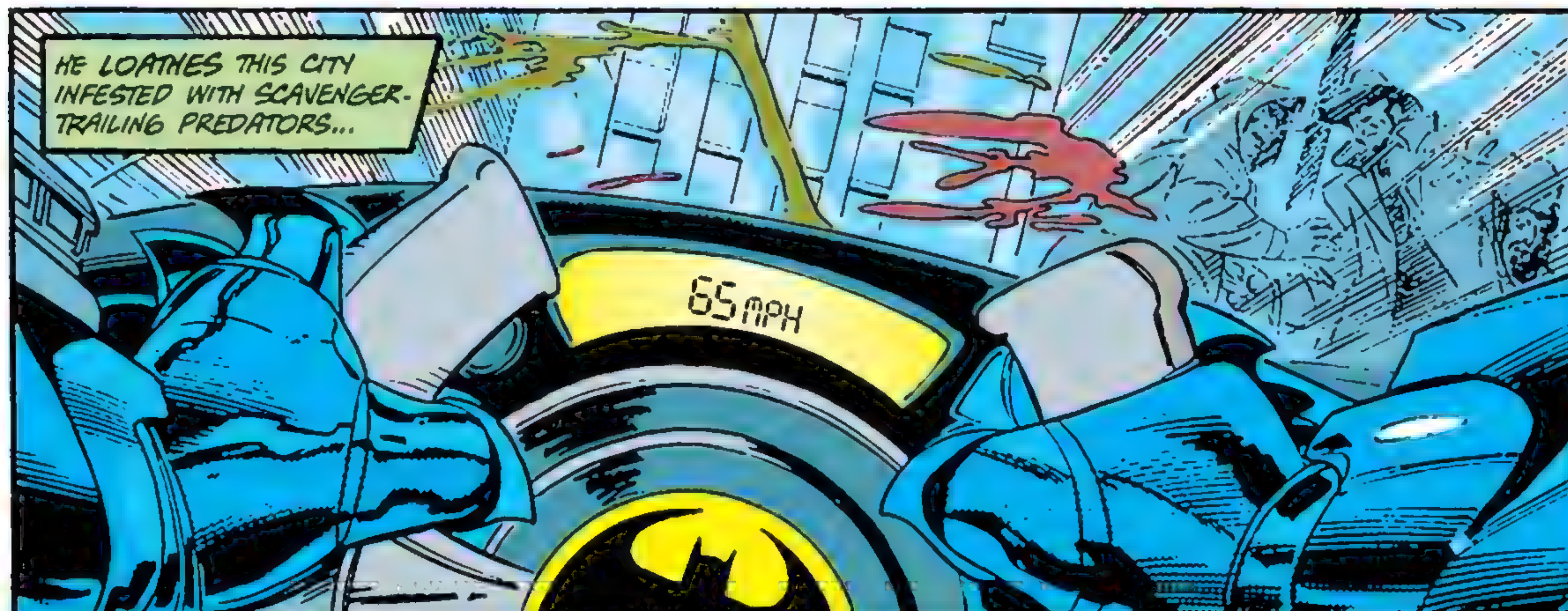
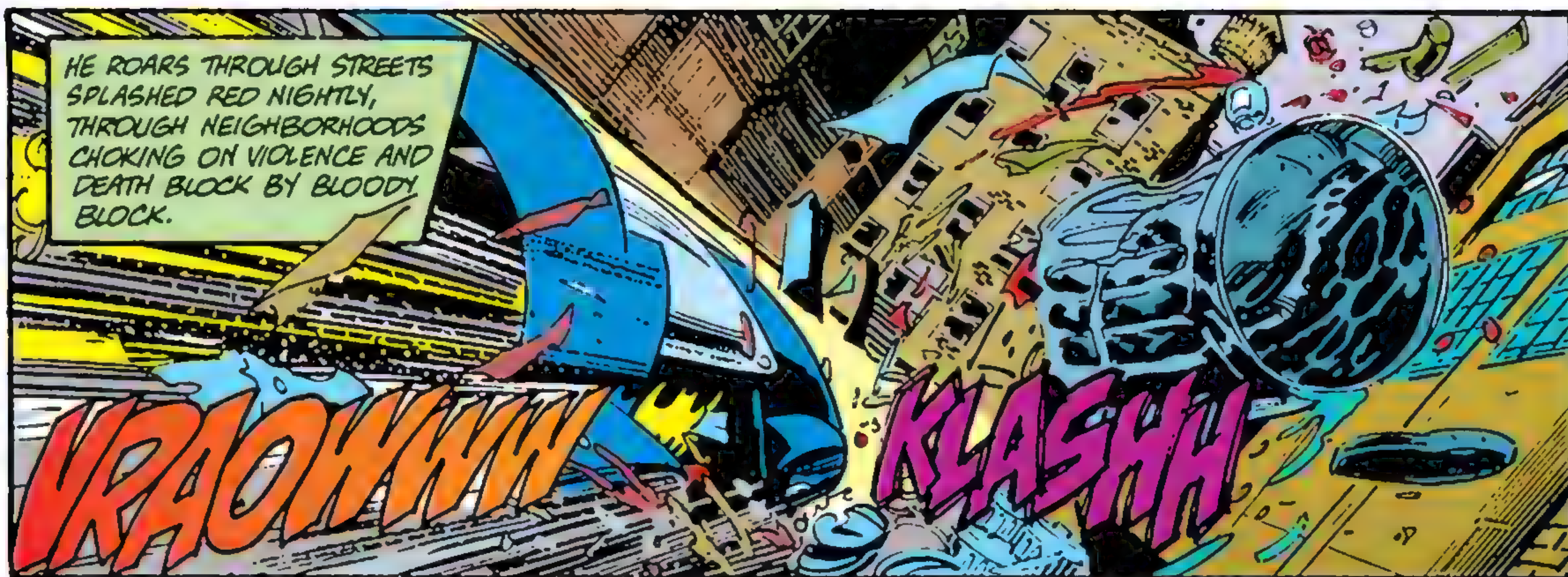
SOMEWHERE IN THE ENDLESS
NIGHT, GUNHAWK AND
ABATTOIR MOCK HIM,
BOTH UNFINISHED BUSINESS...

GUNHAWK
CAN WAIT.

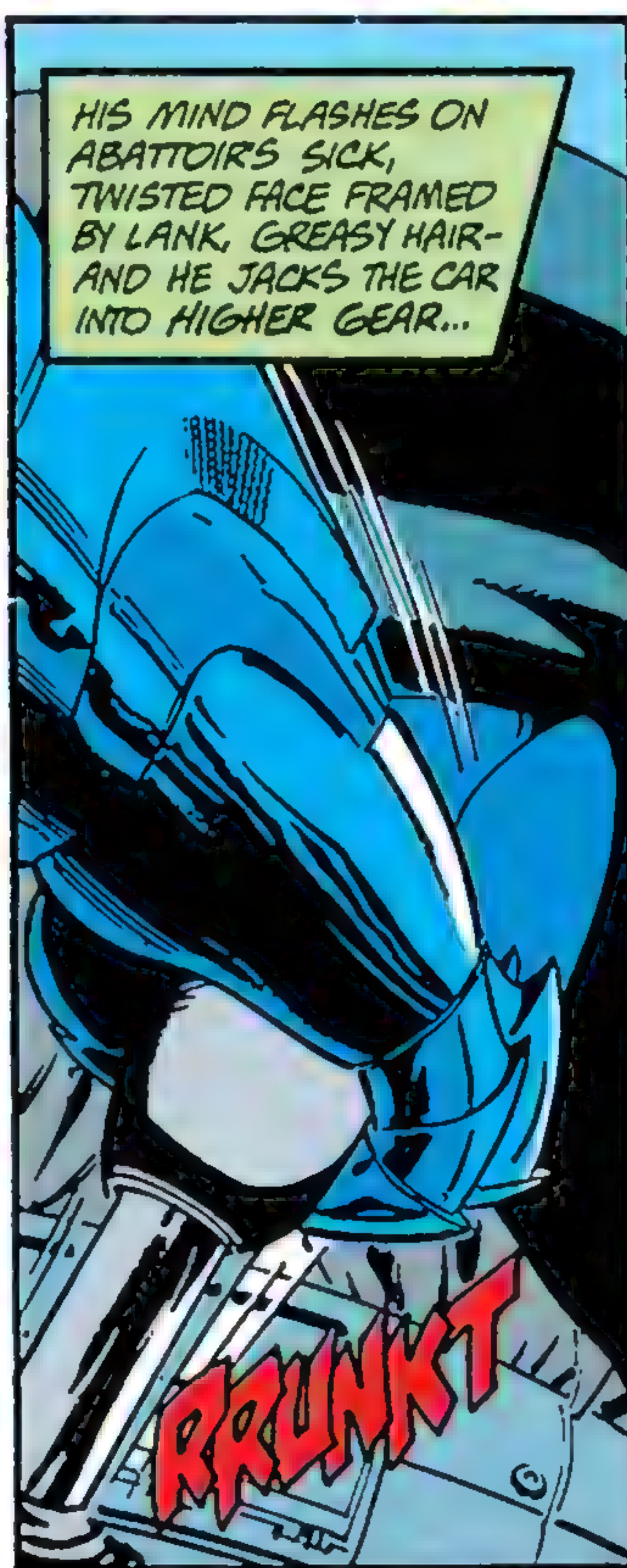
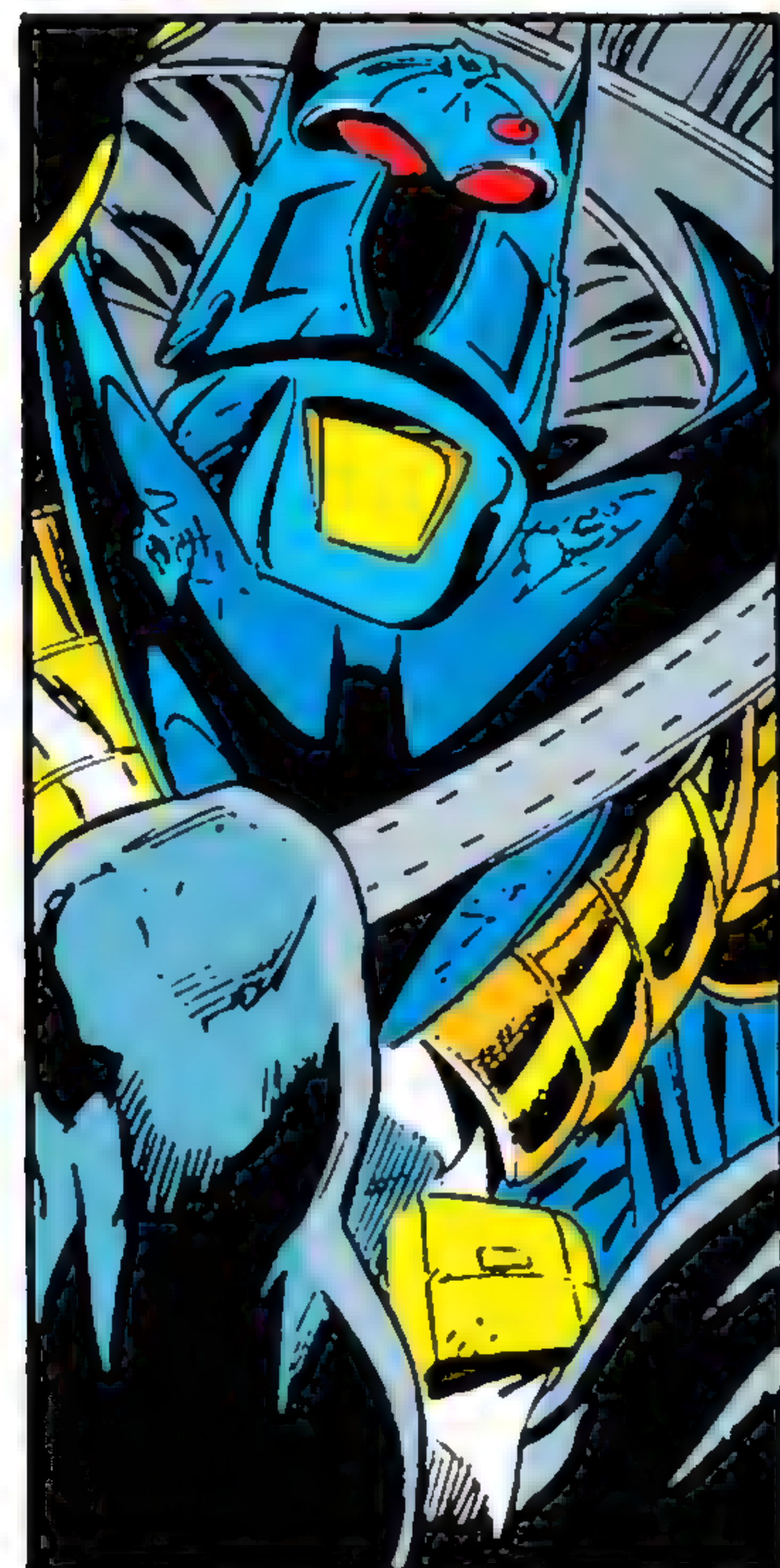
DOUG MOENCH
writer
MIKE MANLEY
penciller

JOSEF RUBINSTEIN - ADRIENNE ROY - KEN BRUZENAK - JORDAN B. GORFINKEL - DENNY O'NEIL
guest inker colorist letterer assistant editor editor

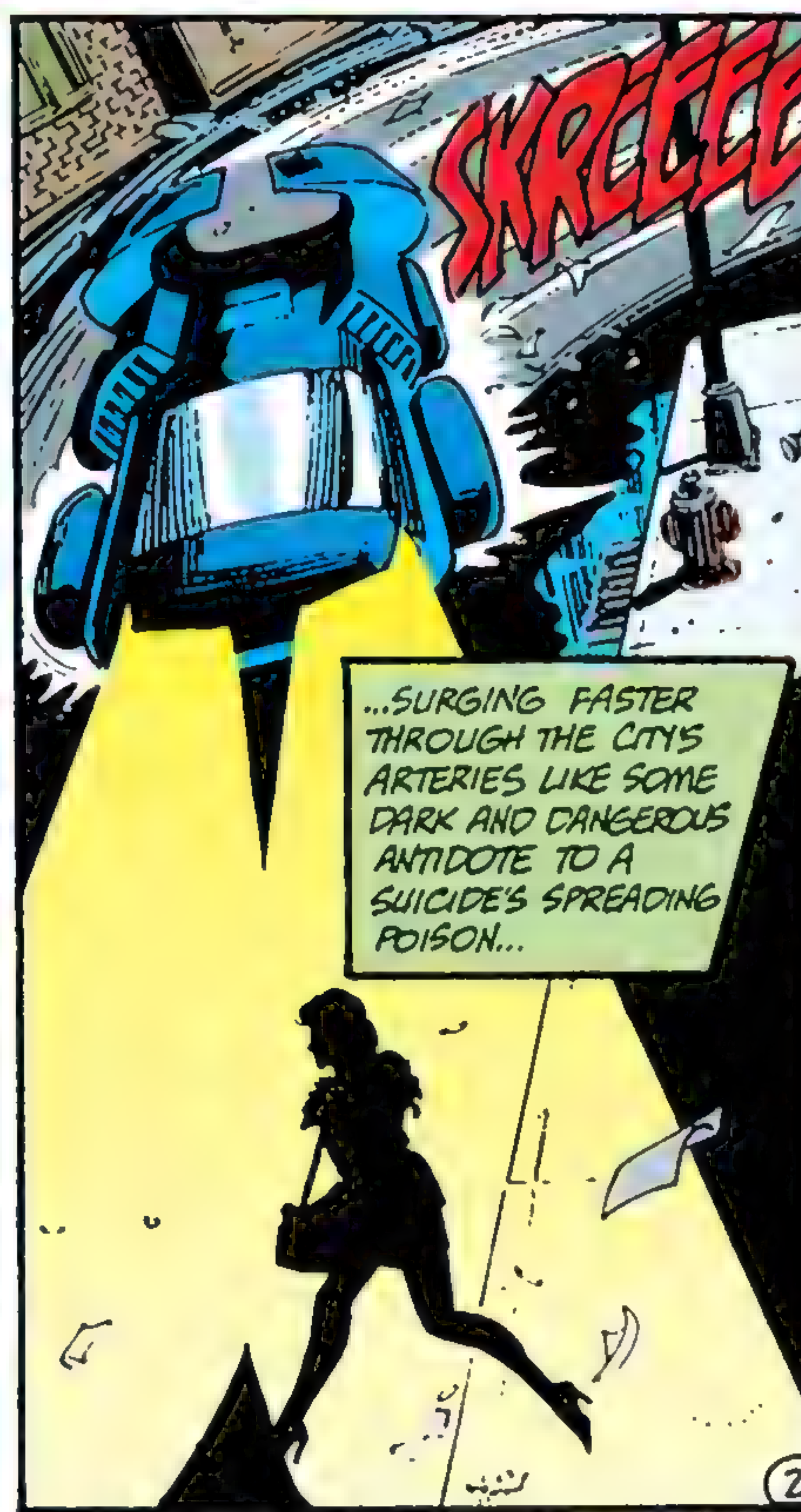
BATMAN created by
BOB KANE



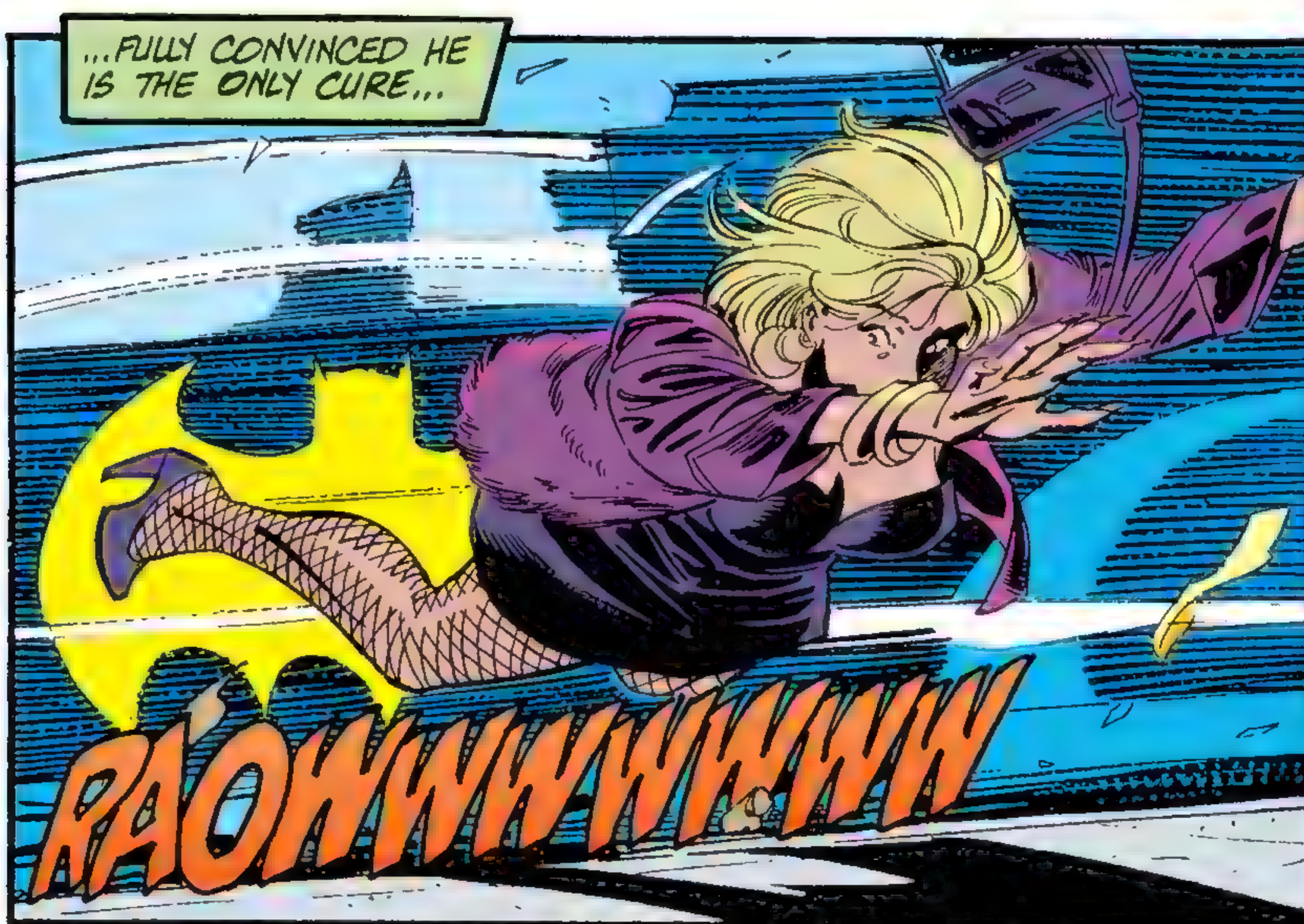
...BUT FOR A CRIMEFIGHTER OBSESSED WITH PROVING HIMSELF, THE BRIGHT HELL OF GOTHAM HAS BECOME A DARK PARADISE OF OPPORTUNITY.



HIS MIND FLASHES ON ABATTOIR'S SICK, TWISTED FACE FRAMED BY LANK, GREASY HAIR- AND HE JACKS THE CAR INTO HIGHER GEAR...



...SURGING FASTER THROUGH THE CITY'S ARTERIES LIKE SOME DARK AND DANGEROUS ANTIDOTE TO A SUICIDE'S SPREADING POISON...



...FULLY CONVINCED HE IS THE ONLY CURE...



...AND COMPLETELY OBLIVIOUS TO ANY AND ALL POTENTIAL SIDE-EFFECTS.

WOULDA KILLED ME...

...IN A GOTHAM SECOND.



TWO MORE MINUTES, COUSIN GRAHAM, AND THE PAIN YOU FEEL NOW... WILL BE A MEMORY OF LOST BLISS...



...WHEN THE INEXORABLE WEIGHT OF DEATH ABRUPTLY GROWS HEAVIER.

Y-YOU... YOU'RE... M-MAD...



NOT AT ALL, COUSIN GRAHAM...

I'M SIMPLY HUNGRY FOR THE NOURISHMENT OF YOUR SOUL... AND YOUR DYING FLESH FEEDS MY LIFEFORCE.



ONE MORE MINUTE
NOW, COUSIN GRAHAM...
ONE MORE MINUTE
OF SAVORED
ANTICIPATION...

...BEFORE THE
NEXT WEIGHT
FALLS.

NO- YOU
CAN'T KEEP...
DOING
THIS...!

ARE
YOU GOING TO
STOP ME--WHEN EVEN
THE HIGH AND
MIGHTY BATMAN
COULDN'T?

ONE
SWIFT STAB
IN THE BACK WOULD
HAVE KILLED YOU
LONG AGO--

--BUT A HUNDRED SLOW
PUNCTURES WILL BE SO MUCH
MORE INTERESTING... AS
BEFITS A TRUE ABATTOIR.

PLEASE...
PLEASE...

THROAT'S
GETTING THICK,
ISN'T IT?

YOU'LL
PROBABLY CHOKE ON
YOUR DYING WHIMPER
WHEN IT COMES... BUT
RIGHT NOW--

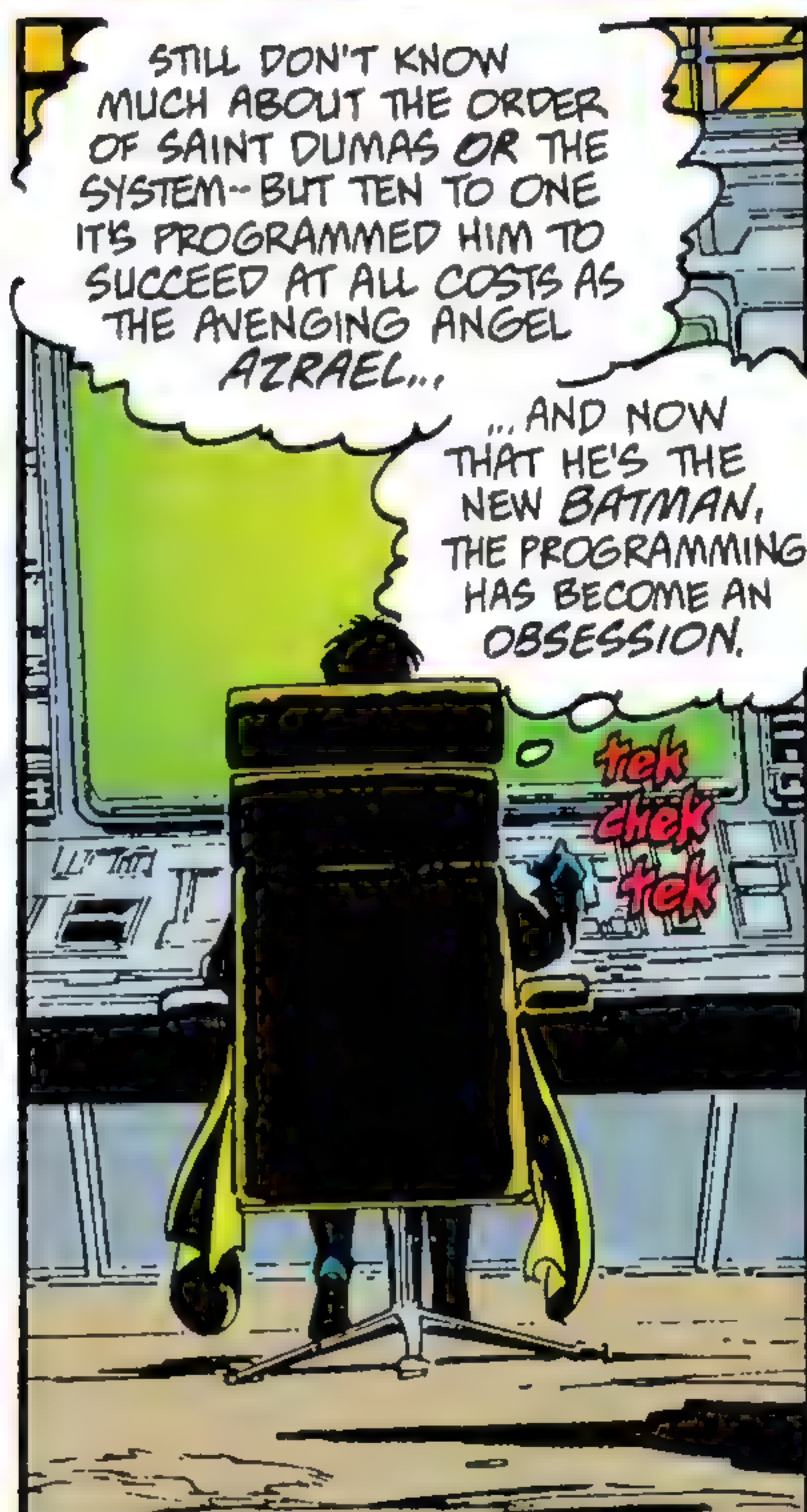
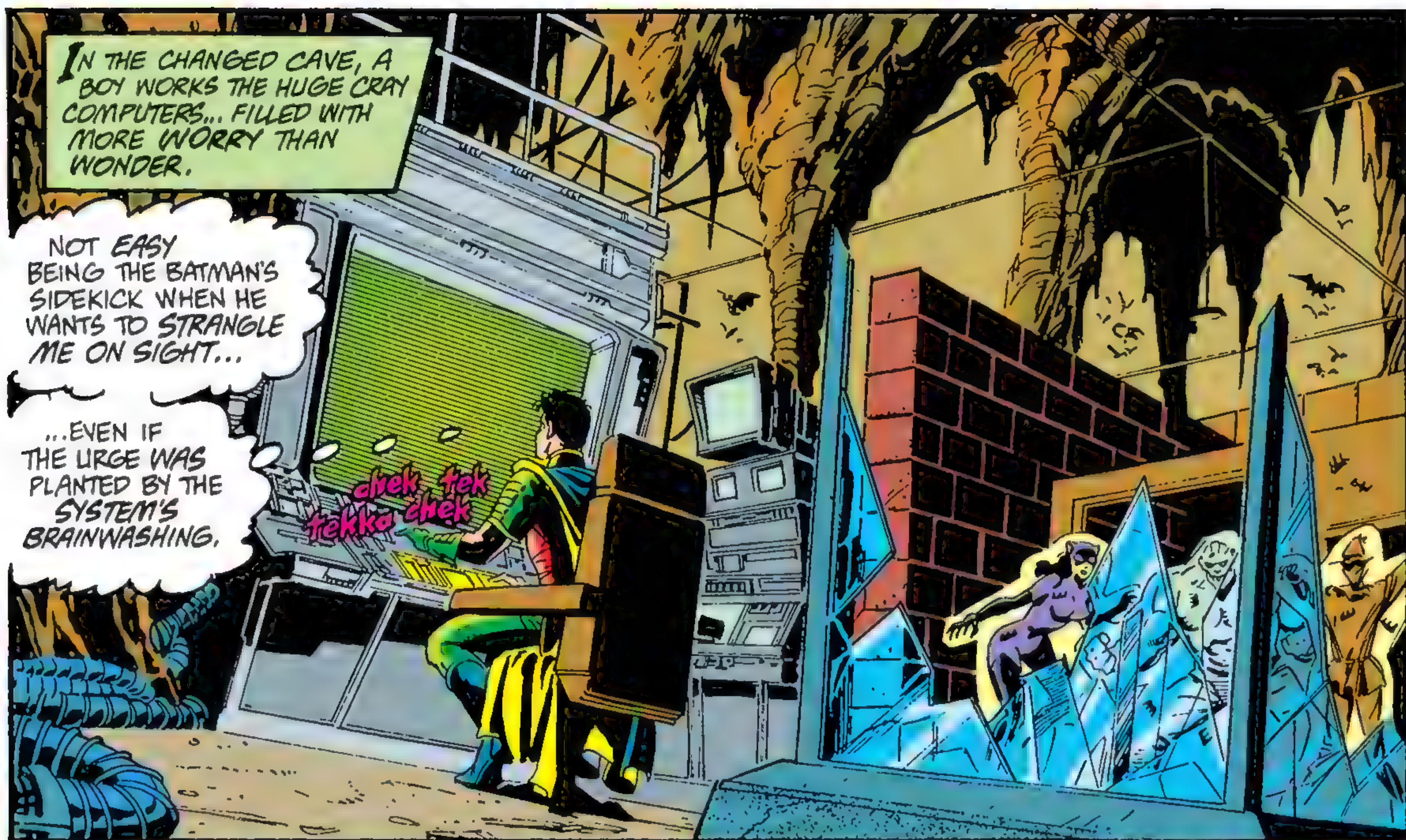
RATCH

AAAAA

WTANK

--FEEL
FREE TO
SIMPLY
SCREAM.

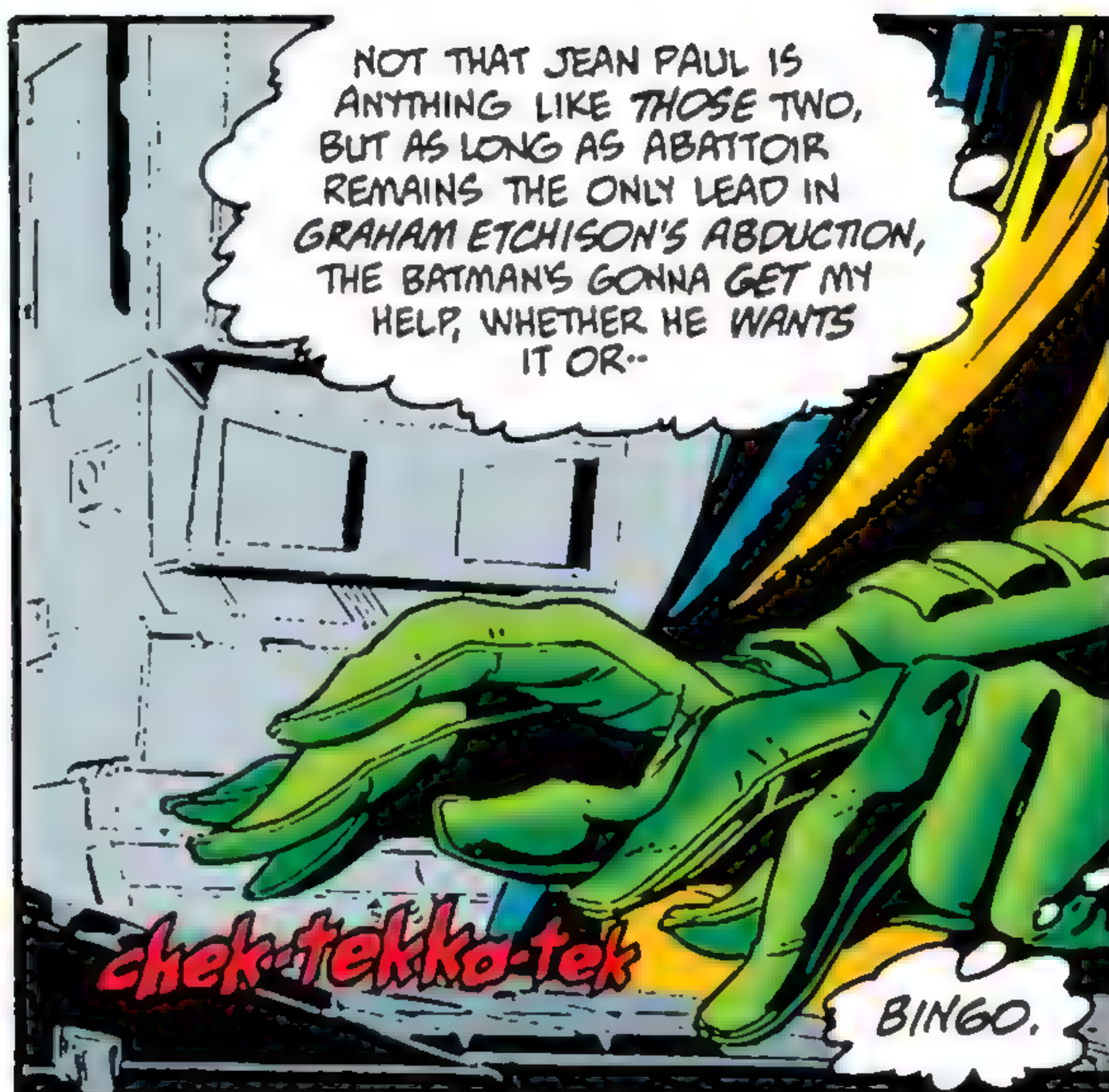
4





BEING GOOD
ENOUGH ISN'T
ENOUGH IF YOU'RE
NOT GOOD.

LIKE THEY SAY IN HISTORY
CLASS: MUSSOLINI MADE THE
TRAINS RUN ON TIME - BUT
HIS MAIN MAN HITLER WAS
USING TRAINS TO FREIGHT
PEOPLE LIKE CATTLE TO THE
SLAUGHTER.



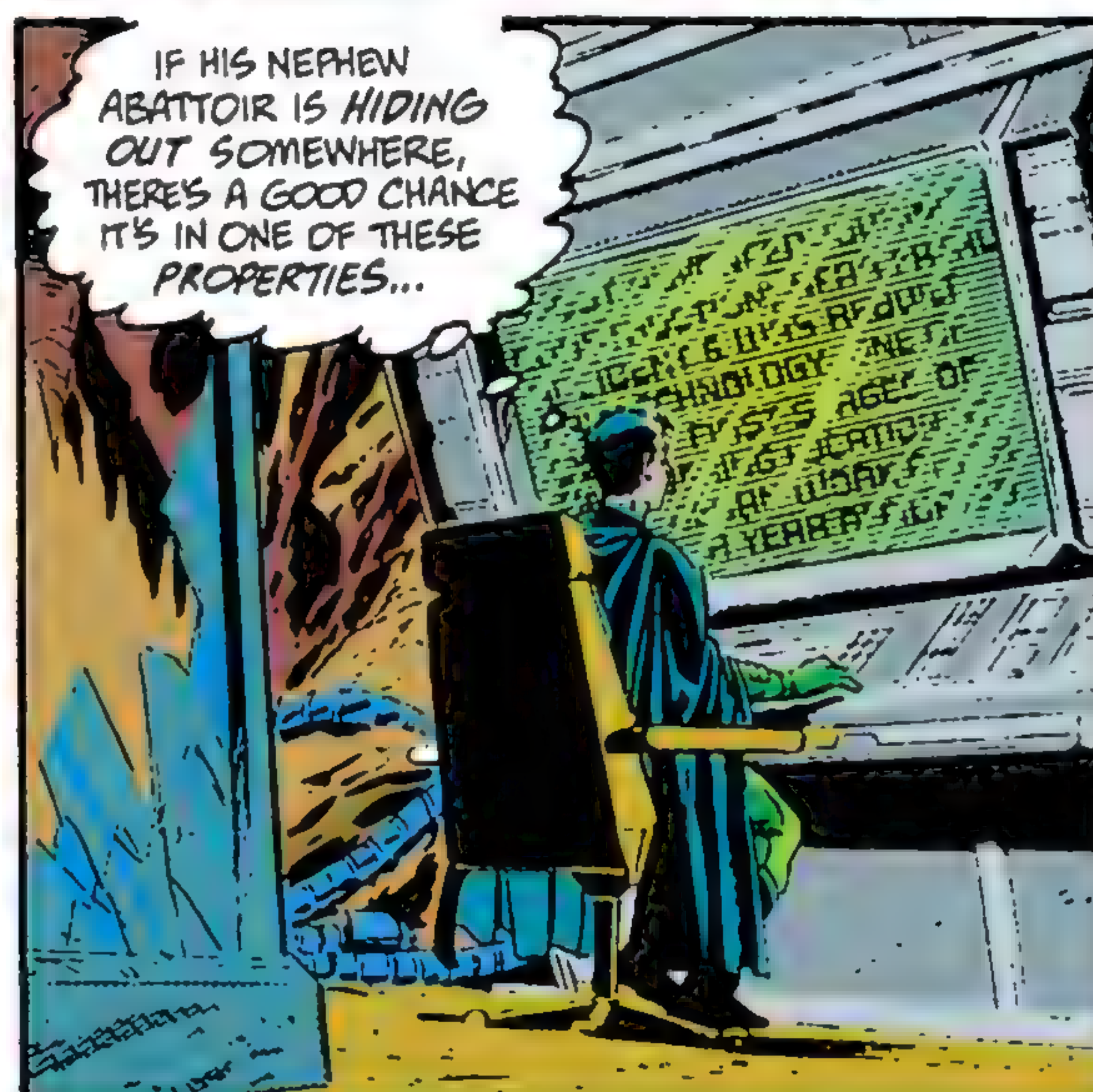
NOT THAT JEAN PAUL IS
ANYTHING LIKE THOSE TWO,
BUT AS LONG AS ABATTOIR
REMAINS THE ONLY LEAD IN
GRAHAM ETCHISON'S ABDUCTION,
THE BATMANS GONNA GET MY
HELP, WHETHER HE WANTS
IT OR..

chek-tekko-tek

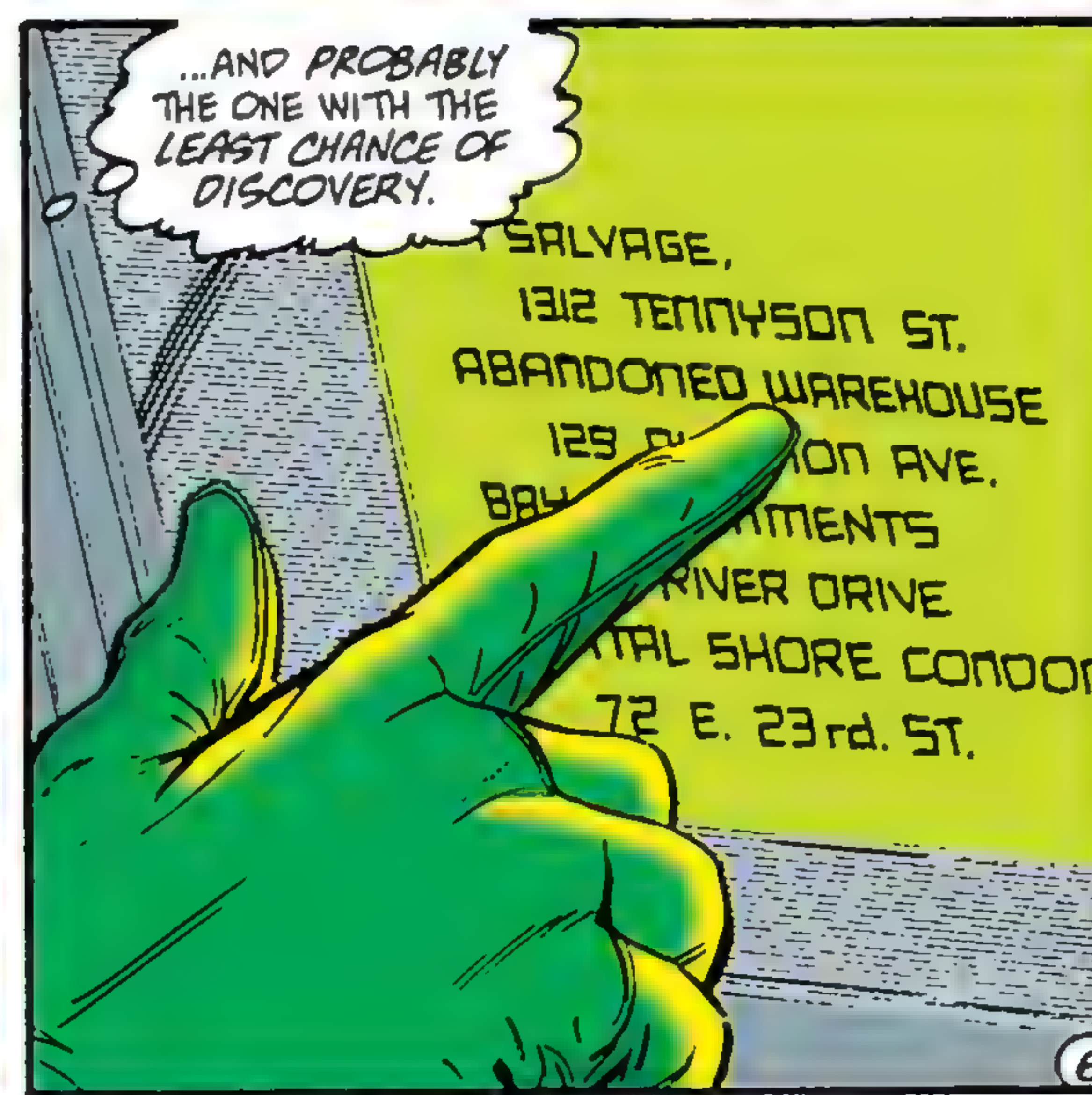
BINGO.



FINALLY
HACKED INTO THE
MUNICIPAL TAX RECORDS
SYSTEM--WITH A FULL LIST
OF THE REAL ESTATE
OWNED BY HENRY
ETCHISON...



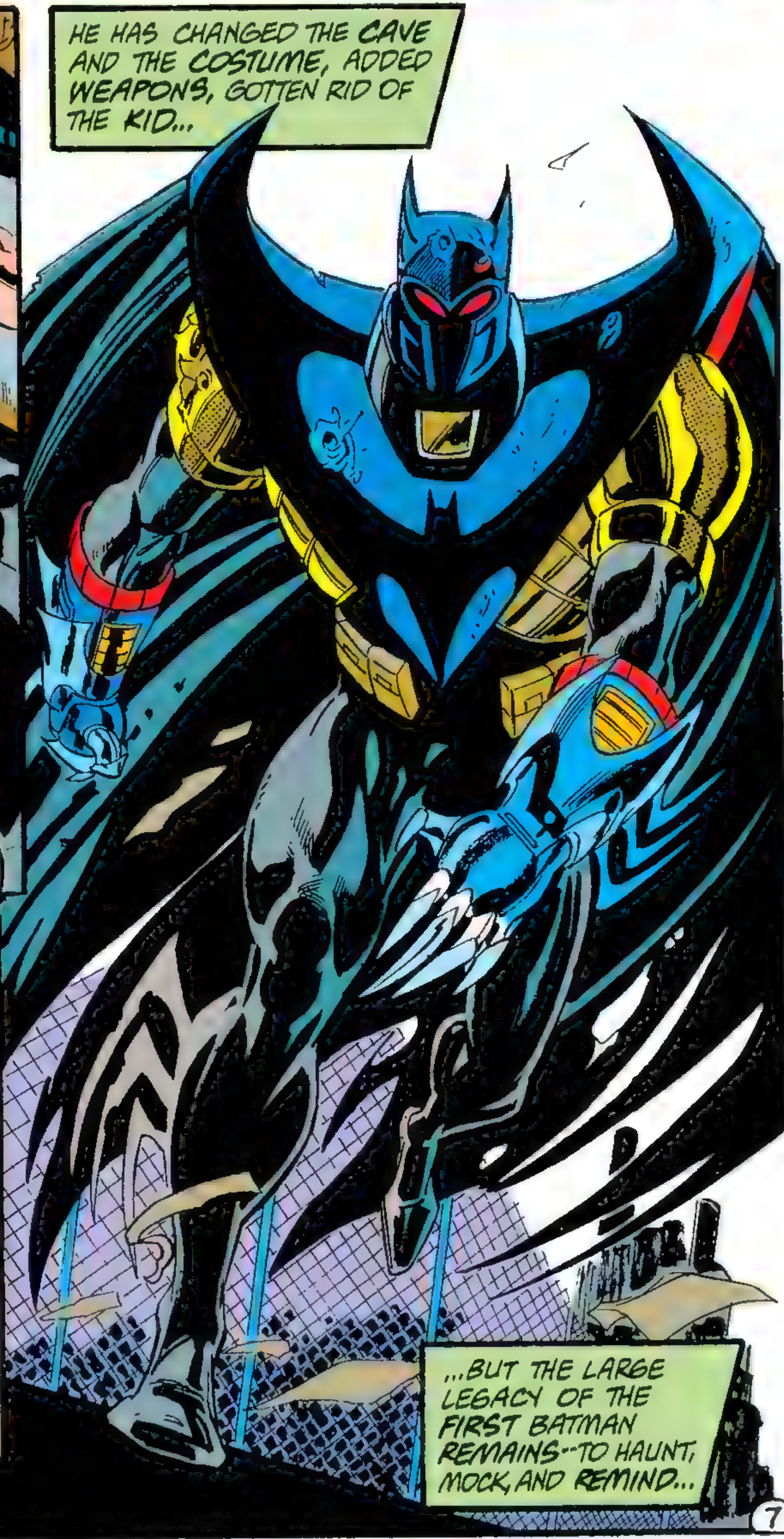
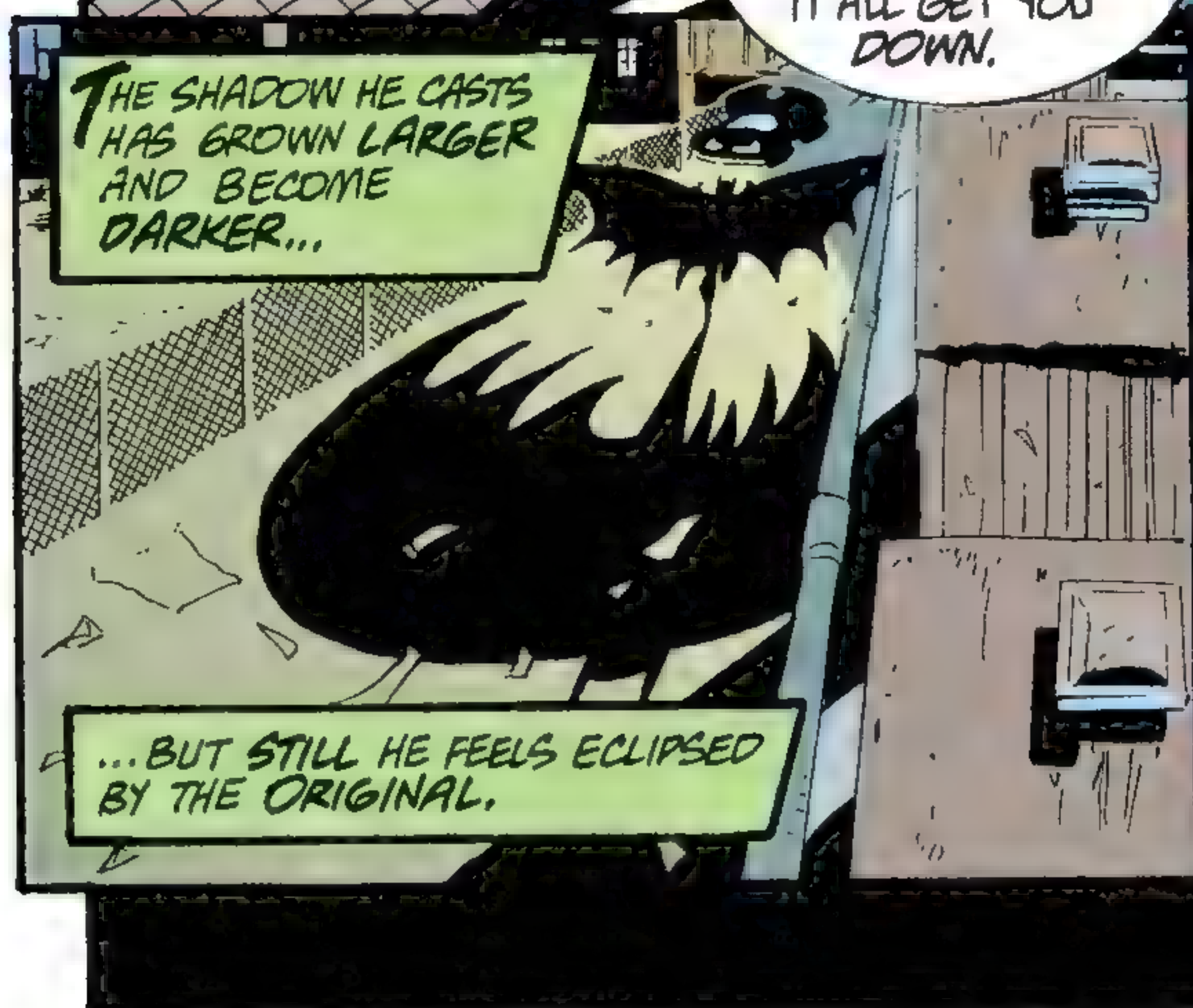
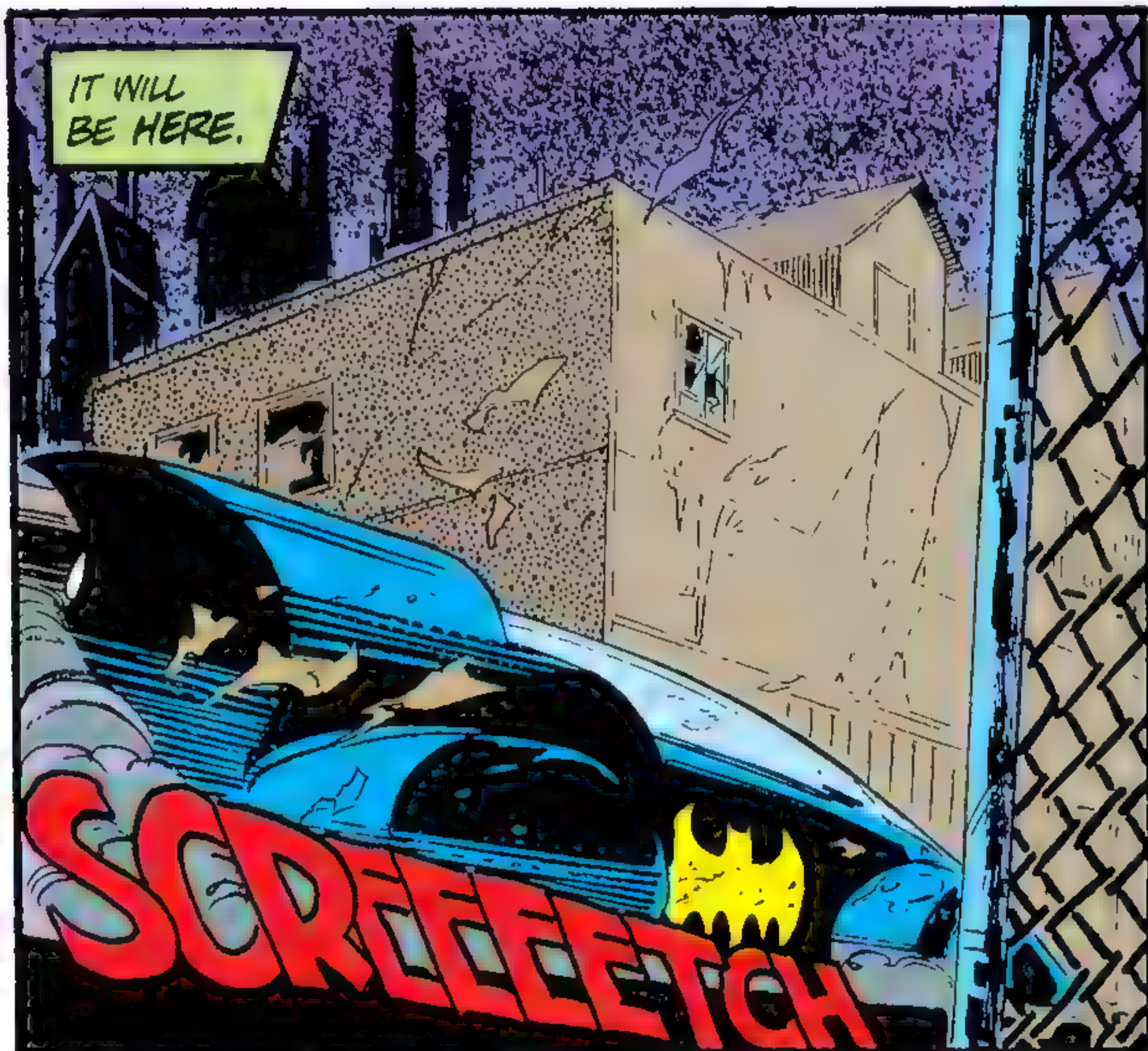
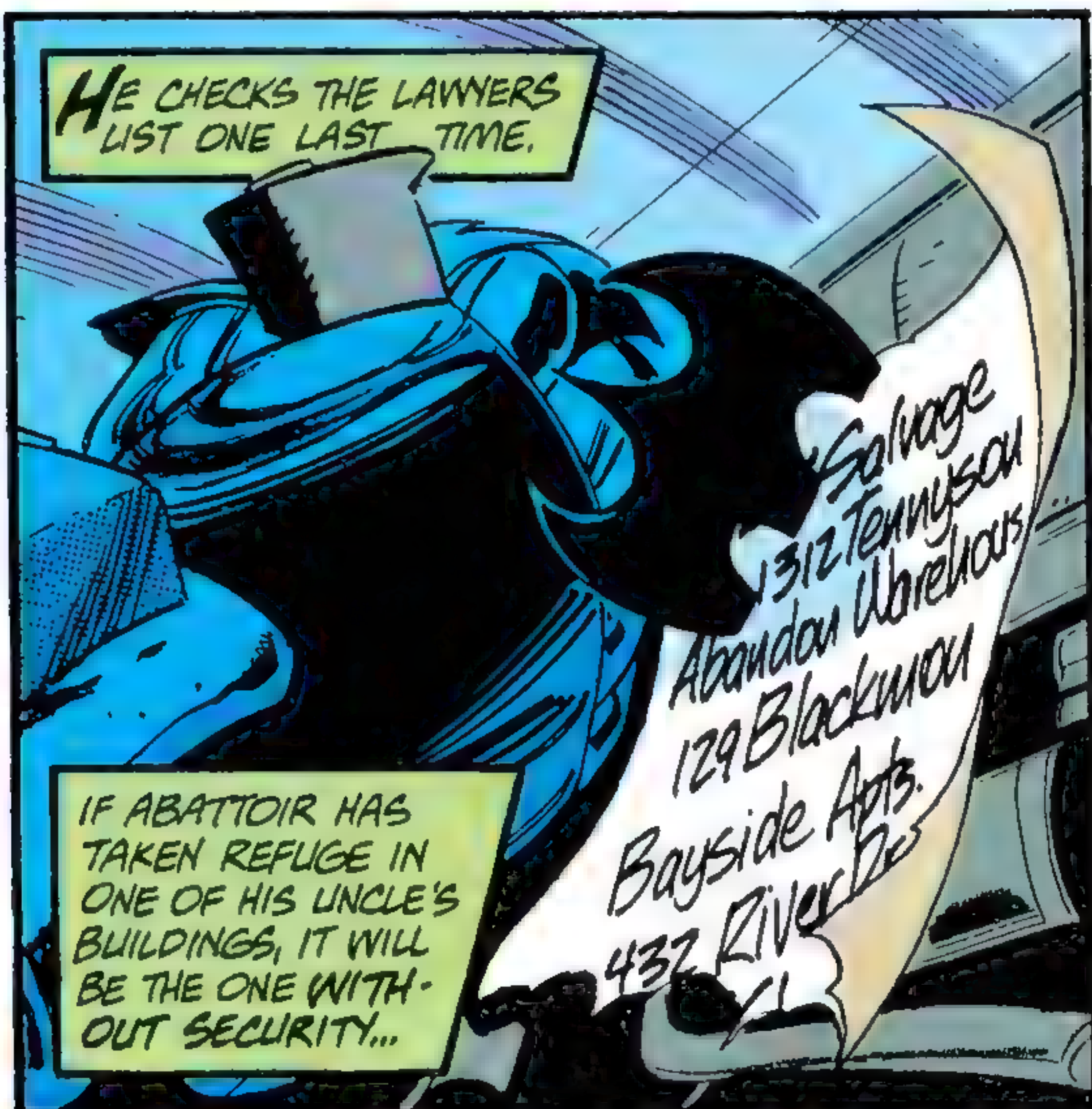
IF HIS NEPHEW
ABATTOIR IS HIDING
OUT SOMEWHERE,
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE
IT'S IN ONE OF THESE
PROPERTIES...

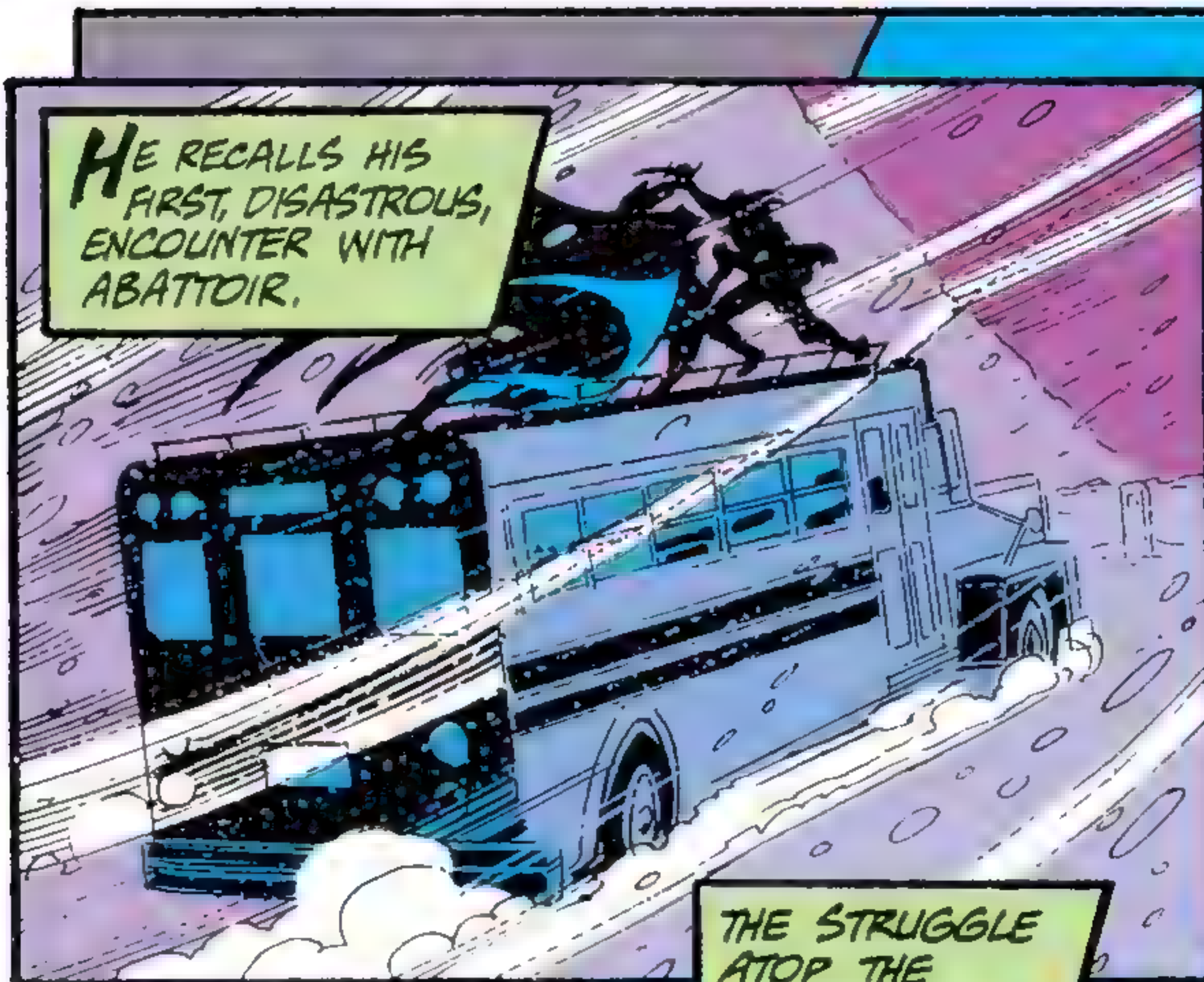


...AND PROBABLY
THE ONE WITH THE
LEAST CHANCE OF
DISCOVERY.

SALVAGE,
1312 TENNYSON ST.
ABANDONED WAREHOUSE
129 DUNN AVE.
844 WILMINGTON ST.
RIVER DRIVE
NORTH SHORE CONDOMINIUMS
72 E. 23rd. ST.

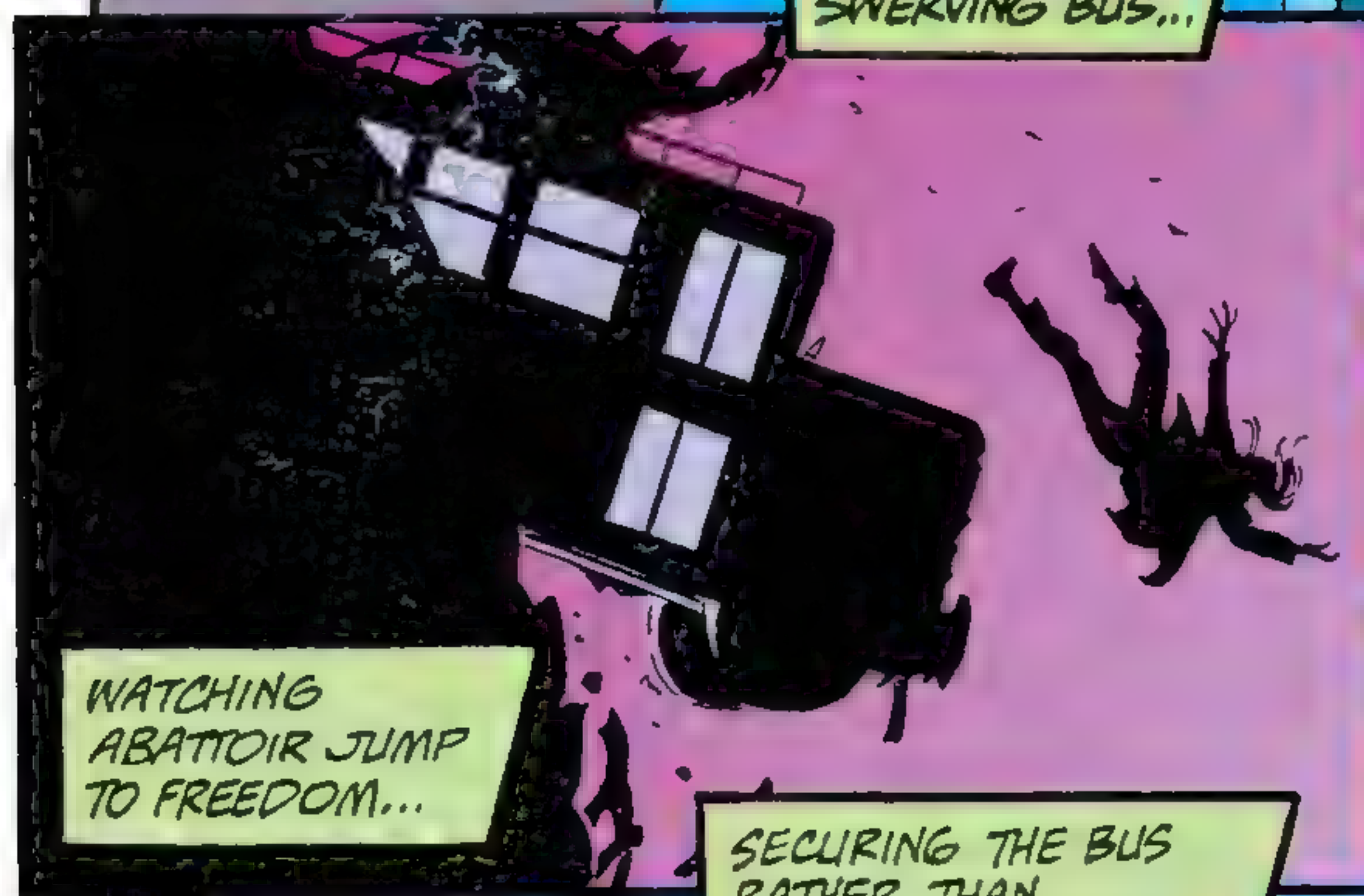
6





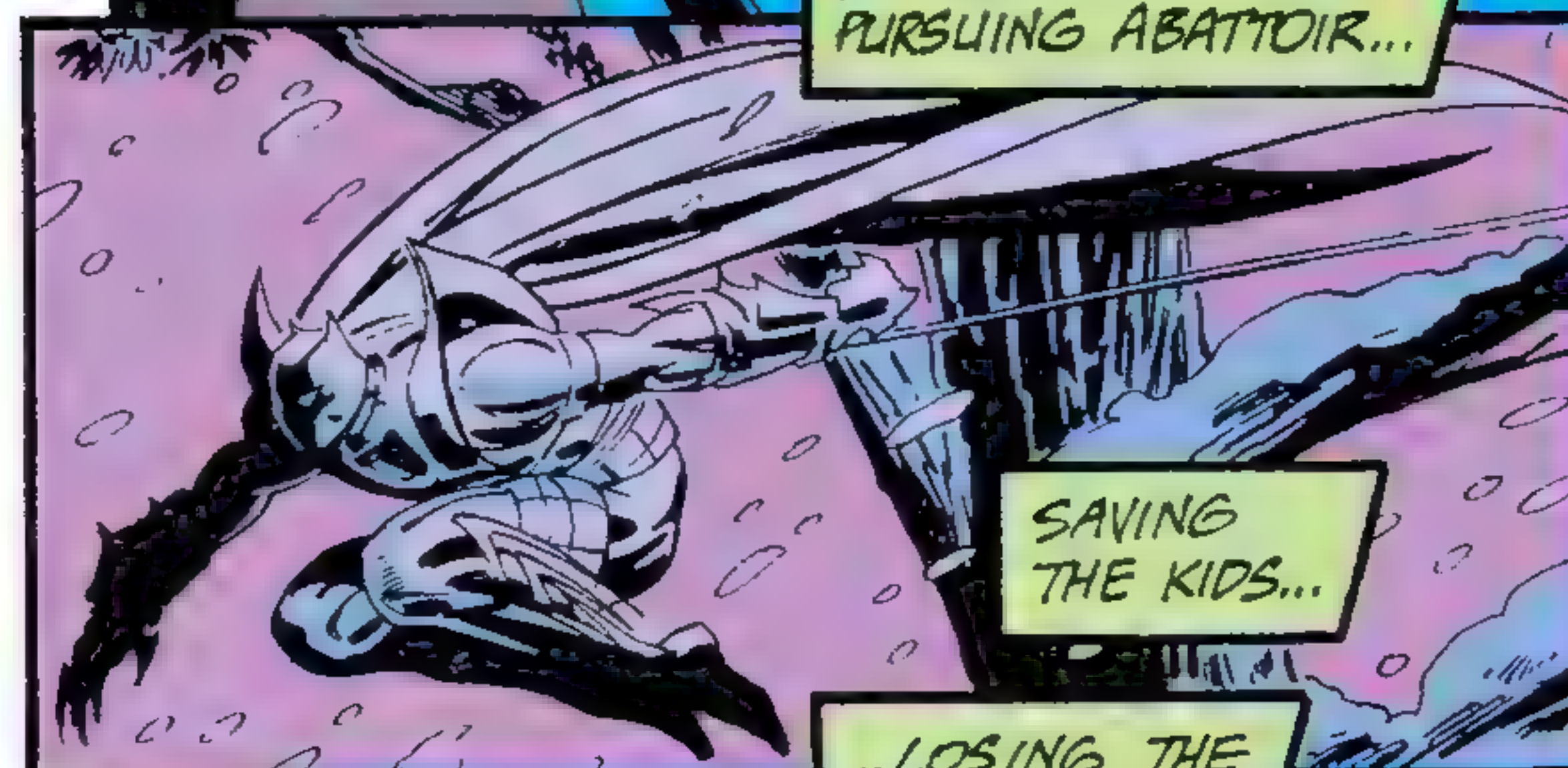
HE RECALLS HIS
FIRST, DISASTROUS,
ENCOUNTER WITH
ABATTOIR.

THE STRUGGLE
ATOP THE
SWERVING BUS...



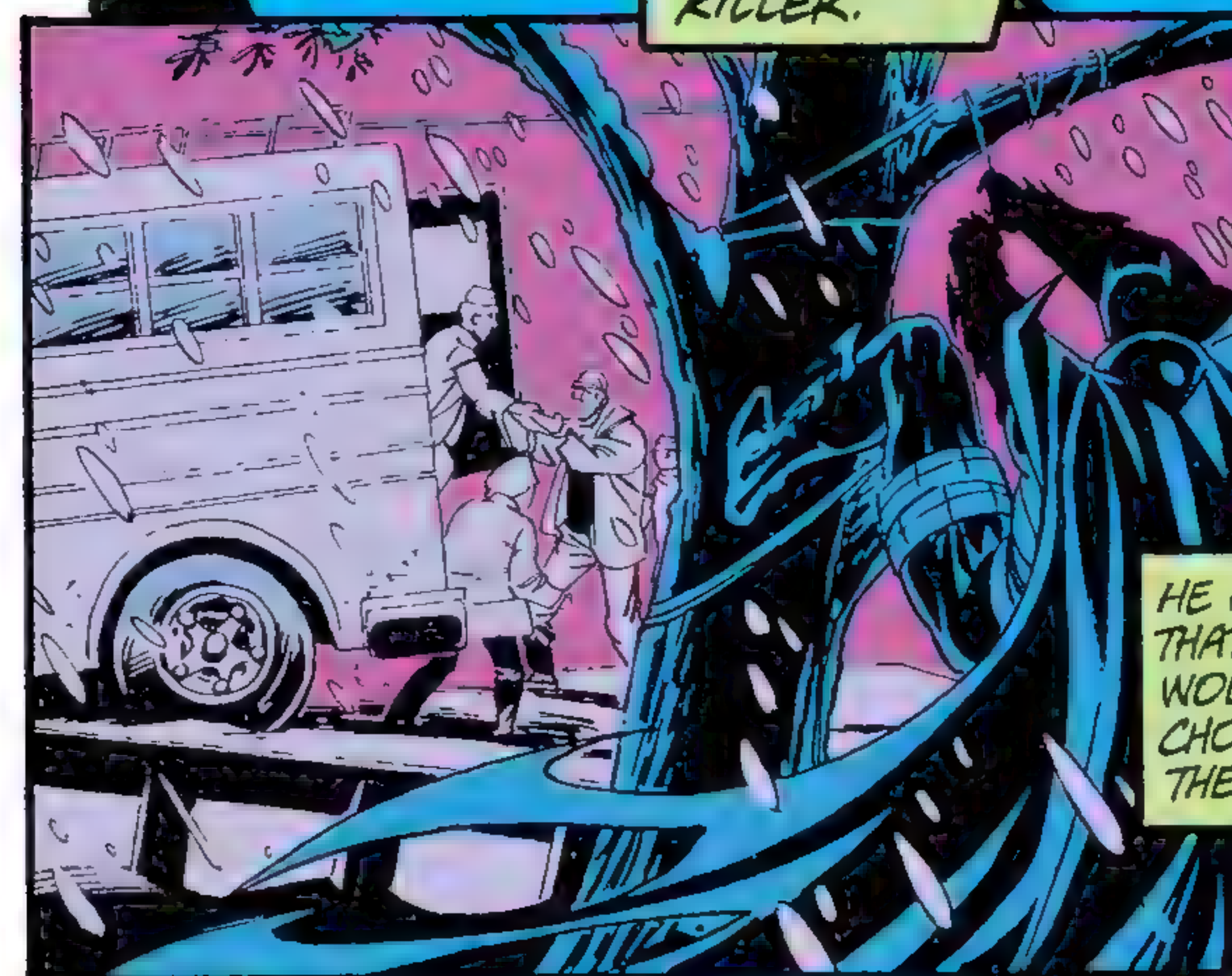
WATCHING
ABATTOIR JUMP
TO FREEDOM...

SECURING THE BUS
RATHER THAN
PURSUING ABATTOIR...



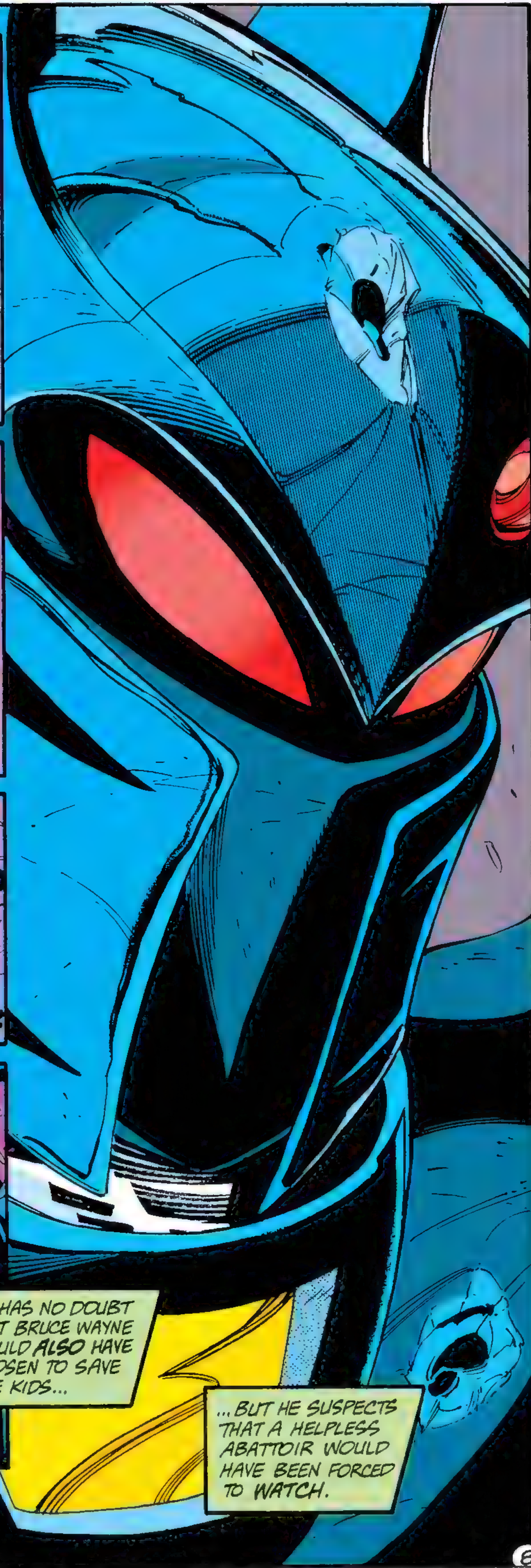
SAVING
THE KIDS...

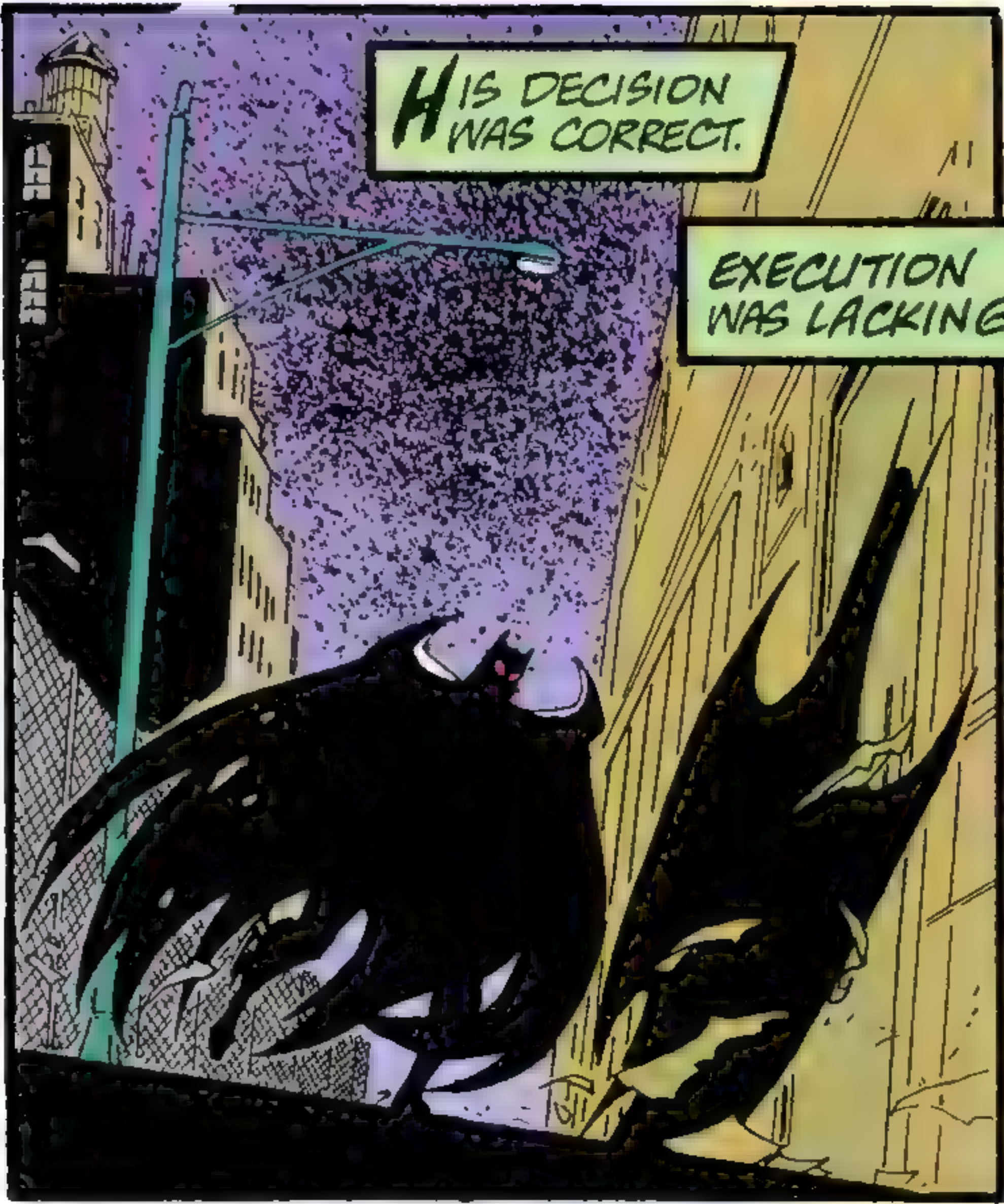
...LOSING THE
KILLER.



HE HAS NO DOUBT
THAT BRUCE WAYNE
WOULD ALSO HAVE
CHOSEN TO SAVE
THE KIDS...

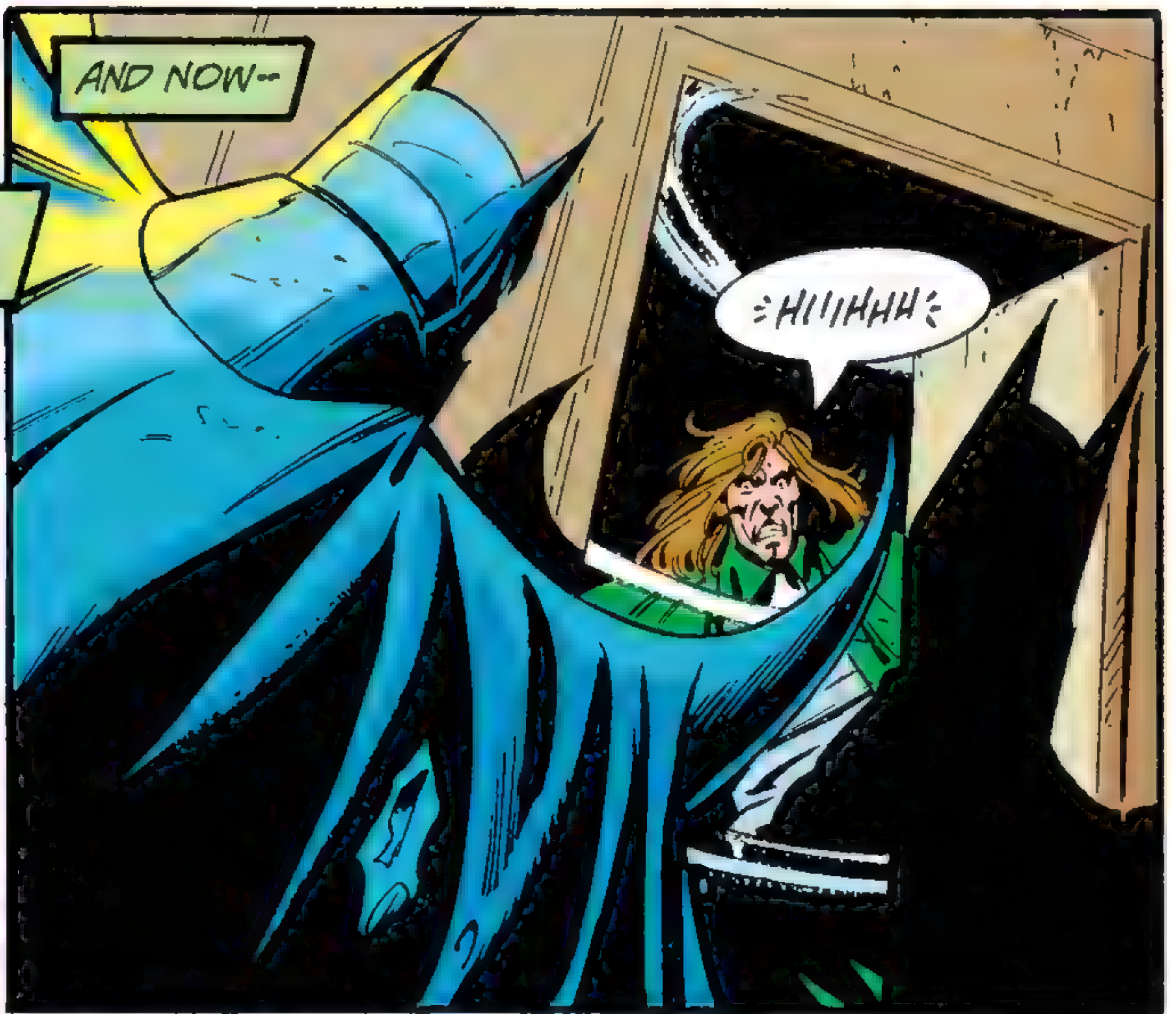
...BUT HE SUSPECTS
THAT A HELPLESS
ABATTOIR WOULD
HAVE BEEN FORCED
TO WATCH.





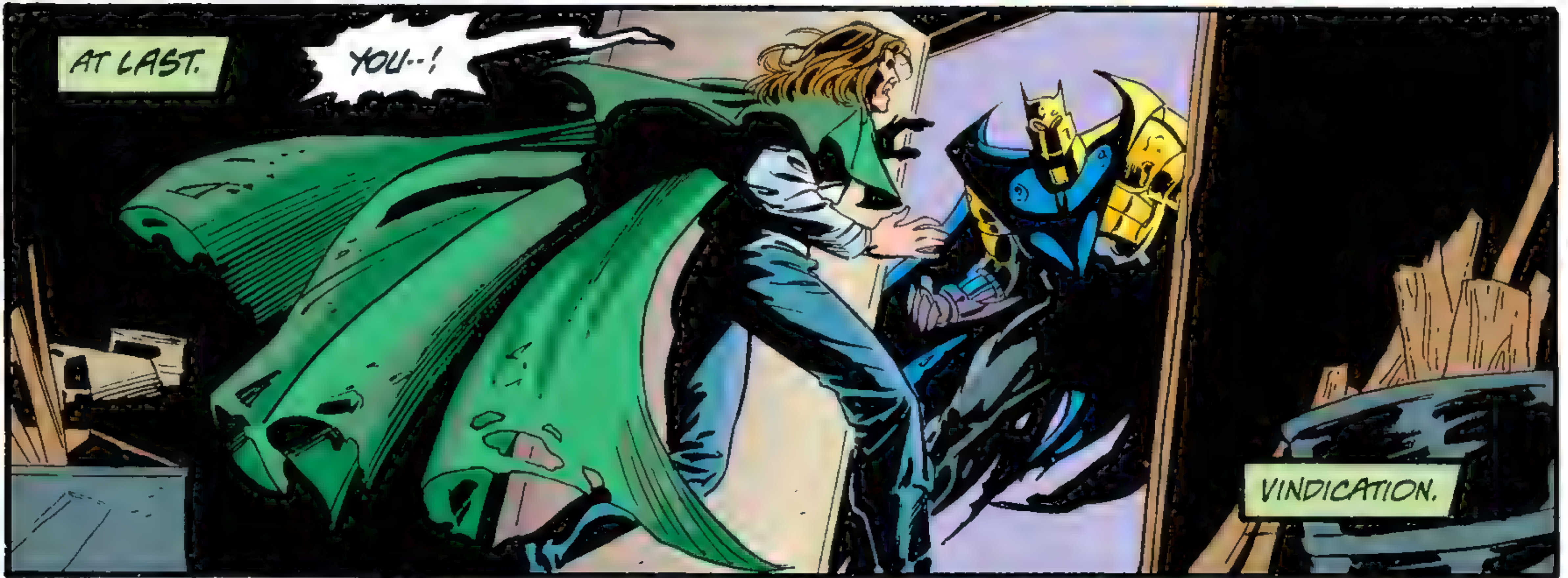
HIS DECISION
WAS CORRECT.

EXECUTION
WAS LACKING.



AND NOW--

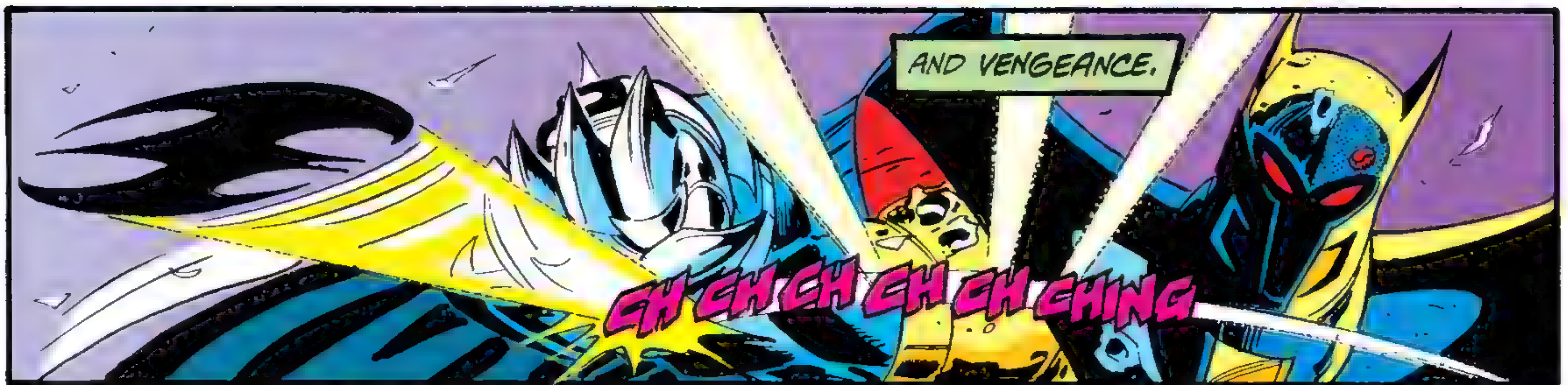
SHHHHHH



AT LAST.

YOU--!

VINDICATION.



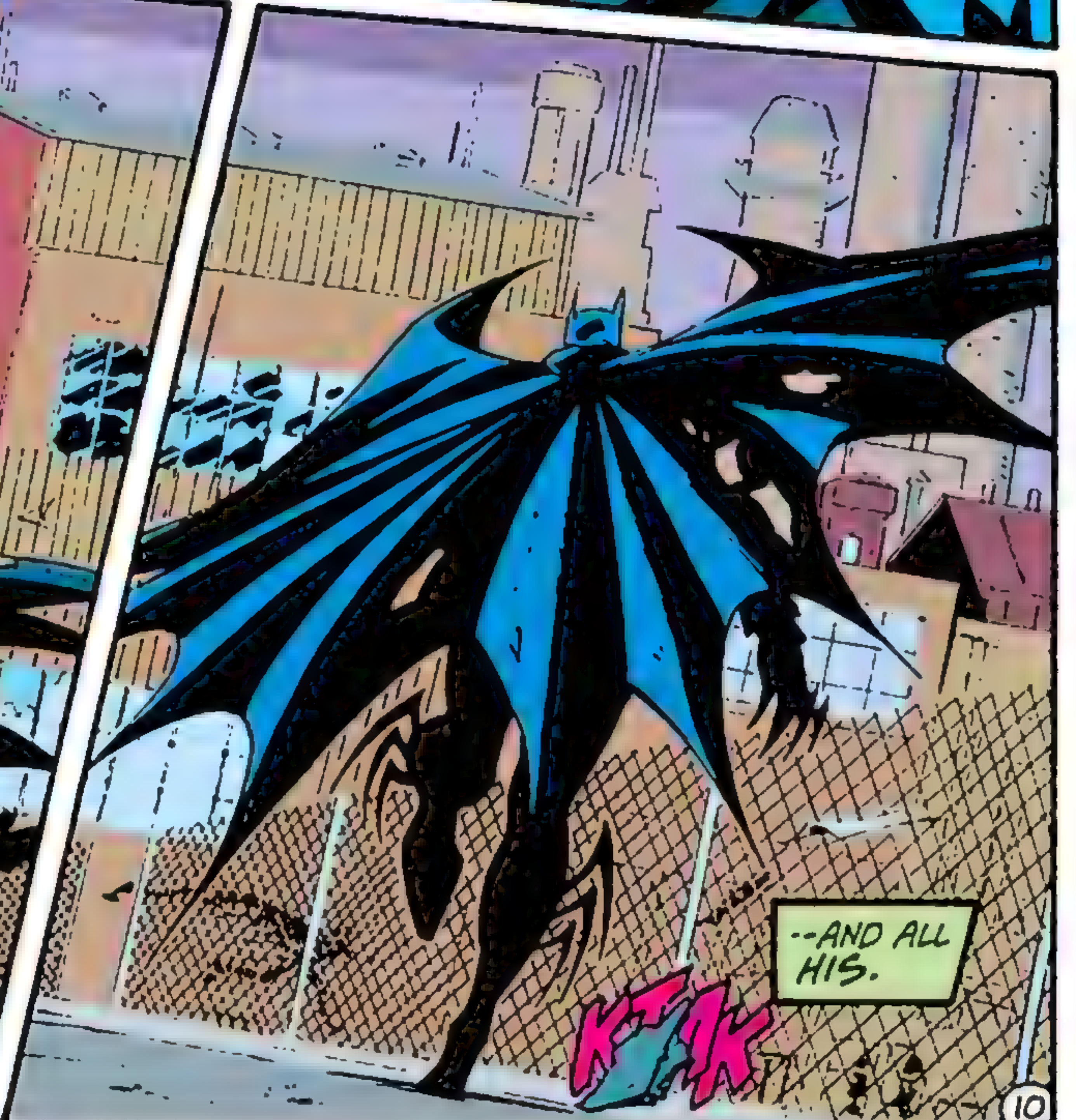
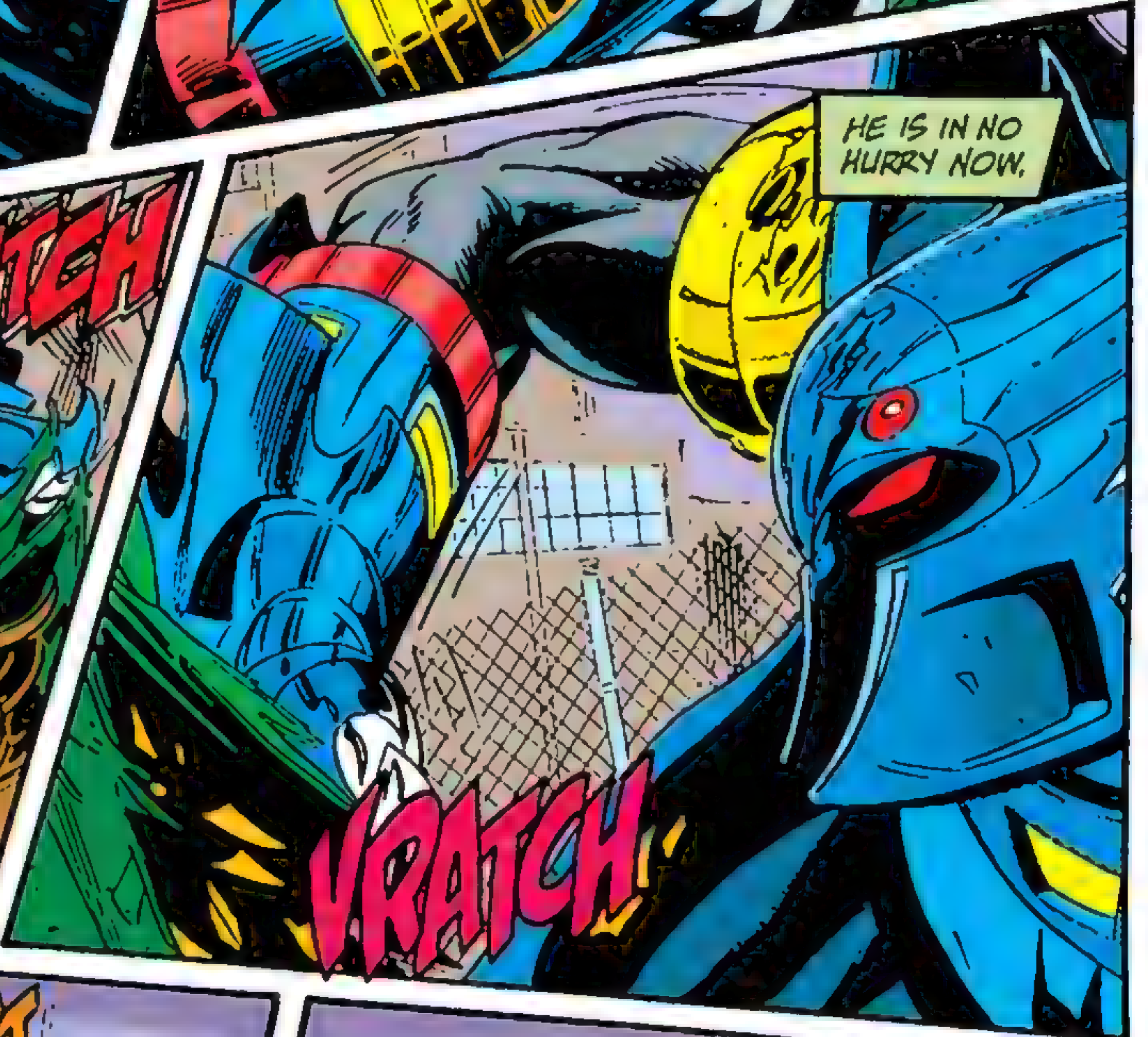
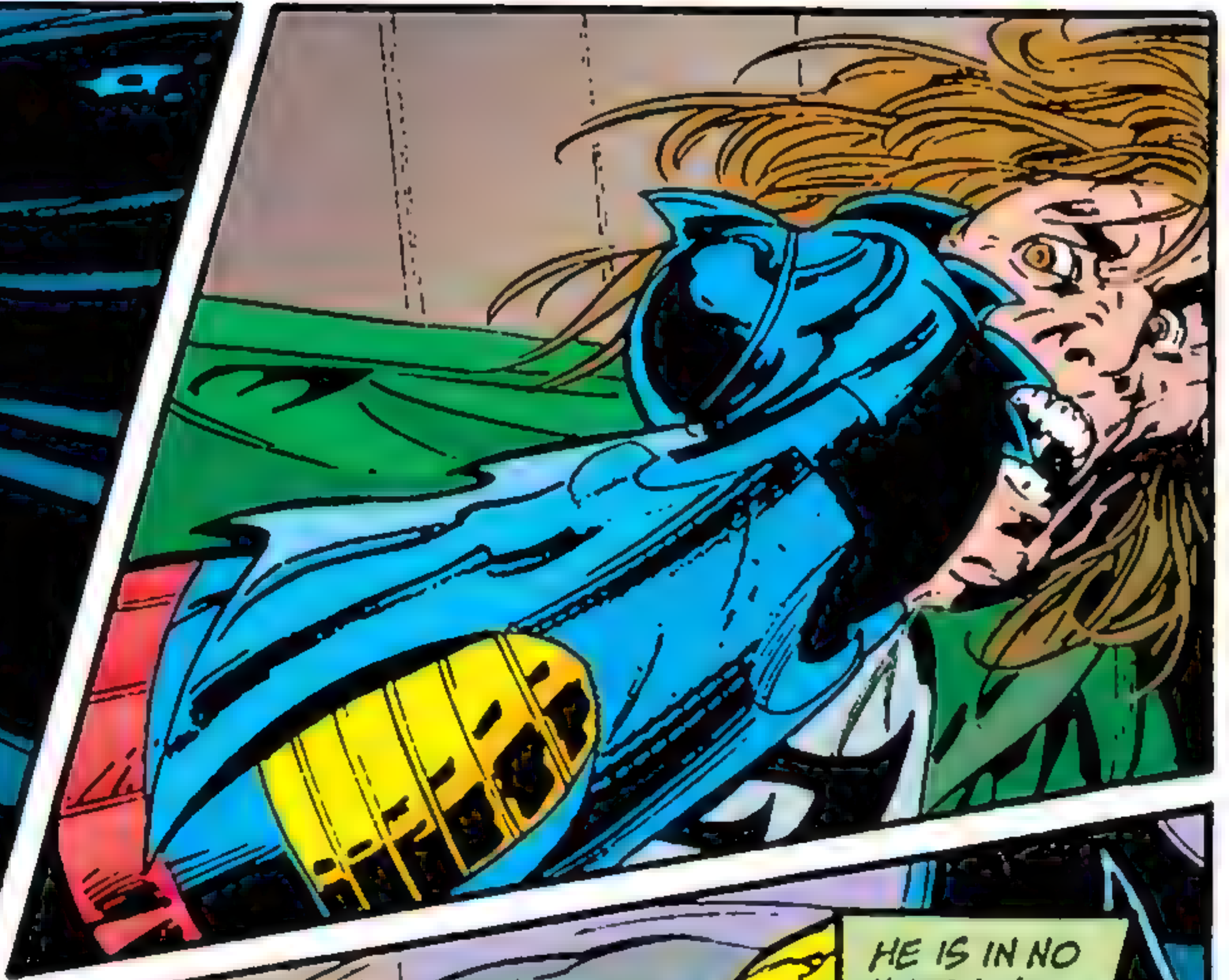
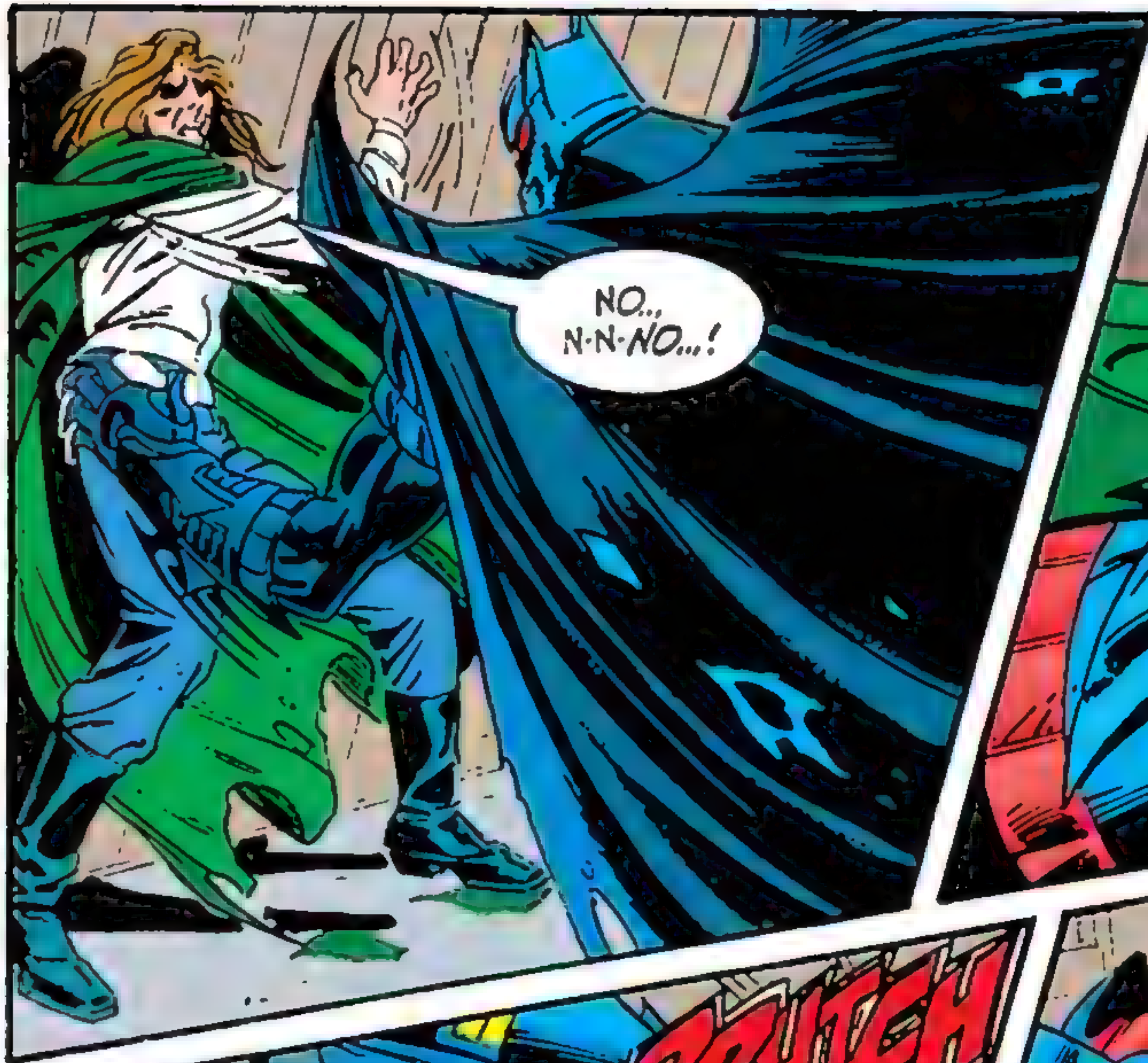
AND VENGEANCE.

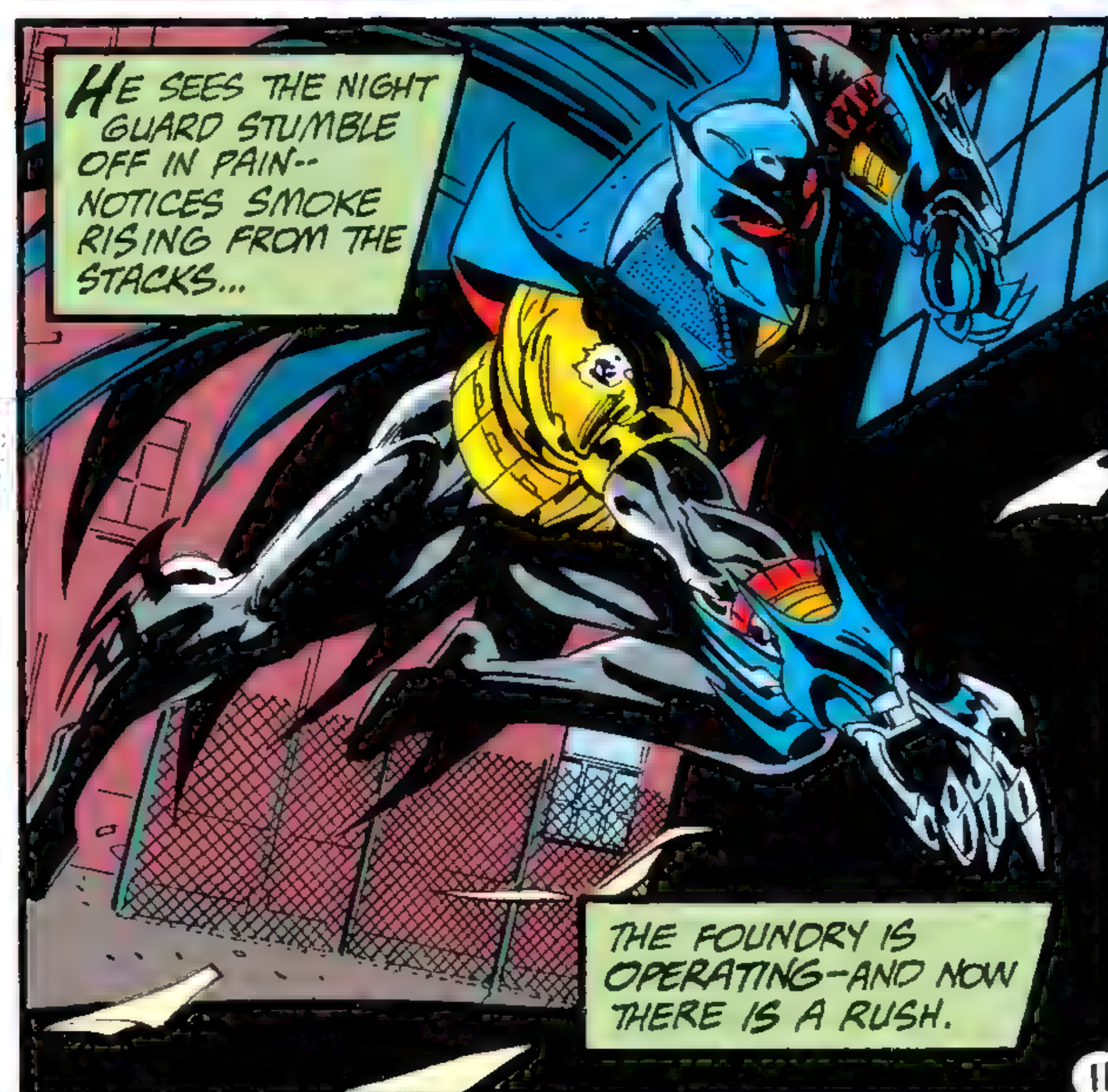
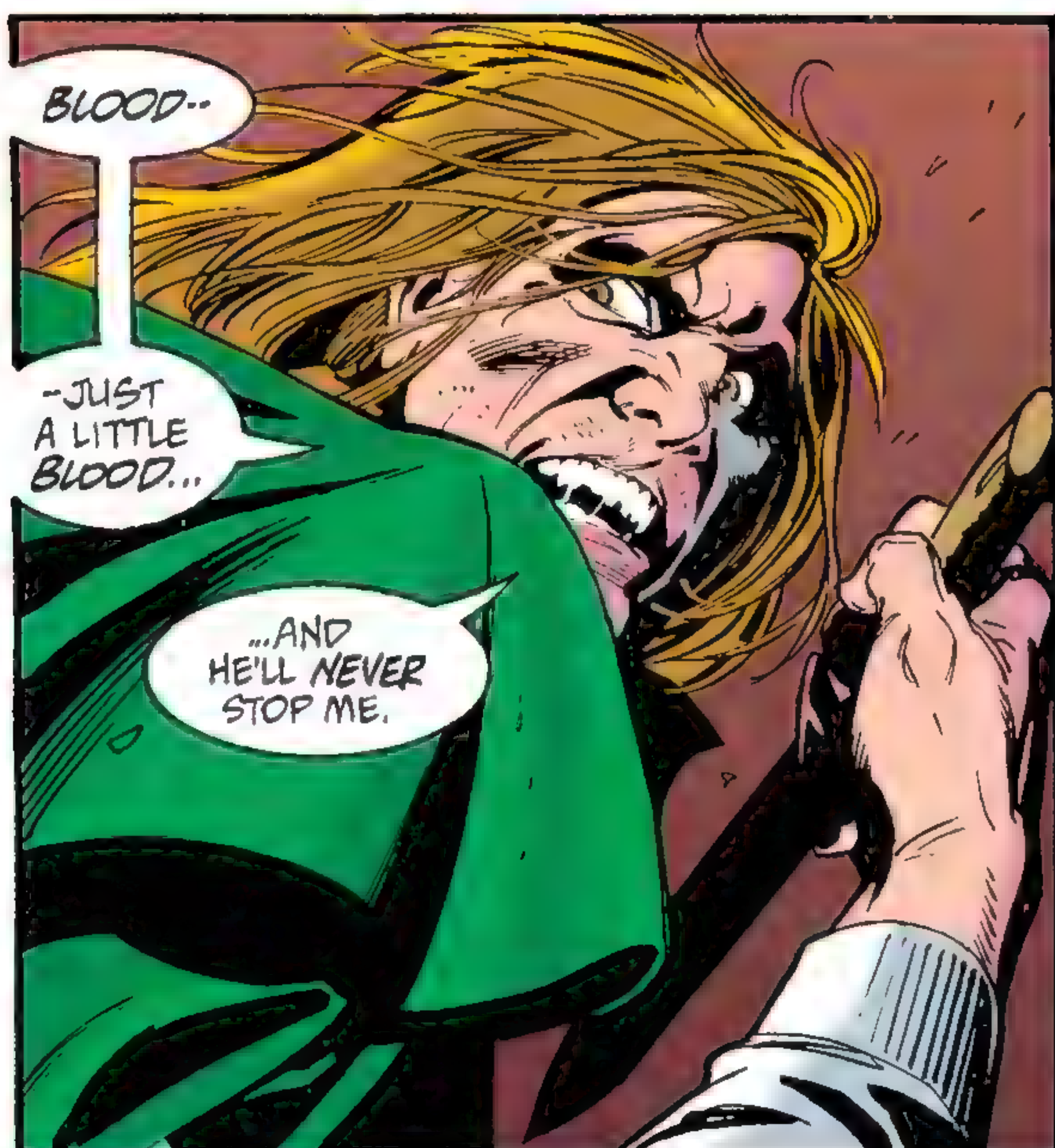
EH EH EH EH EH CHING



STOK TOK TOK TOK TUKT

UNFFF!







GOTTA
HELP
HIM...

...OR
STOP
HIM.



BLOOD!

RUN!

UHN-?!

WHAT
THE-?!

GET
OUTTA
HERE! HE'S
CRAZY!



MORE
BLOOD!

YOUR
DEATH
FOR MY
LIFE!

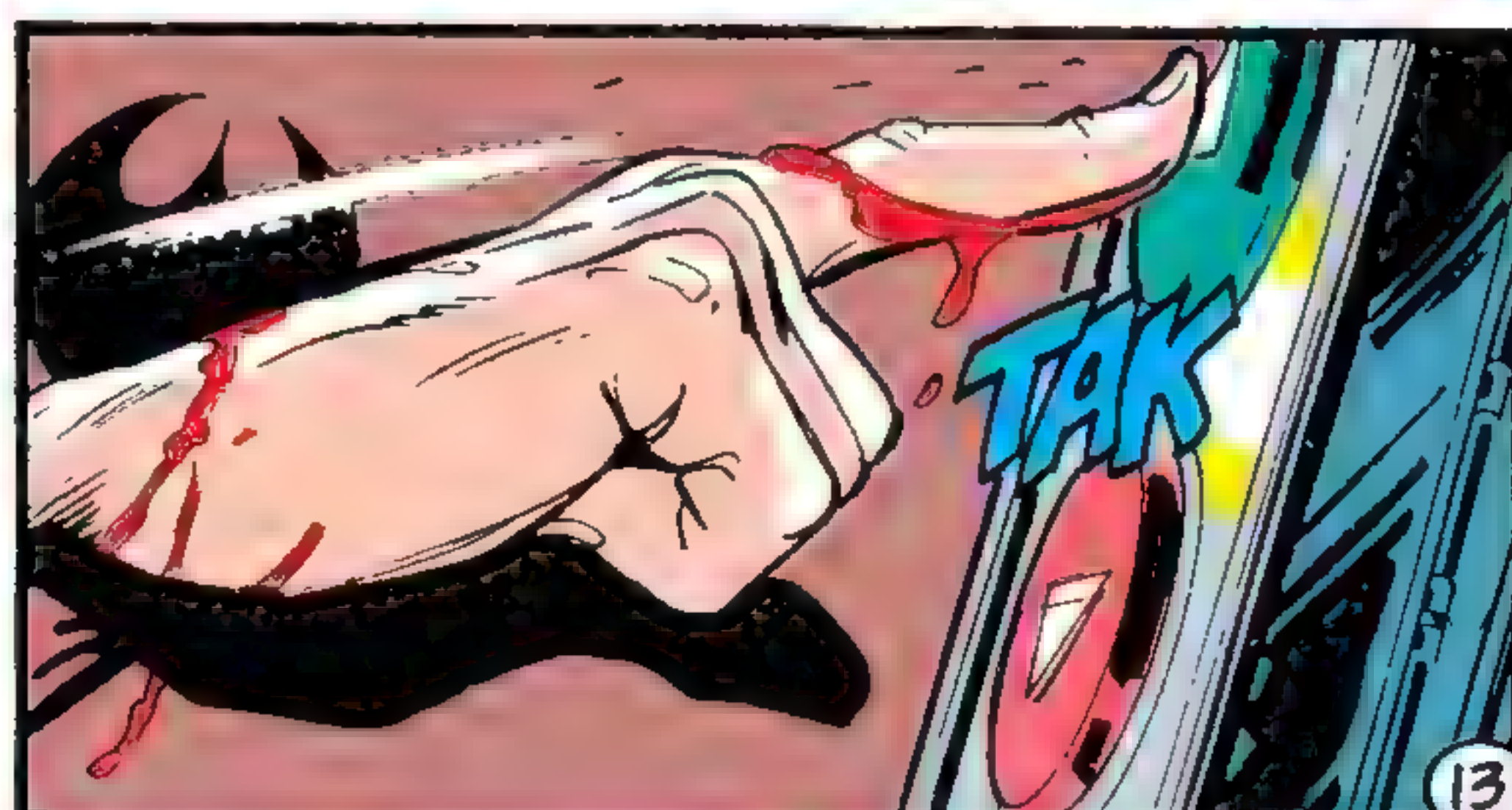
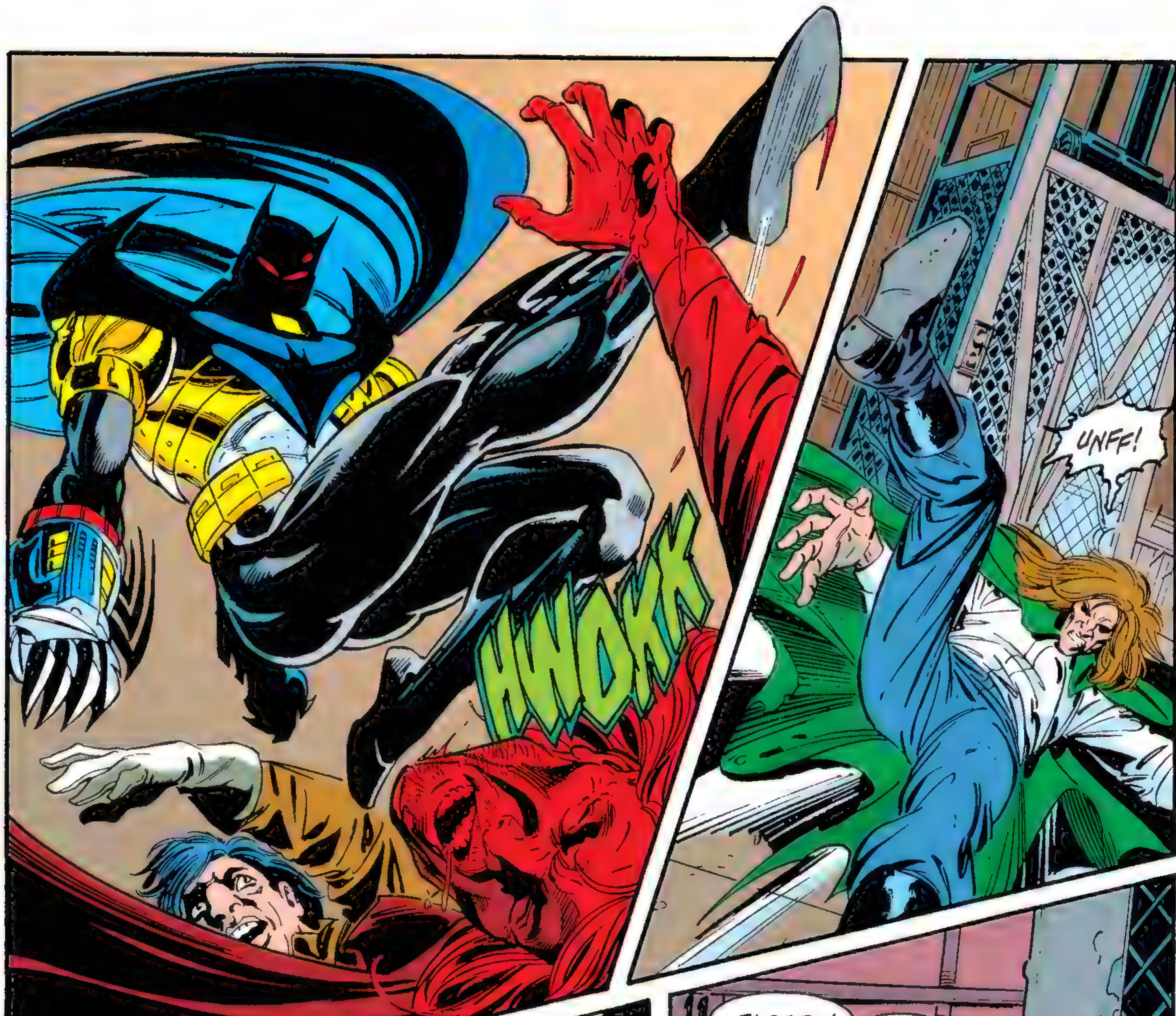
NO!
PLEASE--!
I'VE GOT A
WIFE AND..

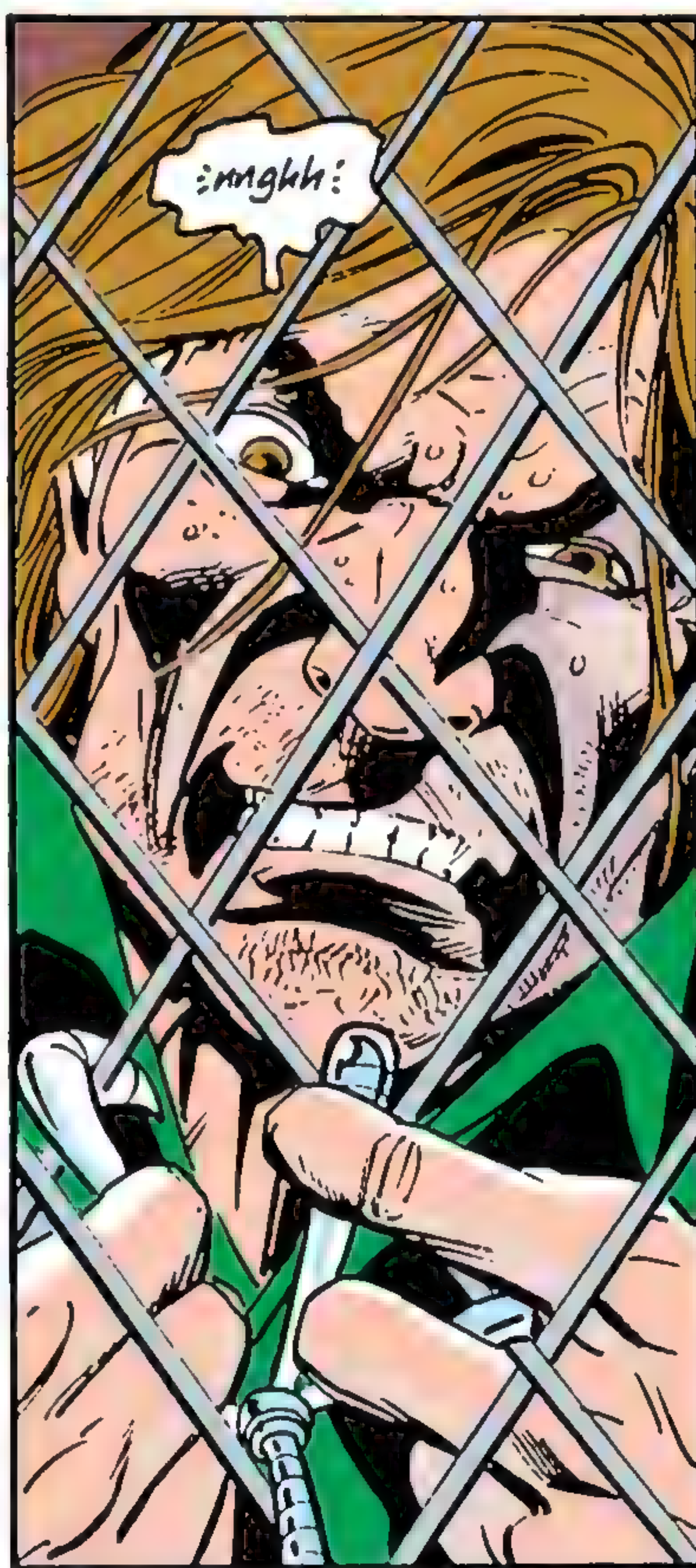
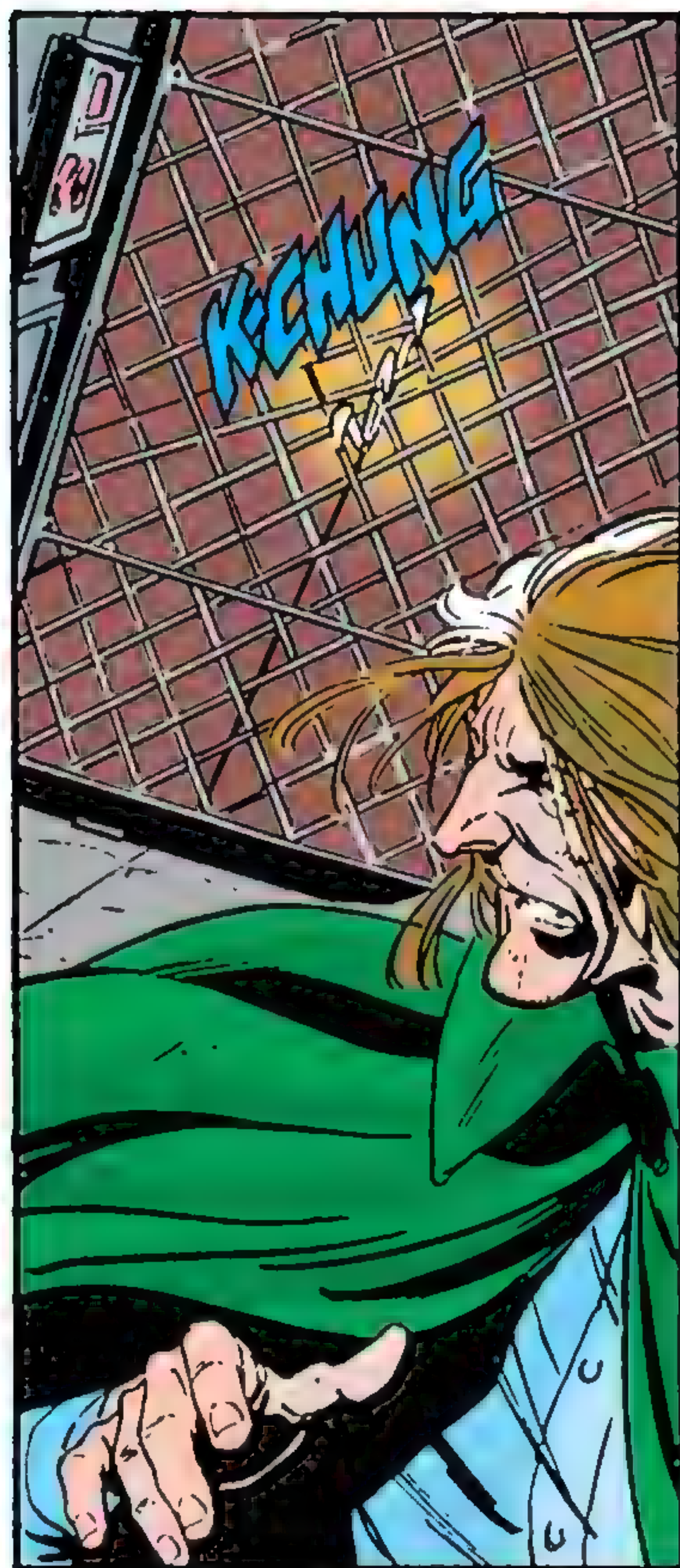
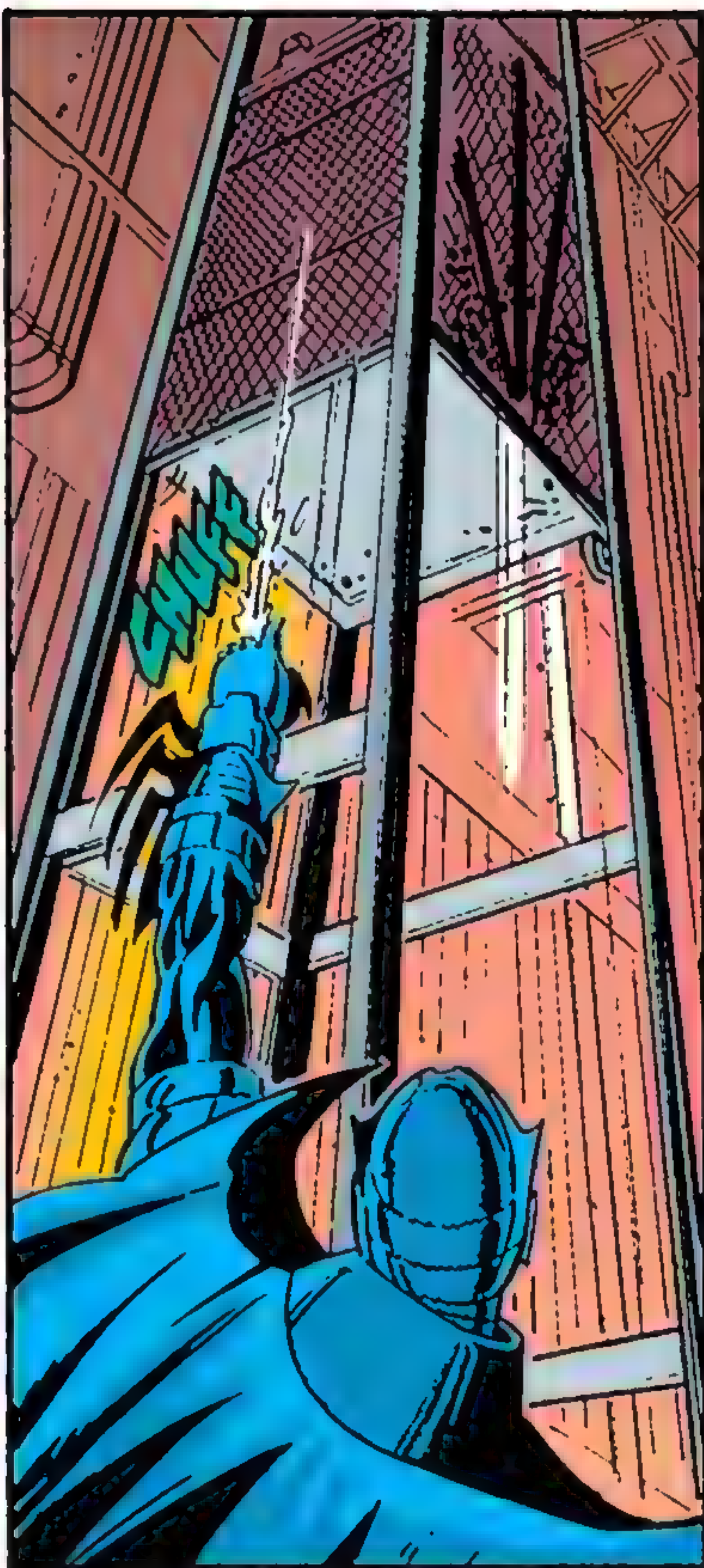
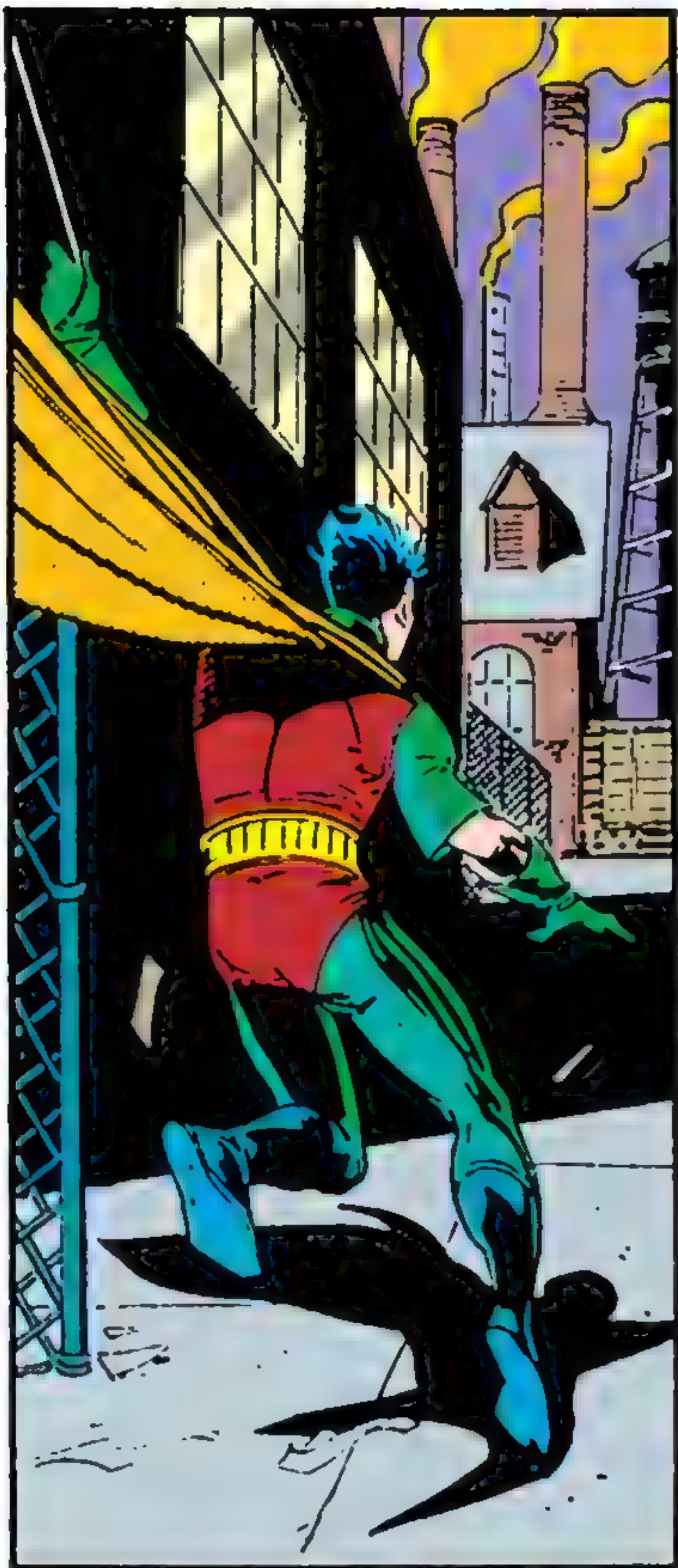


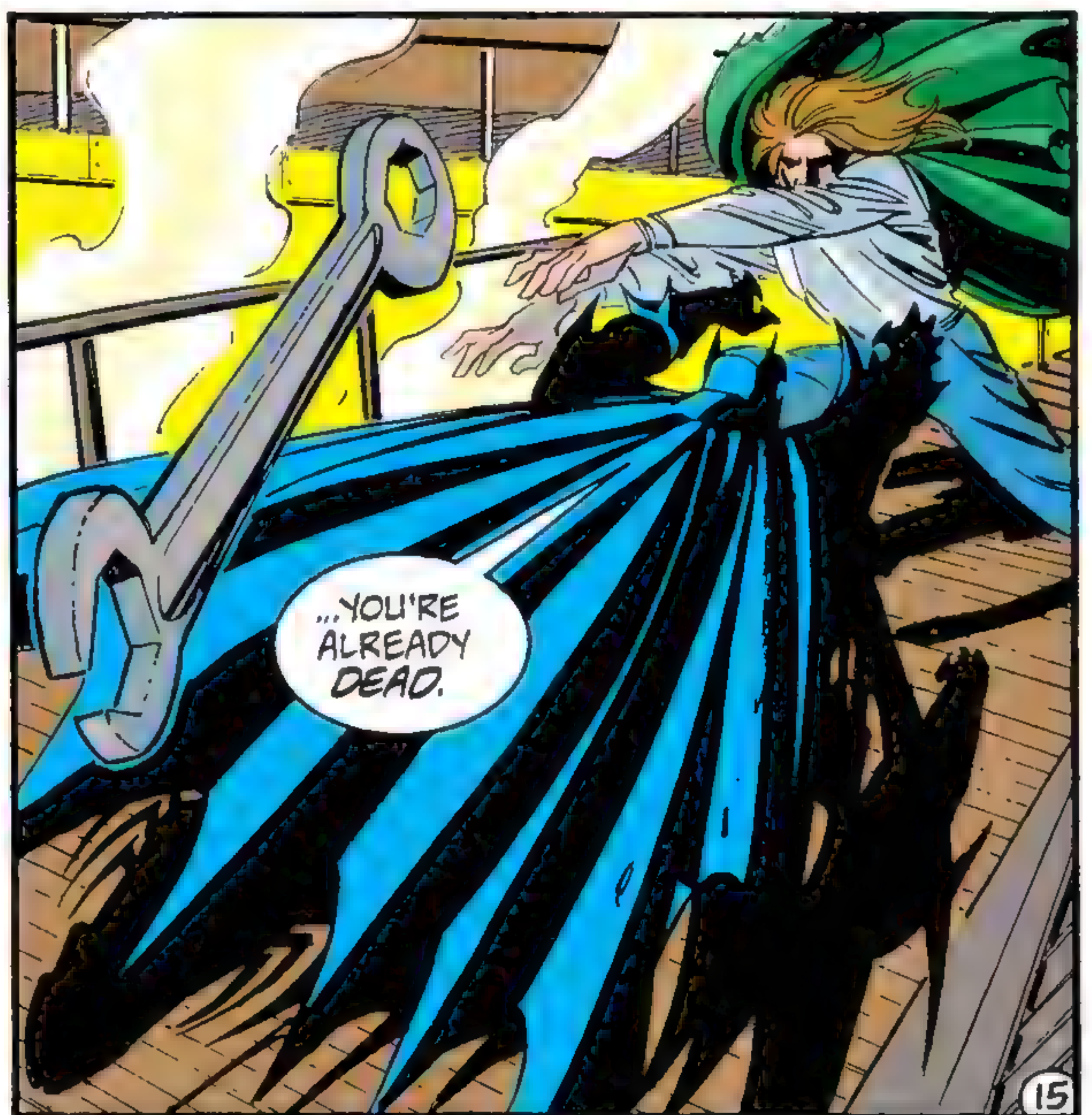
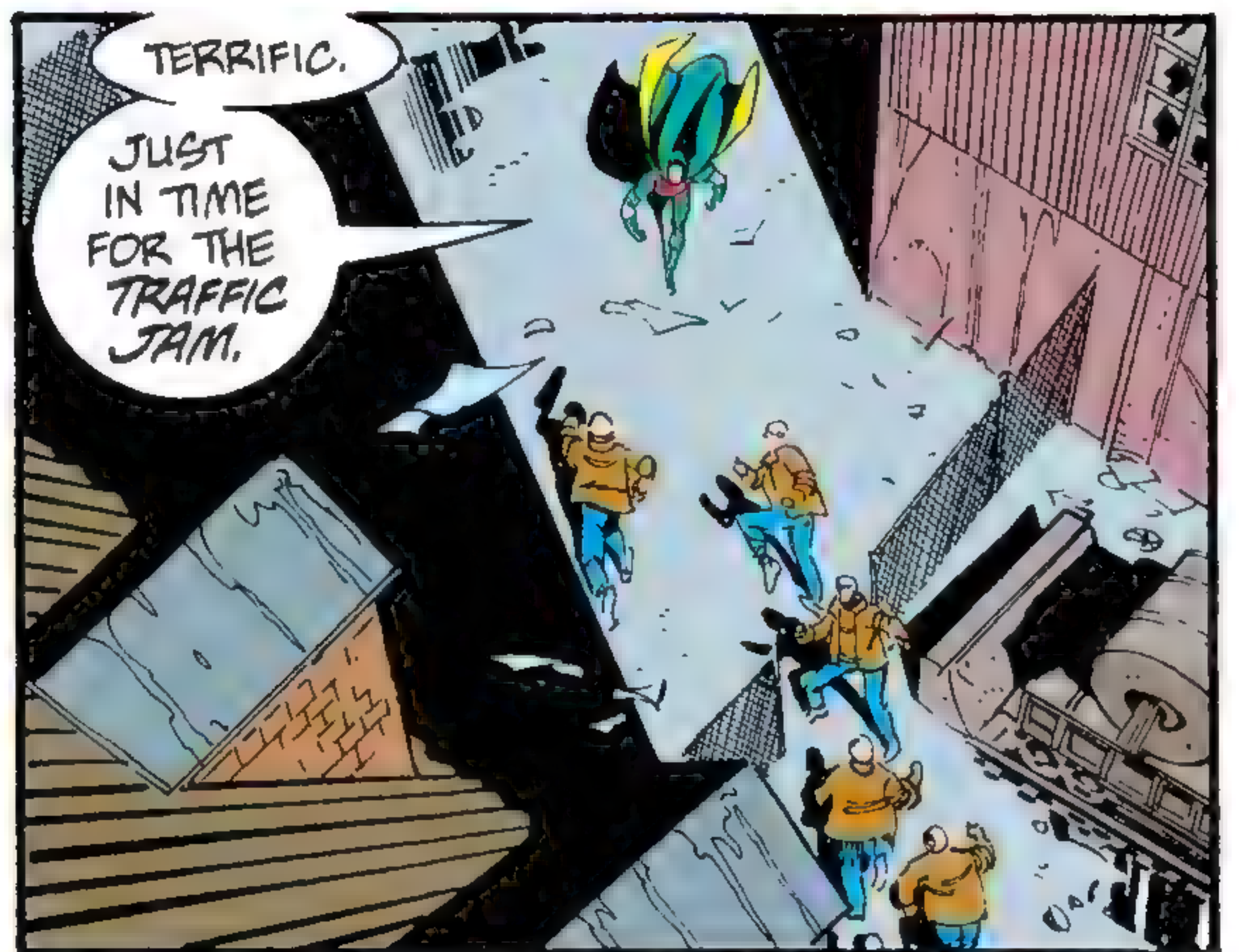
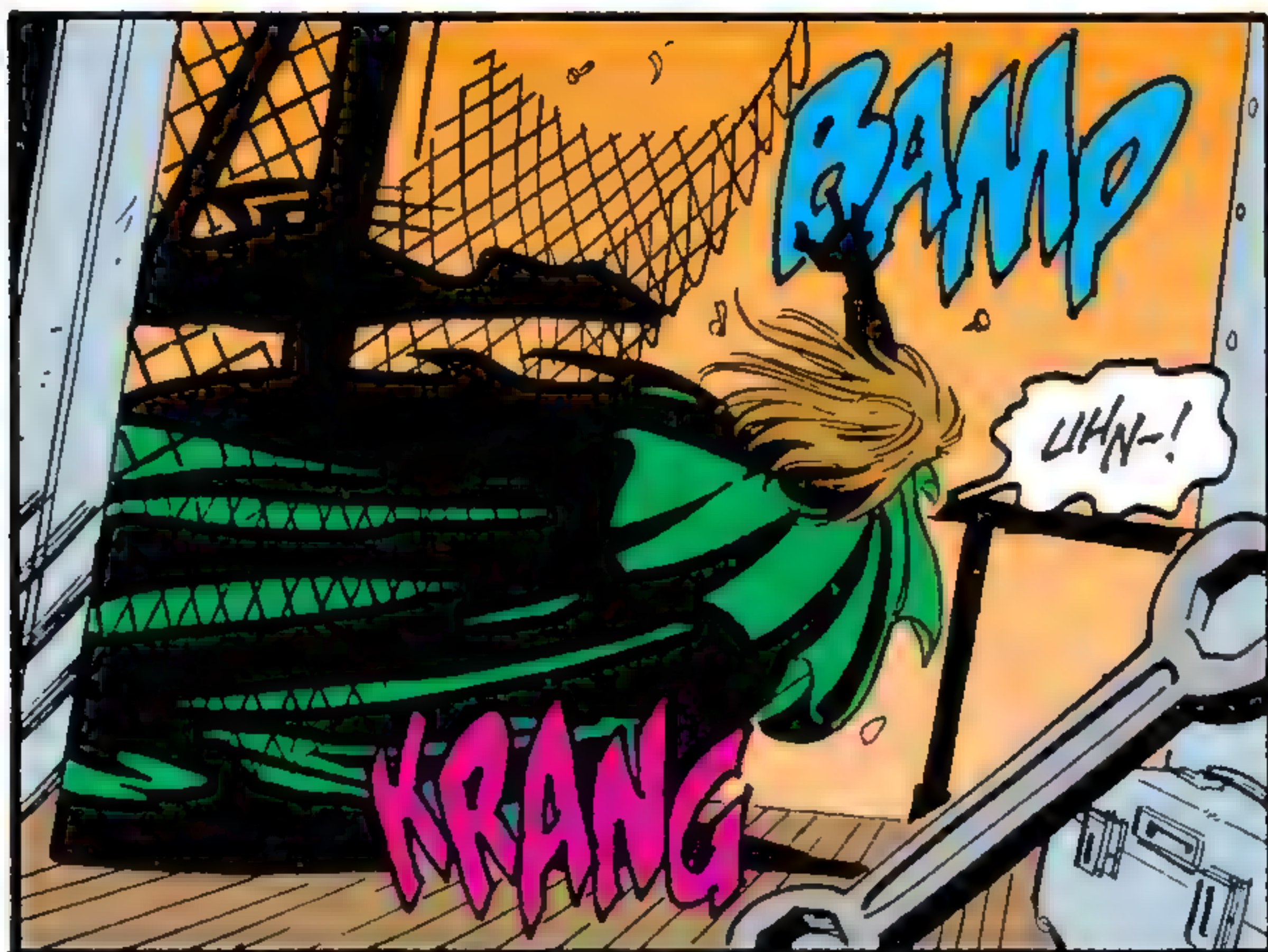
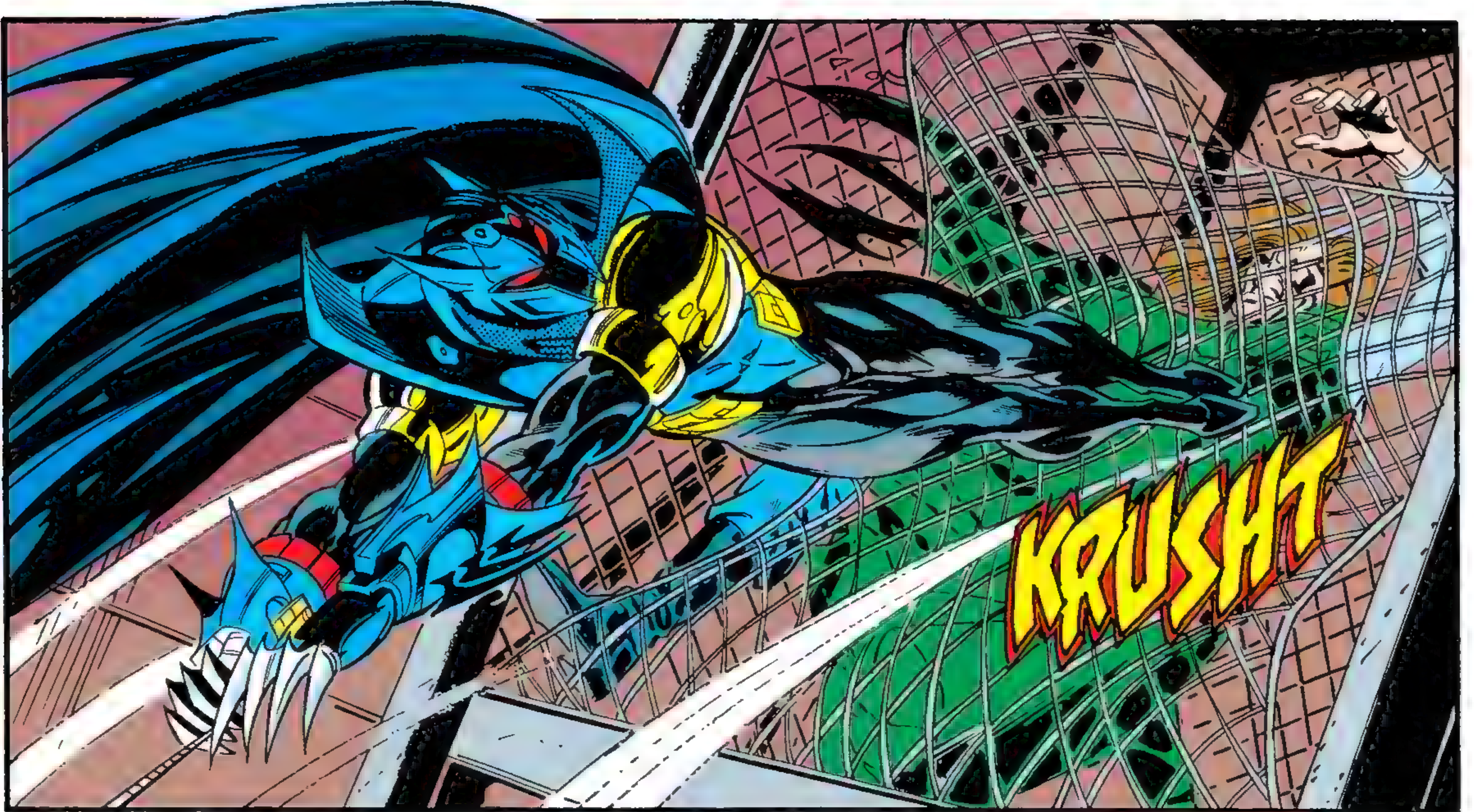
SKING

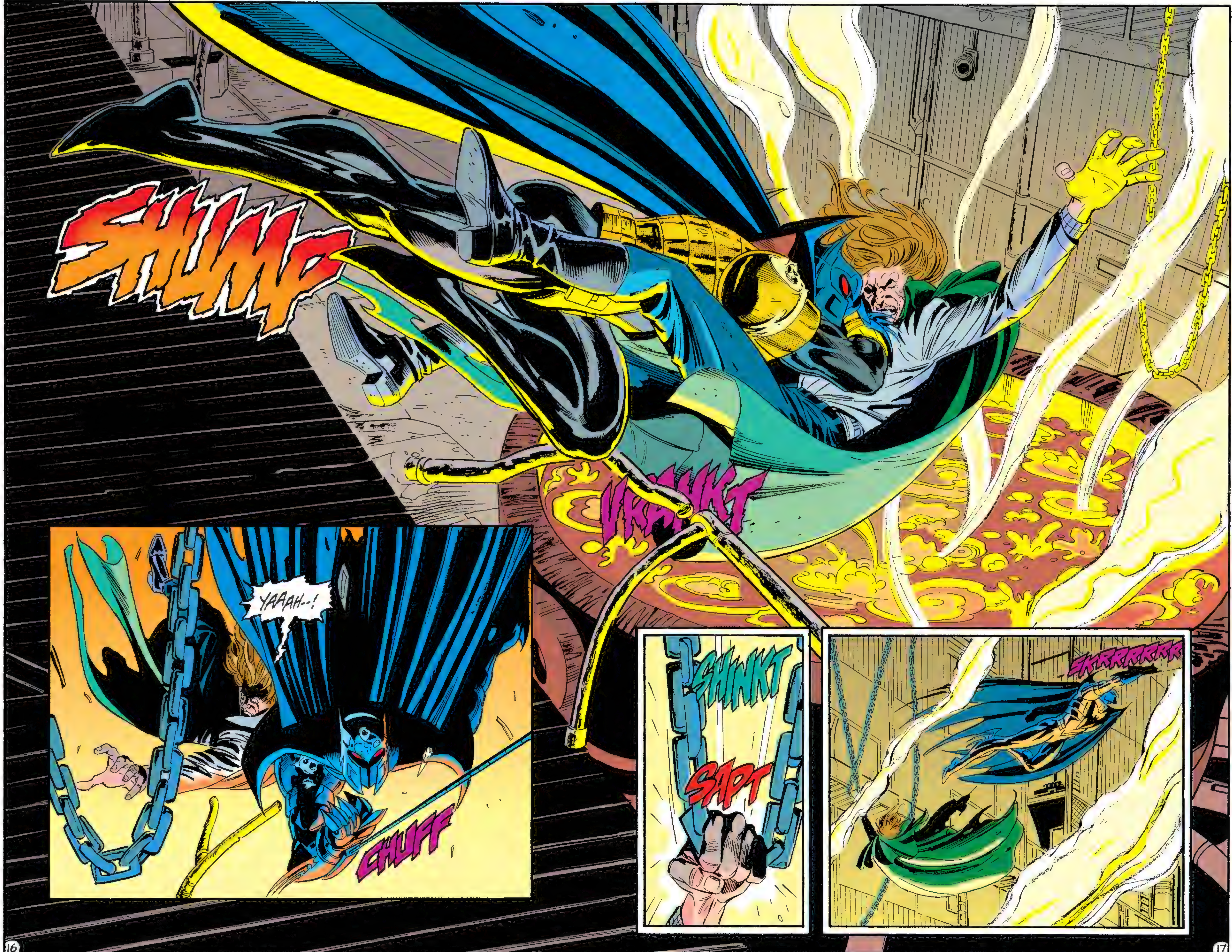
CHUT
THUTCH

AAHRRR!









THUMP

SHINKT

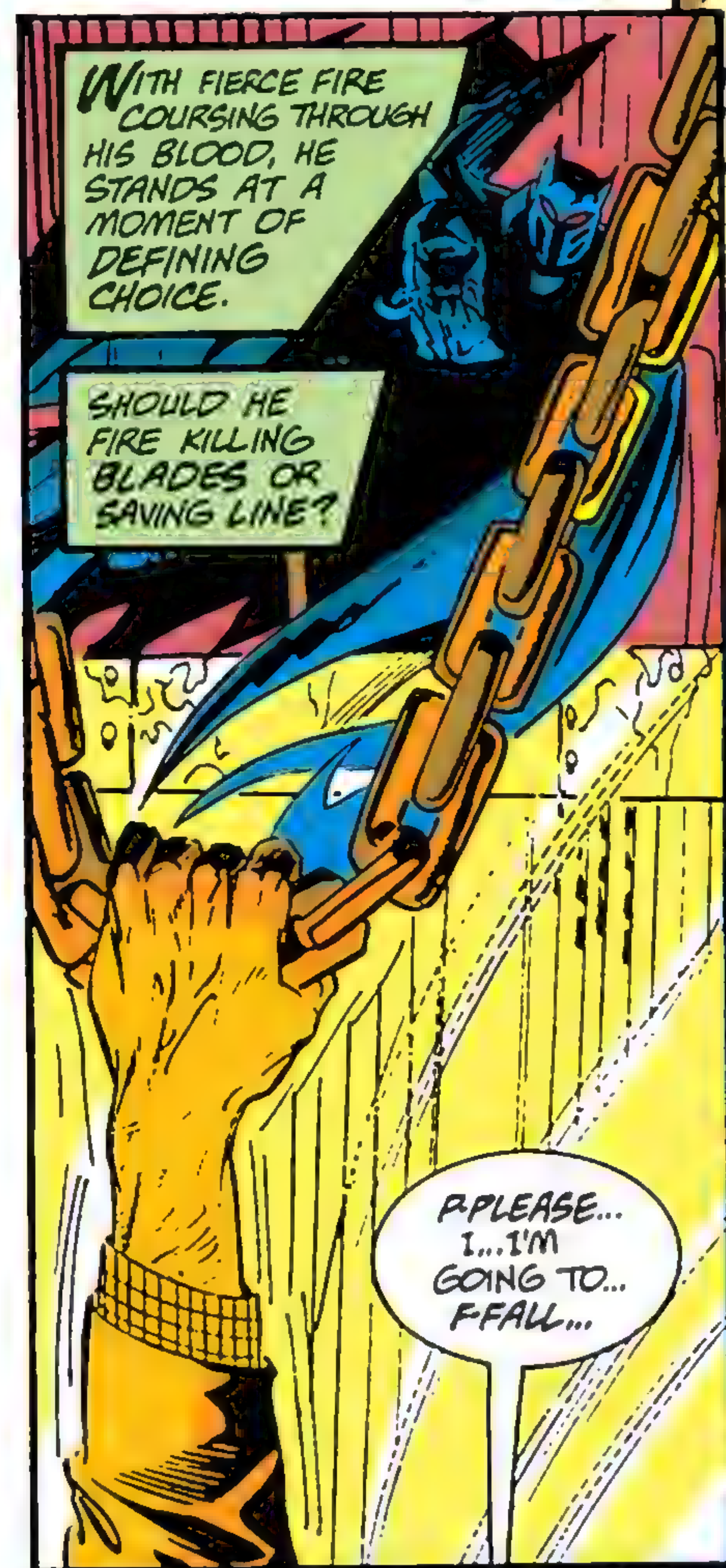
YAAAH--!

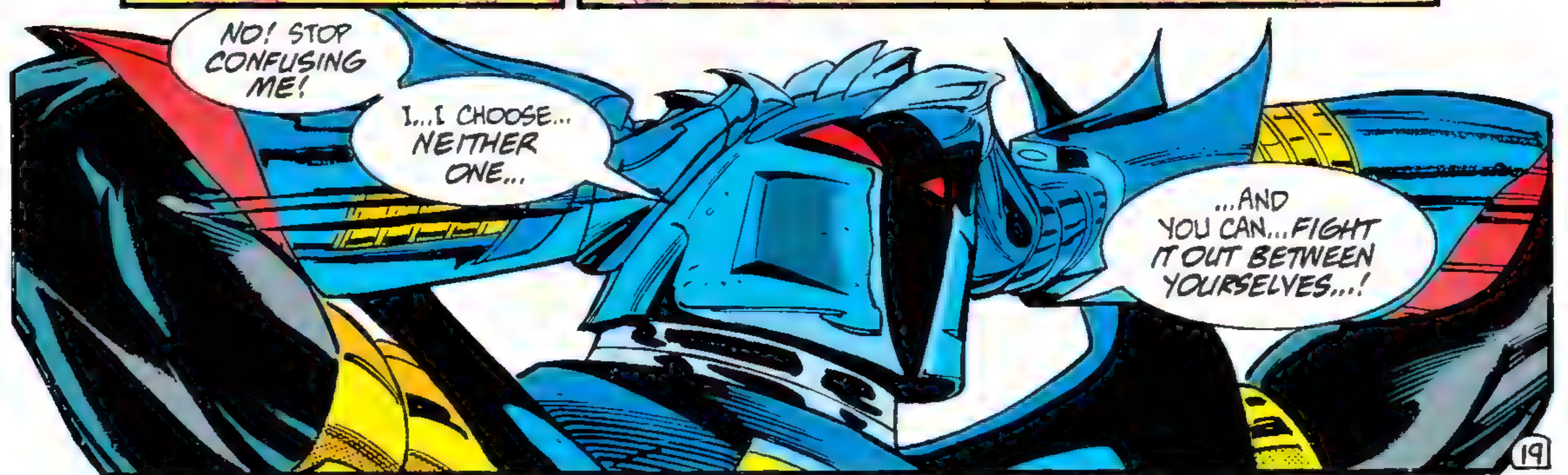
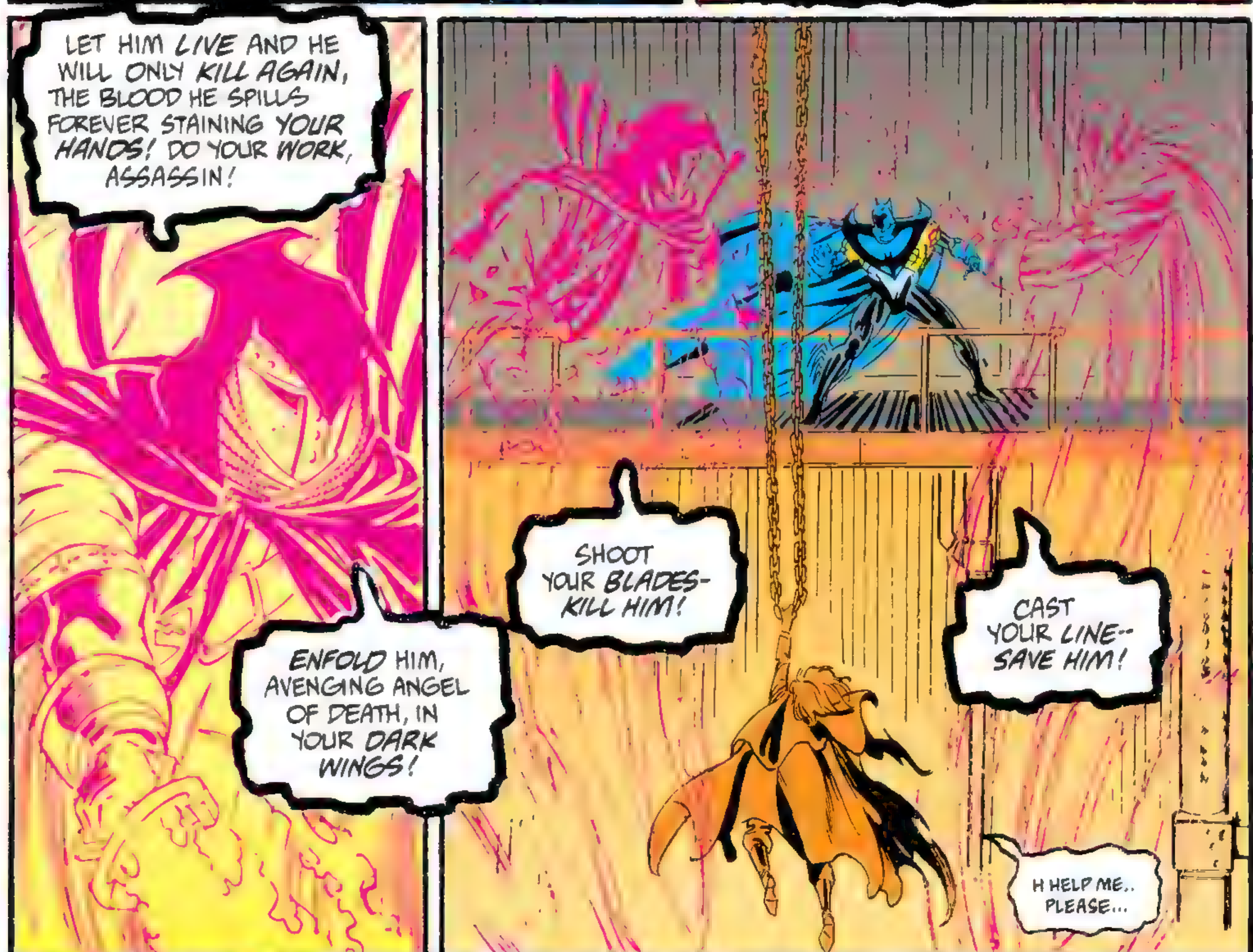
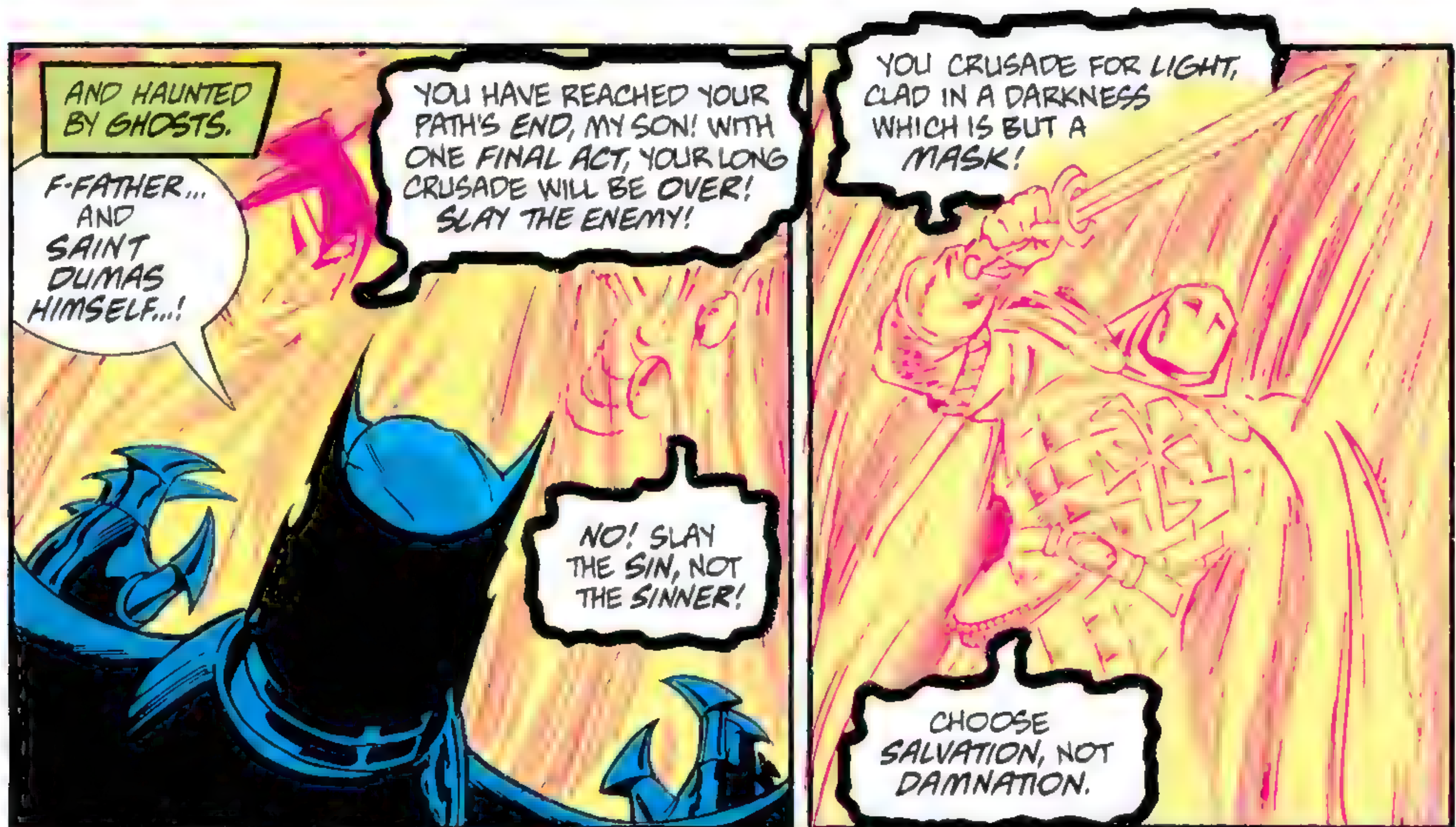
CHUFF

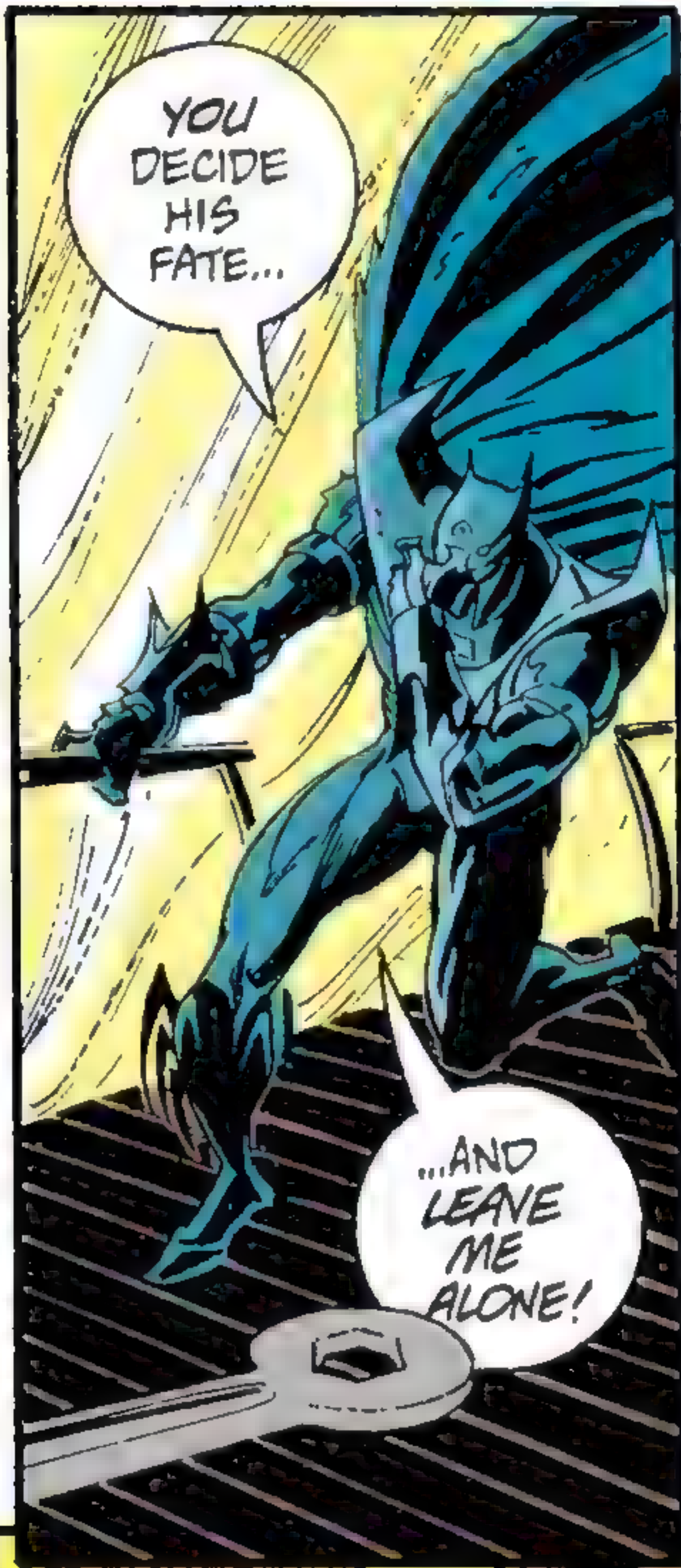
SHINKT

SAPT

SKRRRRRR





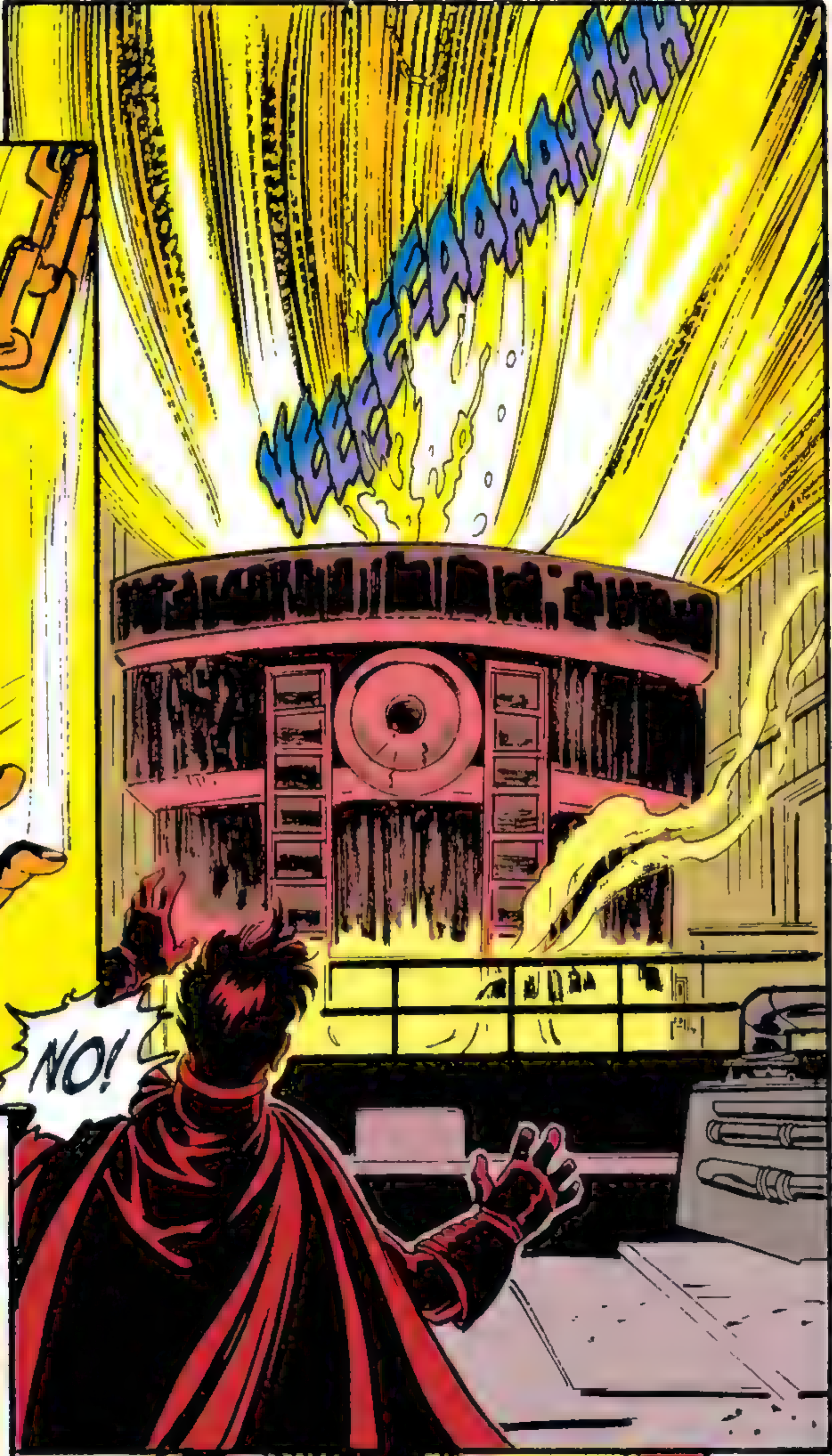


YOU
DECIDE
HIS
FATE...

...AND
LEAVE
ME
ALONE!



RINK!



NO!

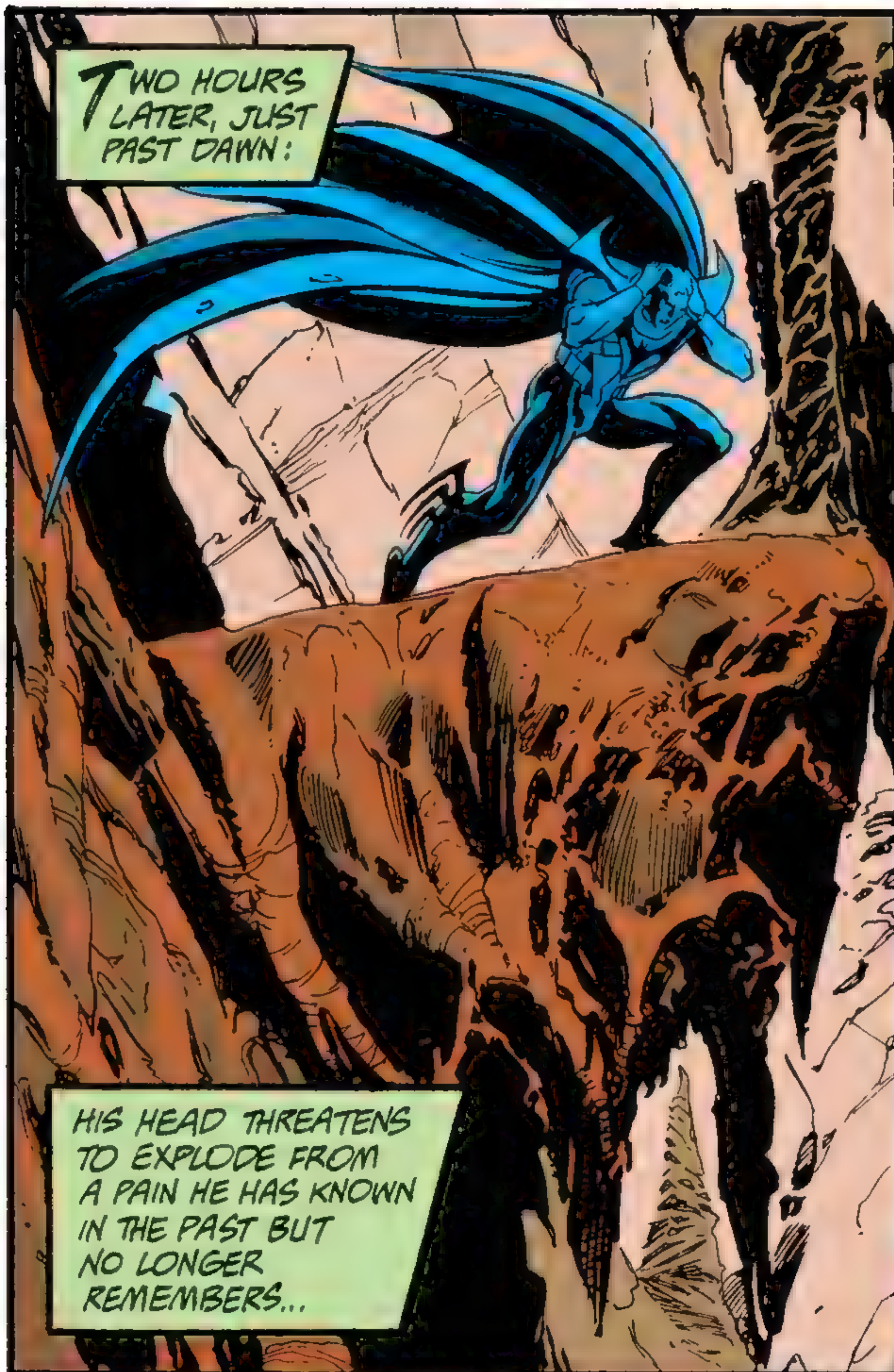


HE...
HE DID
IT...



HE...
LET...
HIM...

...DIE.



TWO HOURS
LATER, JUST
PAST DAWN:

HIS HEAD THREATENS
TO EXPLODE FROM
A PAIN HE HAS KNOWN
IN THE PAST BUT
NO LONGER
REMEMBERS...



...THE PAIN OF THE
SYSTEM, AND ALL
ITS DREAD DARK
SECRETS PLANTED
DEEPLY IN HIS MIND.

NO...



THE PAIN RIPS--
AND FOR A BLACK,
STAGGERING MOMENT,
HE FEARS HE IS
LOSING HIS MIND.

NO...

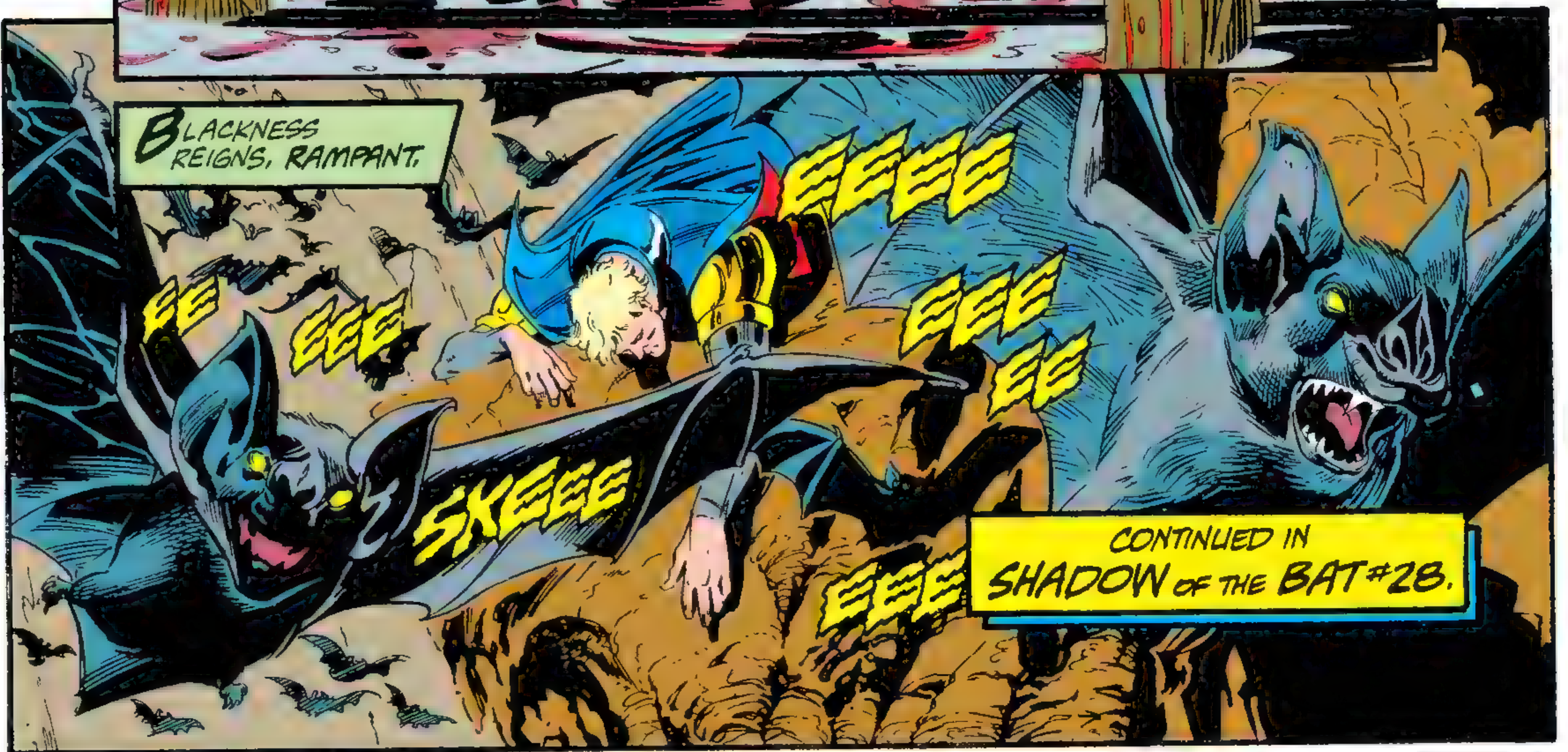
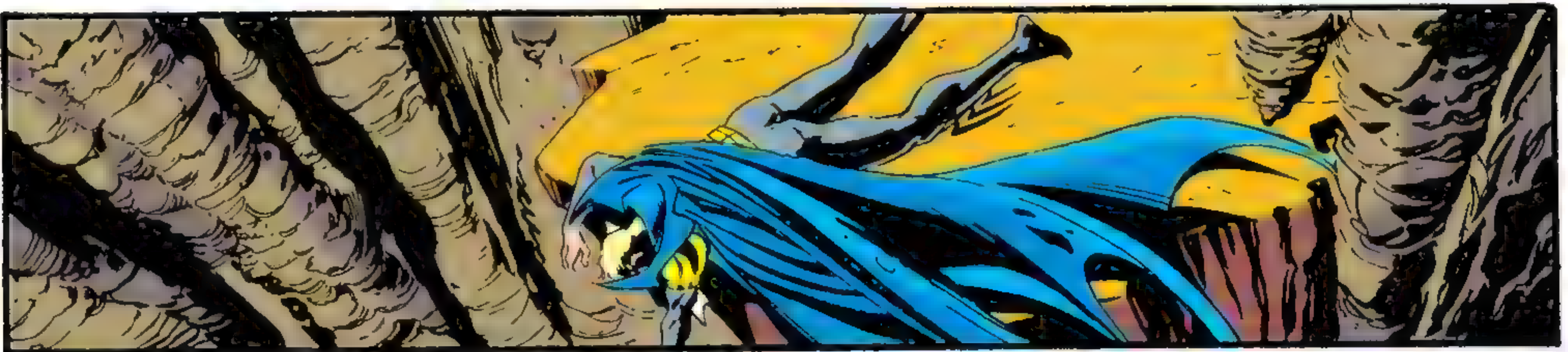
OR HAS ALREADY
LOST IT.



THEN HE
SCREAMS,

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO





Cover art by BRIAN STELFREEZE



KNIGHTQUEST™

THE CRUSADE

B A T M A N



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SHADOW OF THE BAT™

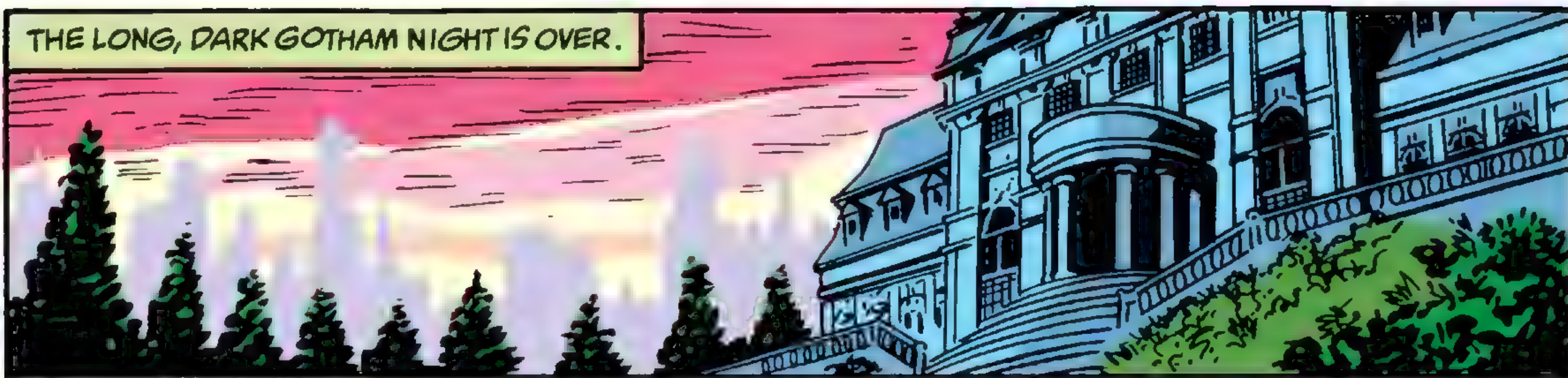
COMMISSIONER GORDON™

THE LONG DARK NIGHT

GRANT BLEVINS SMITH



THE LONG, DARK GOTHAM NIGHT IS OVER.



IN HIS CAVE BENEATH A NEGLECTED, DECAYING MANSION, A MAN CONSIDERS THE RESULTS OF HIS NOCTURNAL CALLING.

IN THE TIME SINCE HE FIRST PUT ON THE CAPE AND COWL, JEAN PAUL VALLEY HAS SAVED HIS ADOPTED CITY A DOZEN TIMES AND MORE. HE'S SENT CRIMINALS TO JAIL -- TO THE HOSPITAL -- AND RUNNING SCARED RIGHT OUT OF TOWN.



BLACKGATE



BLACKGATE



AT LARGE



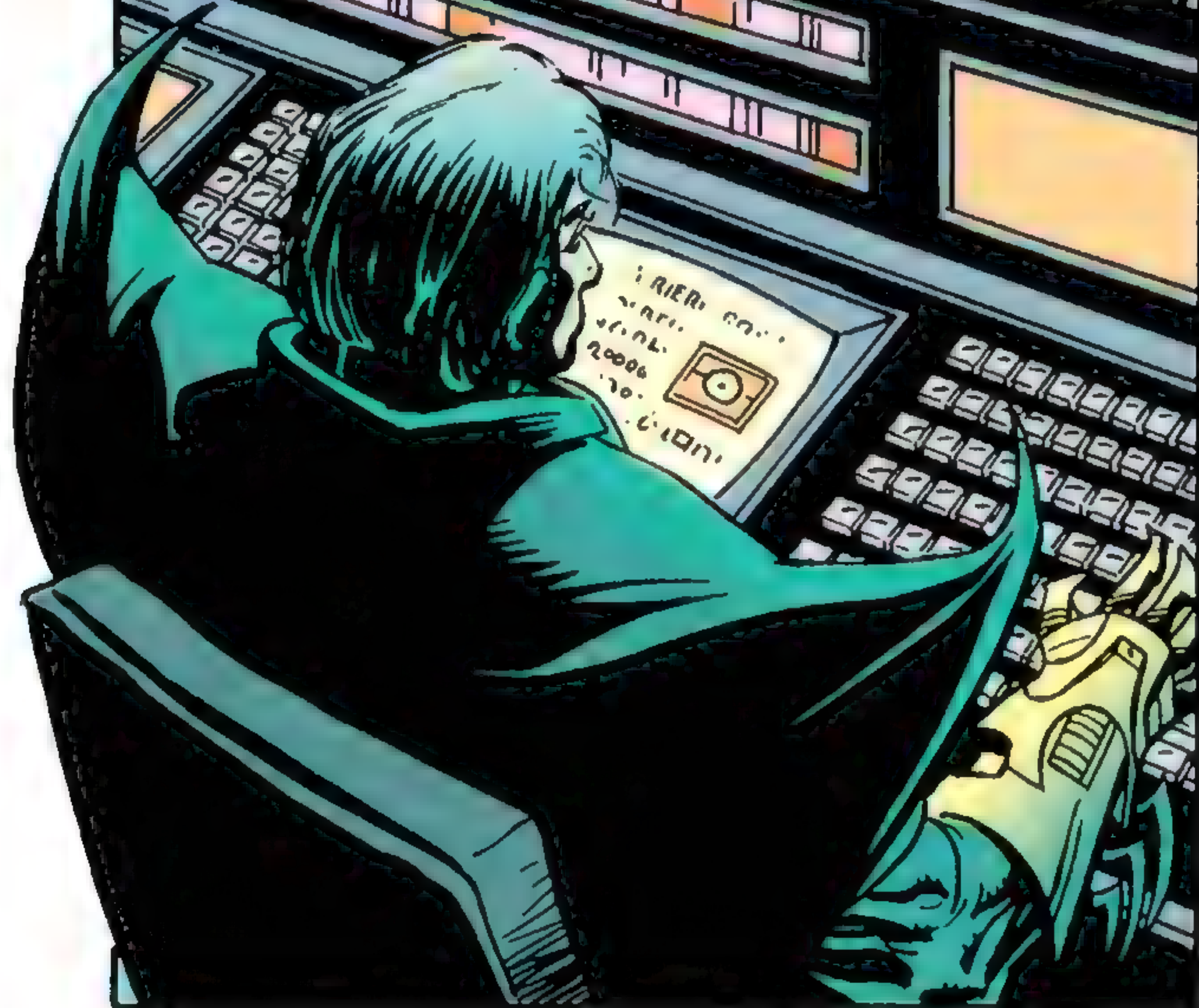
BLACKGATE



PRISON HOSP.



DEAD



BUT TONIGHT, A LINE HAS BEEN CROSSED. TONIGHT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A MAN HAS DIED BECAUSE OF HIM.

JEAN PAUL VALLEY FEELS NO GUILT, NO REMORSE. THE SERIAL KILLER ABATTOIR HAD KILLED MANY TIMES, ALL MEMBERS OF HIS OWN FAMILY; THE MAN DESERVED TO DIE, BEFORE HIS VICTIM-LIST WAS EXTENDED EVEN FURTHER.

HE UNDERSTANDS NOW WHY SOME MEN MURDER; HE'S GLIMPSED THE AWESOME POWER THAT DEATH UNLEASHES, HE'S TASTED MAN'S OLDEST, DARKEST THRILL.



HE DOESN'T FEEL GOOD, AND HE DOESN'T FEEL BAD.



JEAN PAUL VALLEY FEELS RIGHTEOUS.

LESS THAN TEN MILES AWAY, ANOTHER MAN HAS ALSO BEEN UP ALL NIGHT--

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE?

A MAN WHO, IN HIS PRIME AND ON A TOUGH CASE, THOUGHT NOTHING OF STAYING UP 72 HOURS STRAIGHT--

NOT ONE HUNDRED PERCENT, COMMISSIONER--

--BUT THE BEST EXPLANATION SEEMS TO BE THAT BATMAN DELIBERATELY LEFT ABATTOIR TO DIE!

NO BIG LOSS, COMMISH, BELIEVE ME!

YOU'RE WRONG THERE, HARVEY. ABATTOIR KIDNAPPED GRAHAM ETCHISON, REMEMBER. NOW THAT THE CREEP'S DEAD, WE HAVE NO WAY OF FINDING HIM!

ABATTOIR PROB'LY STIFFED HIM FIRST. NO URGENCY IN HUNTIN' FOR A CORPSE!

WE DON'T KNOW THAT, BULLOCK.

WHAT WE DO KNOW IS THAT ABATTOIR'S INSANITY WAS WORSENING--AND THAT WHERE POSSIBLE HE PREFERRED TO TORTURE HIS VICTIMS BEFORE DEATH.

IT COULD WELL BE THAT POOR WRETCH ETCHISON IS LYING. BADLY HURT SOMEPLACE!

HE'S LYIN' STIFFED, IS WHAT HE IS, KITCH!

WHAT DO YOU SAY, COMMISSIONER?

SIR?

MMM? OH--!

HE HAD ALWAYS KNOWN IT WOULD GET HARDER, THE OLDER HE BECAME--

GET EVERY SPARE UNIT ON IT--TOP PRIORITY! I WANT GRAHAM ETCHISON FOUND!

--BUT NOT EVEN IN HIS NIGHTMARES DID HE DREAM IT WOULD GET THIS HARD.

ONLY TEN BLOCKS FROM POLICE H.Q.,
A THIRD MAN HAS NOT SLEPT...



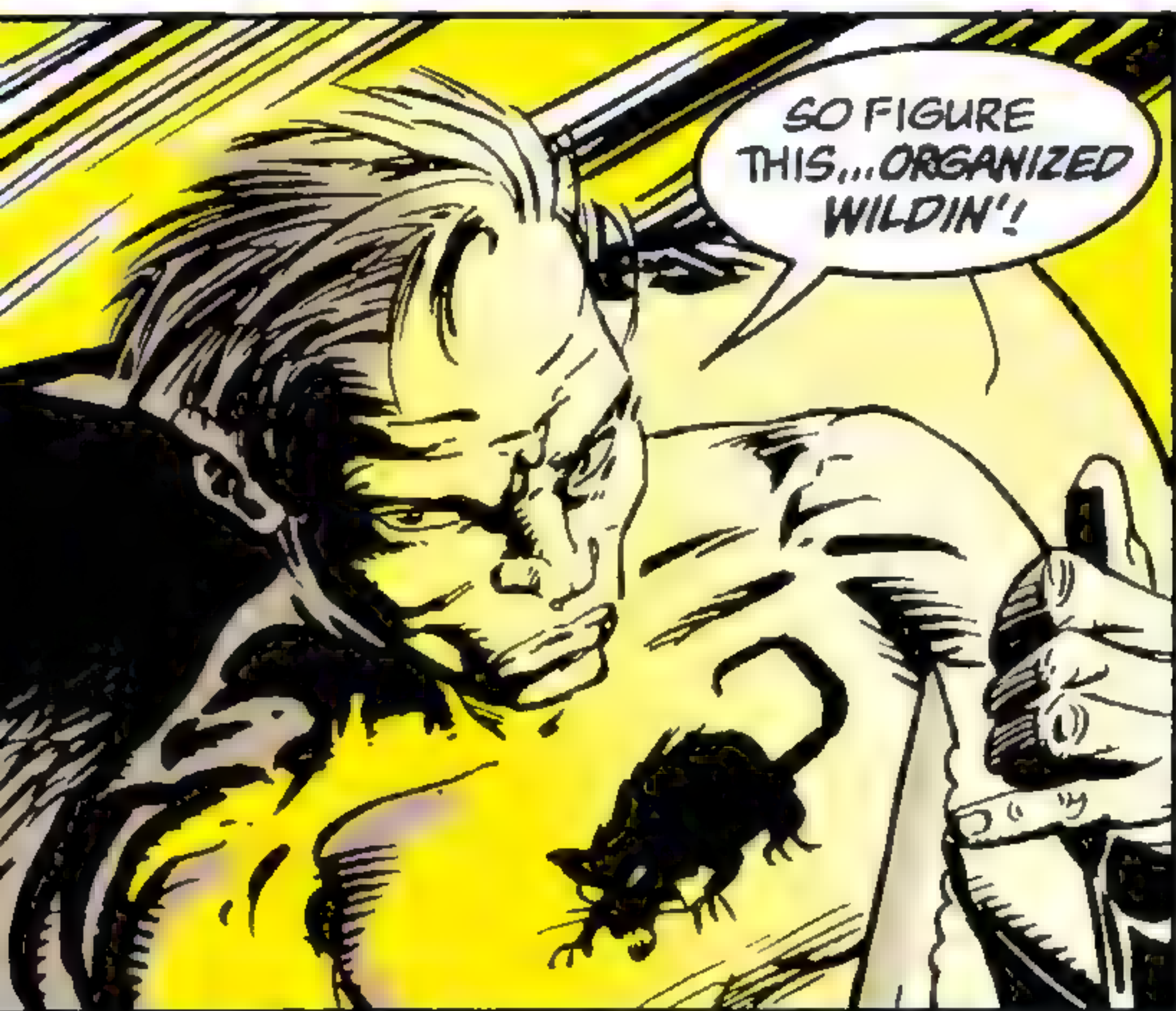
'S THE
PERFECT PLAN,
MAN!

NOW, IN THE PALE AFTERMATH OF A DRUG-HIGH NIGHT, VERMIN HARNETT
HAS HAD AN IDEA THAT WILL MAKE HIM AND HIS RAT GANG RICH.



Y'KNOW
WILDING,
RIGHT?

WHAT IS THIS, MAN? A
QUIZ? WE WILDED A DOZEN
TIMES, VERMIN--YOU WAS THERE,
RIGHT? OR DID YA DRINK SO
MUCH YA FORGOT...?



SO FIGURE
THIS...ORGANIZED
WILDIN'!

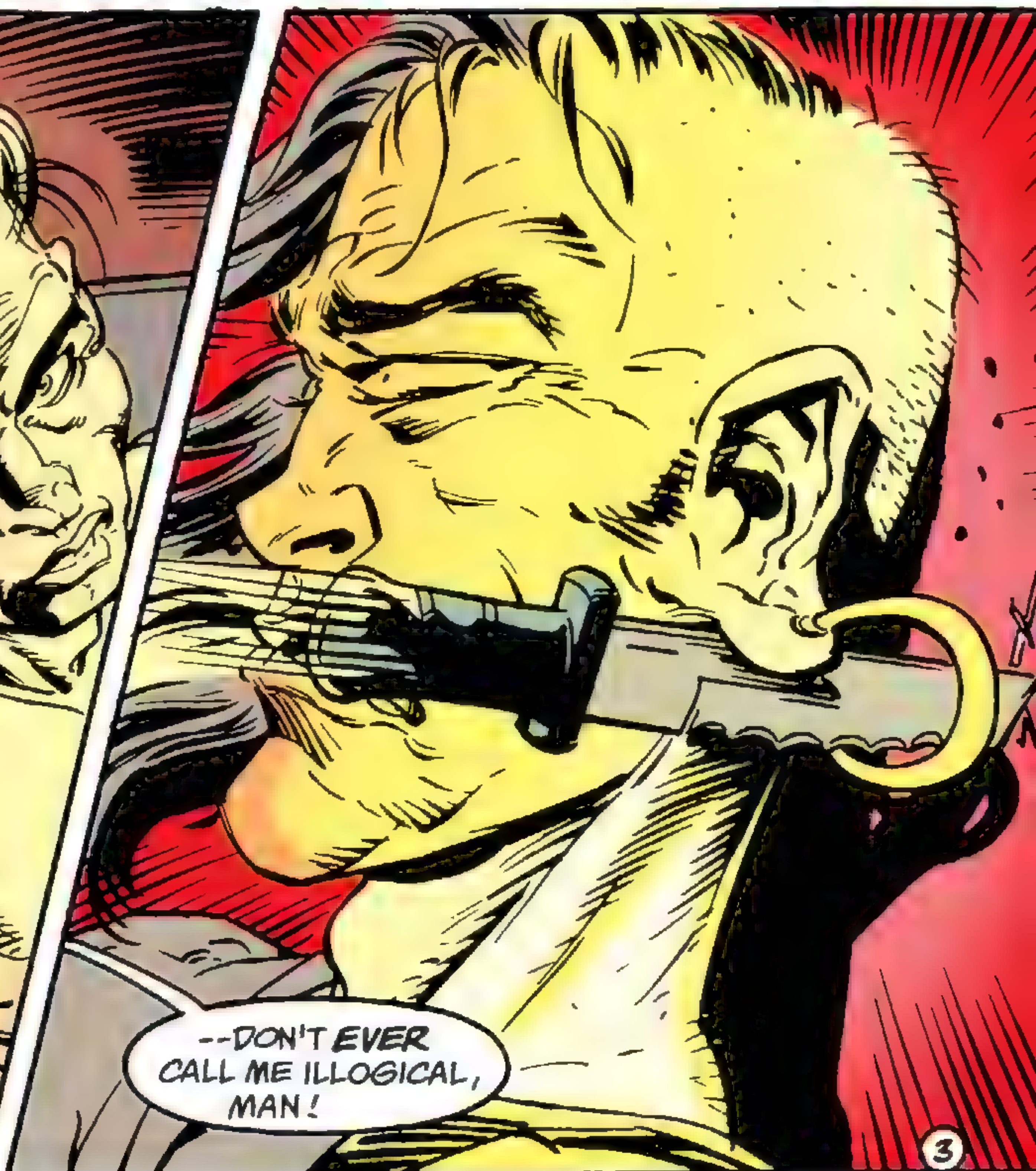


MAN, IT AIN'T JUST YER MEMORY
THE DRINK TOOK! ORGANIZED WILDIN'?
IT AIN'T LOGICAL!

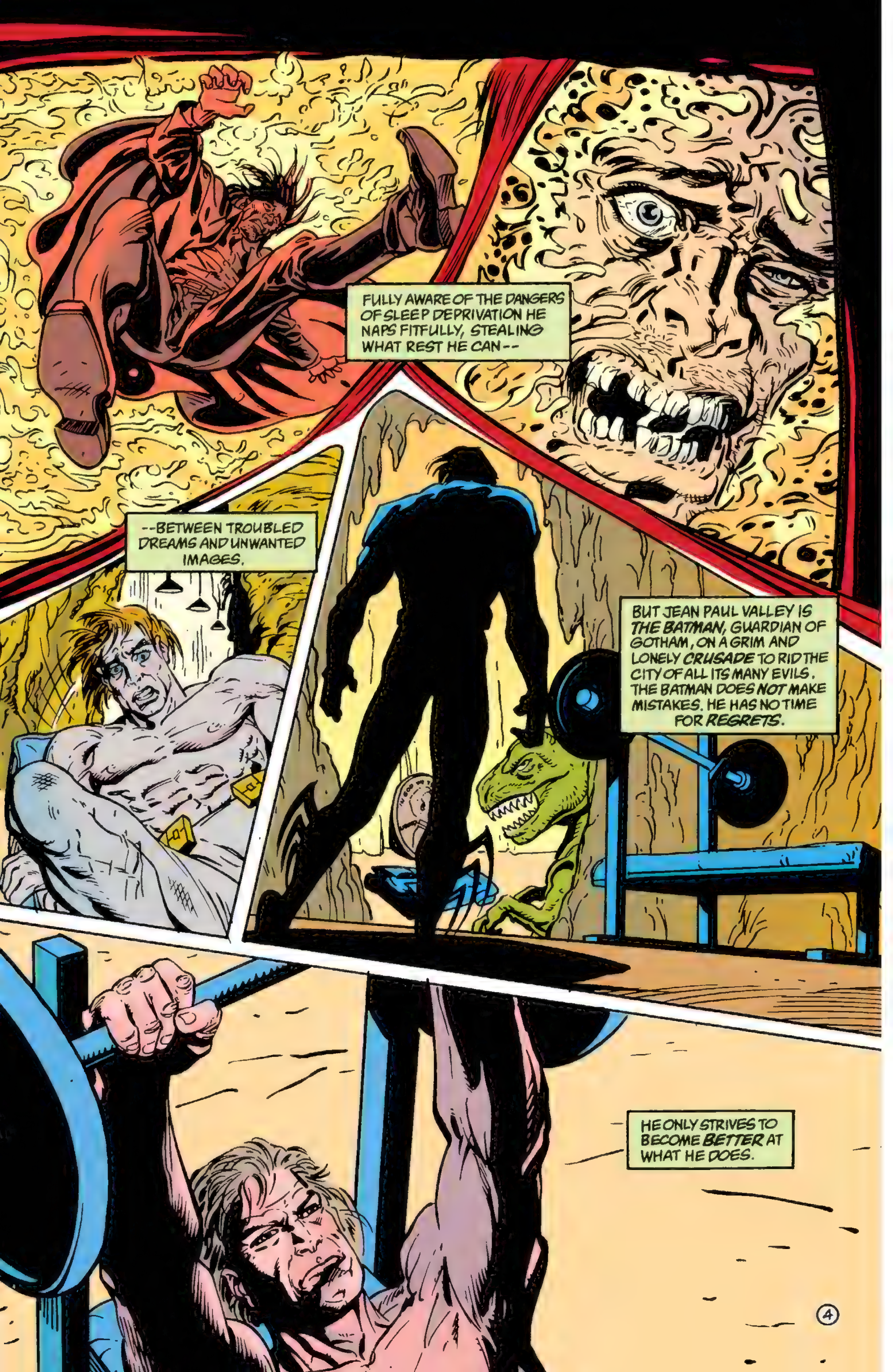
YER WRONG,
DODGE. 'SGONNA
MAKE TH' RATS INTO
TH' RICHEST GANG
IN GOTHAM!



OH, AN'
DODGE--



--DON'T EVER
CALL ME ILLOGICAL,
MAN!

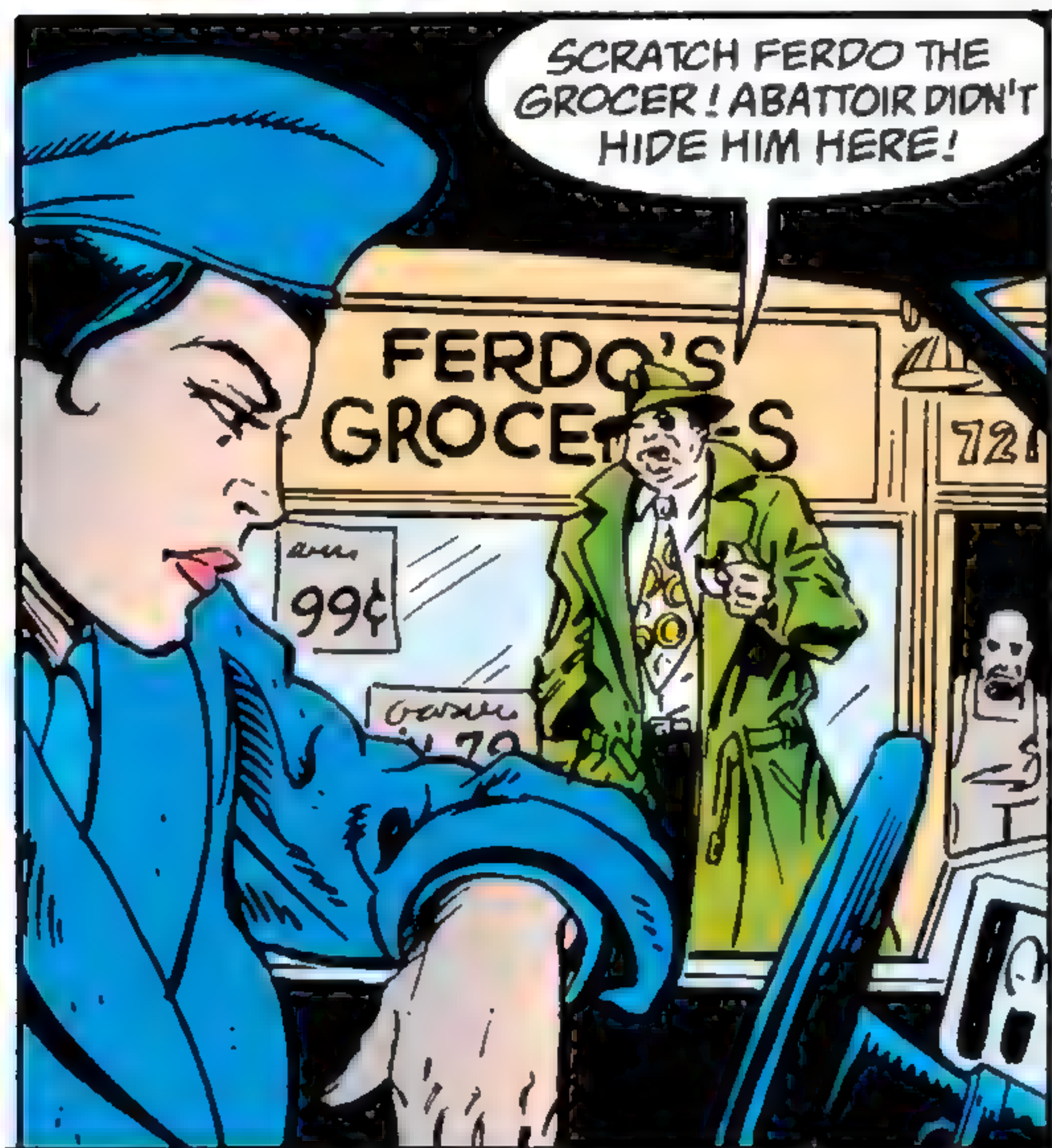


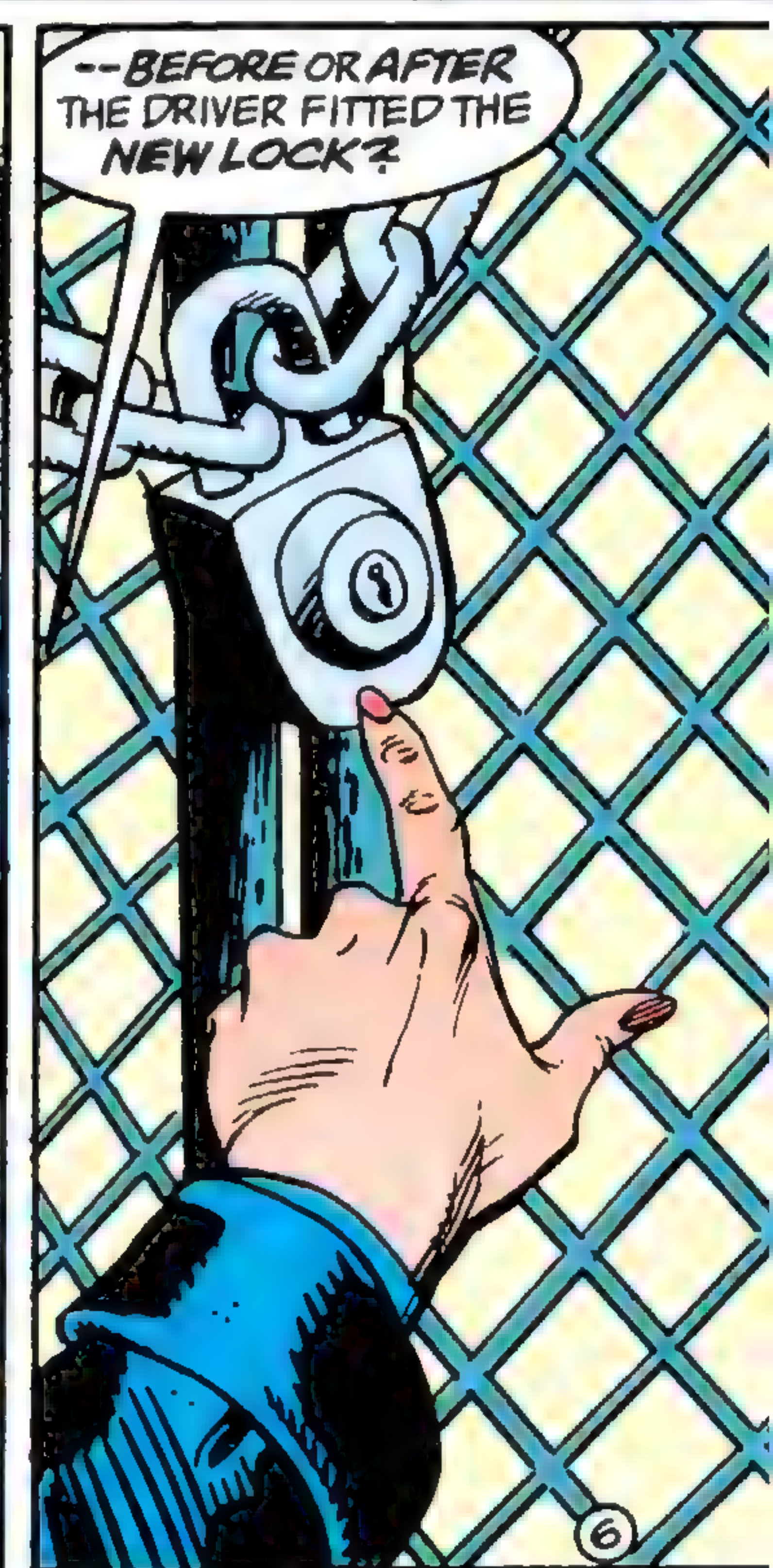
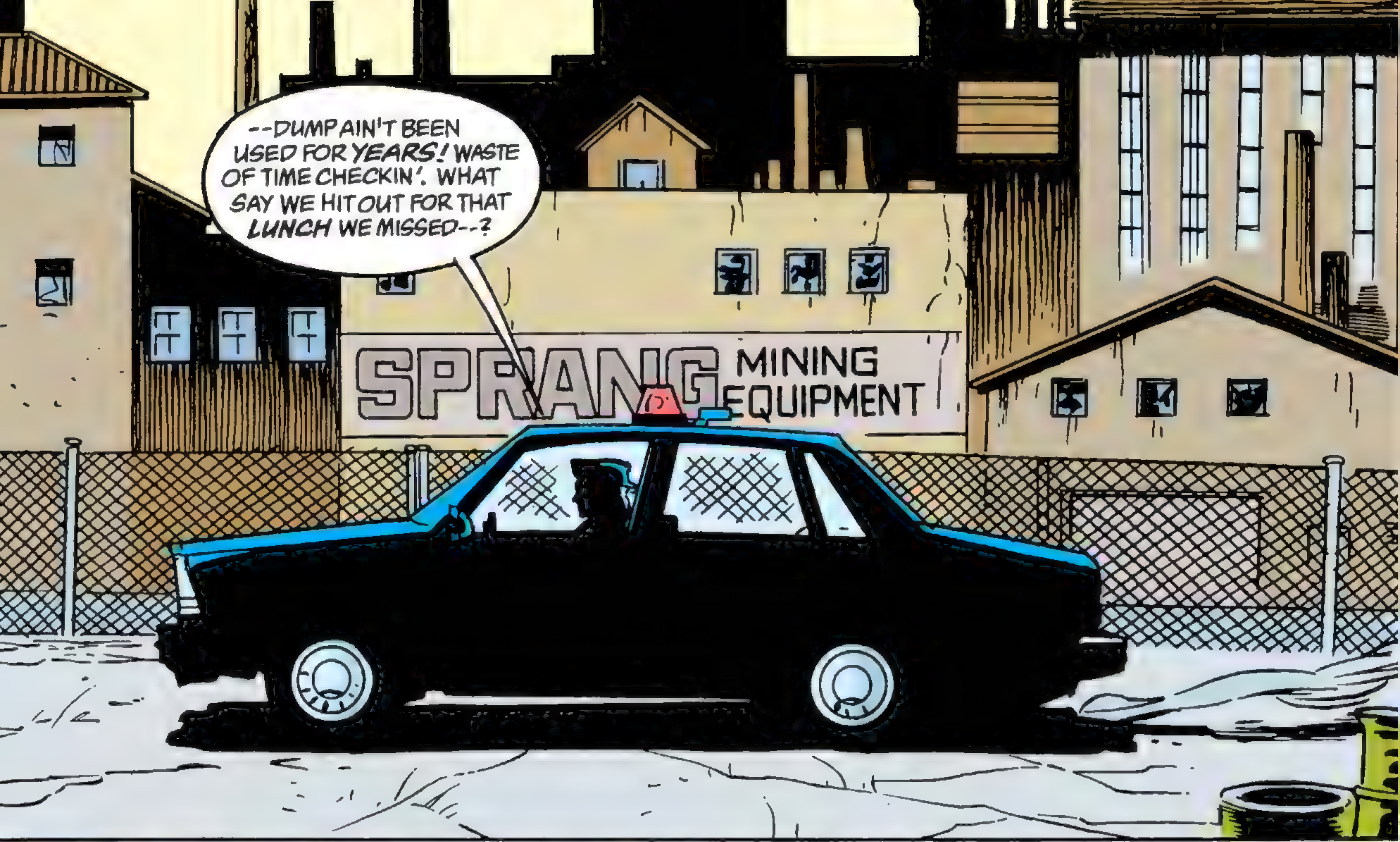
FULLY AWARE OF THE DANGERS
OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION HE
NAPS FITFULLY, STEALING
WHAT REST HE CAN--

--BETWEEN TROUBLED
DREAMS AND UNWANTED
IMAGES.

BUT JEAN PAUL VALLEY IS
THE BATMAN, GUARDIAN OF
GOTHAM, ON A GRIM AND
LONELY CRUSADE TO RID THE
CITY OF ALL ITS MANY EVILS.
THE BATMAN DOES NOT MAKE
MISTAKES. HE HAS NO TIME
FOR REGRETS.

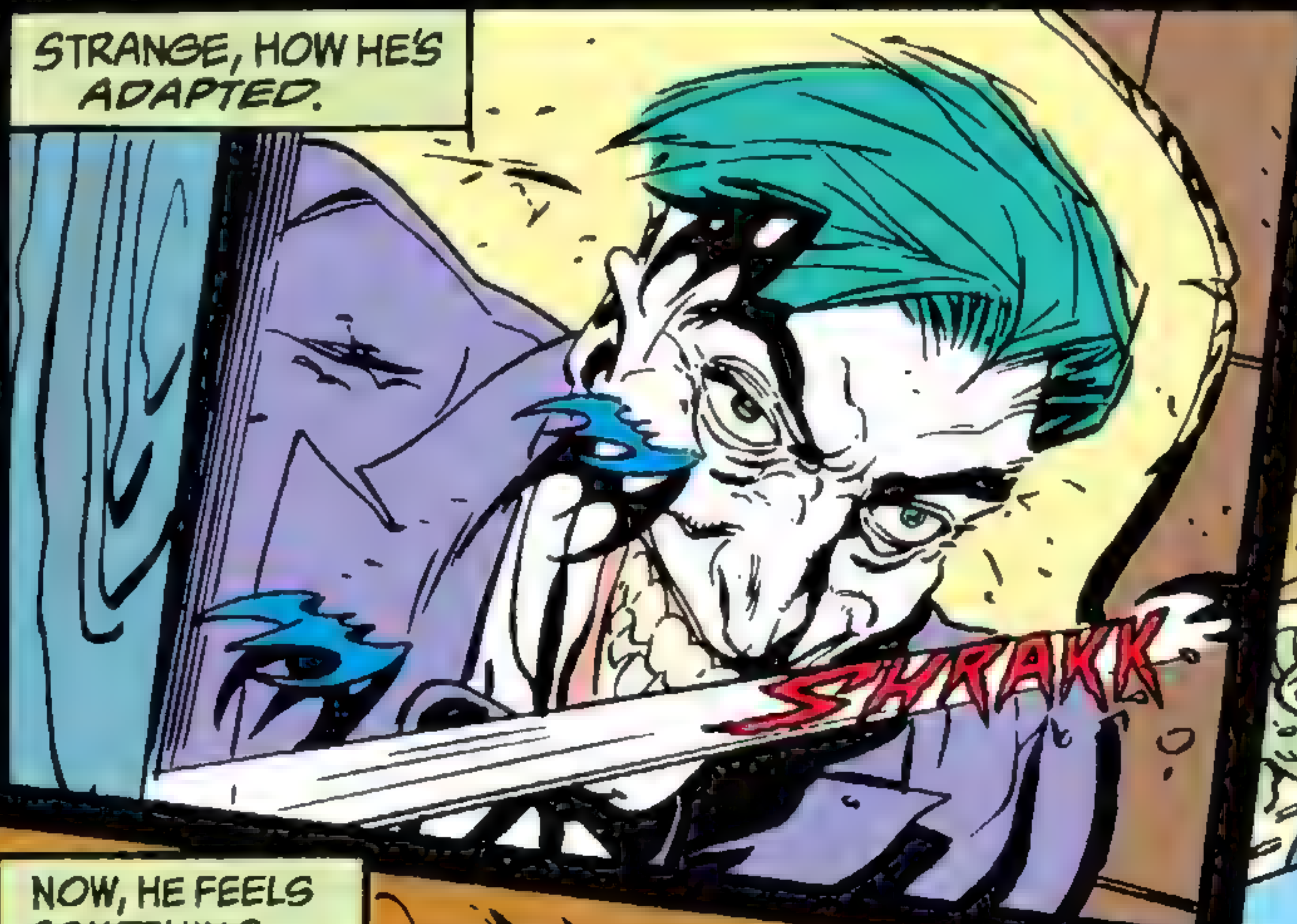
HE ONLY STRIVES TO
BECOME BETTER AT
WHAT HE DOES.



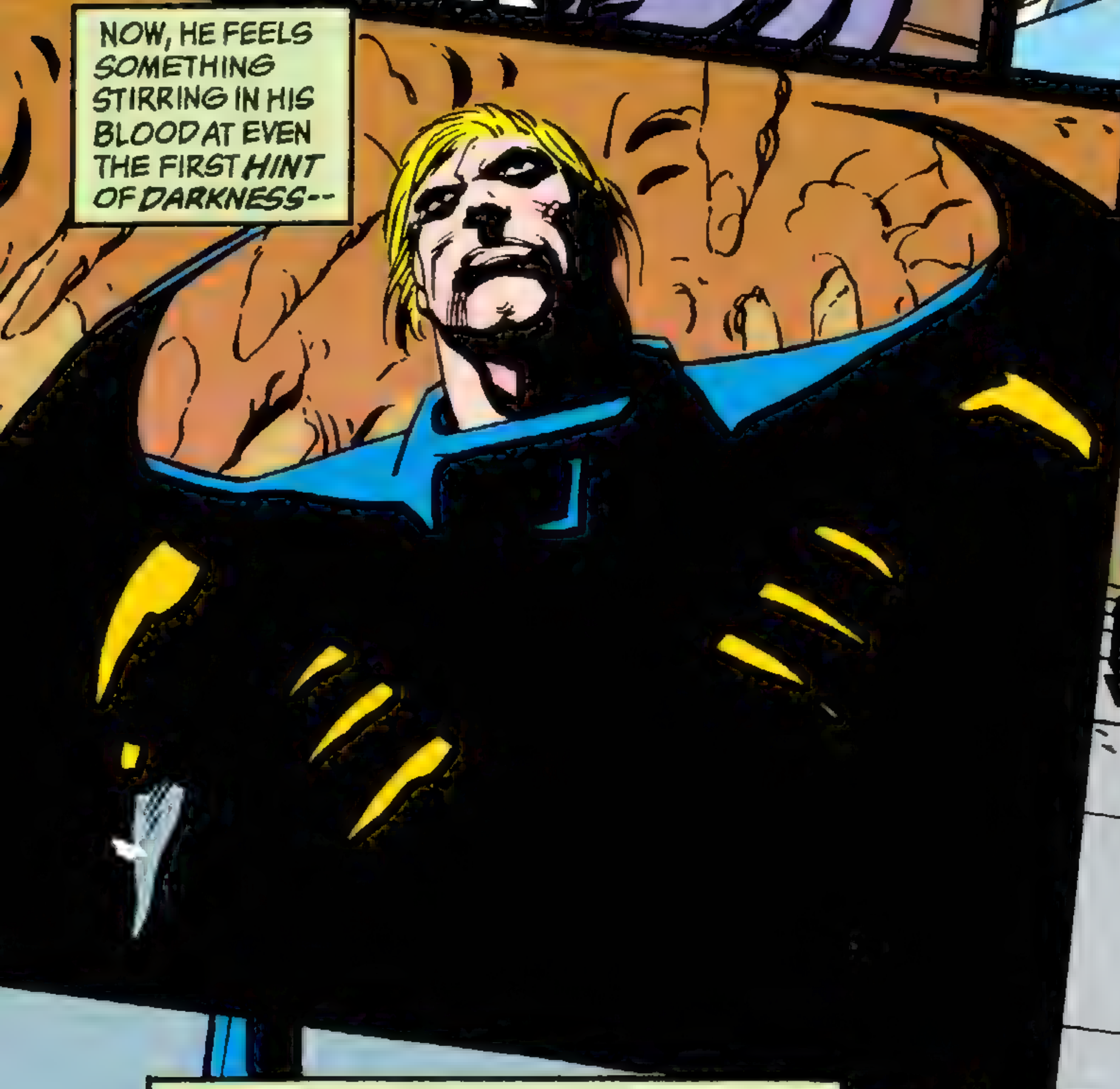




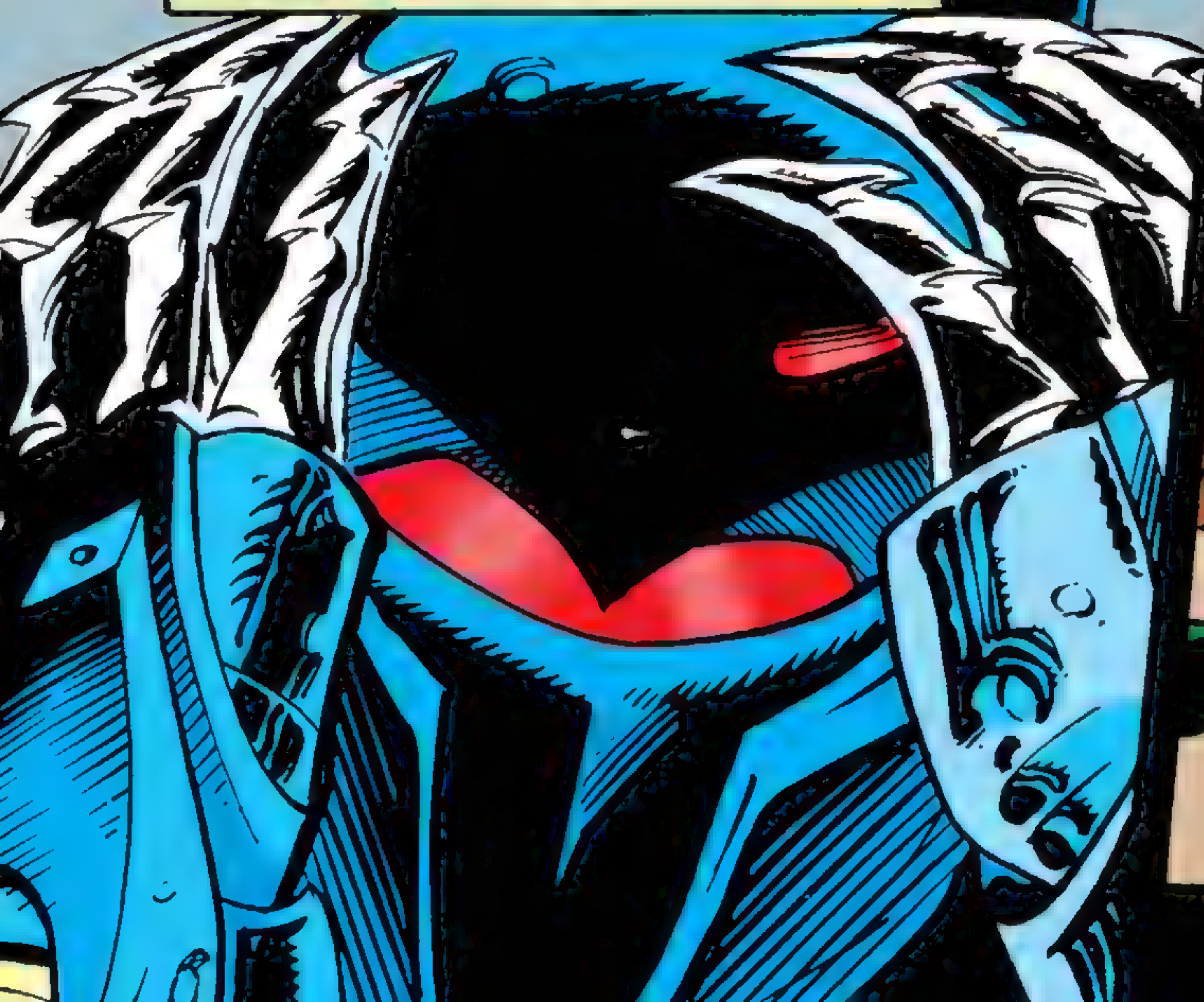
STRANGE, HOW HE'S
ADAPTED.



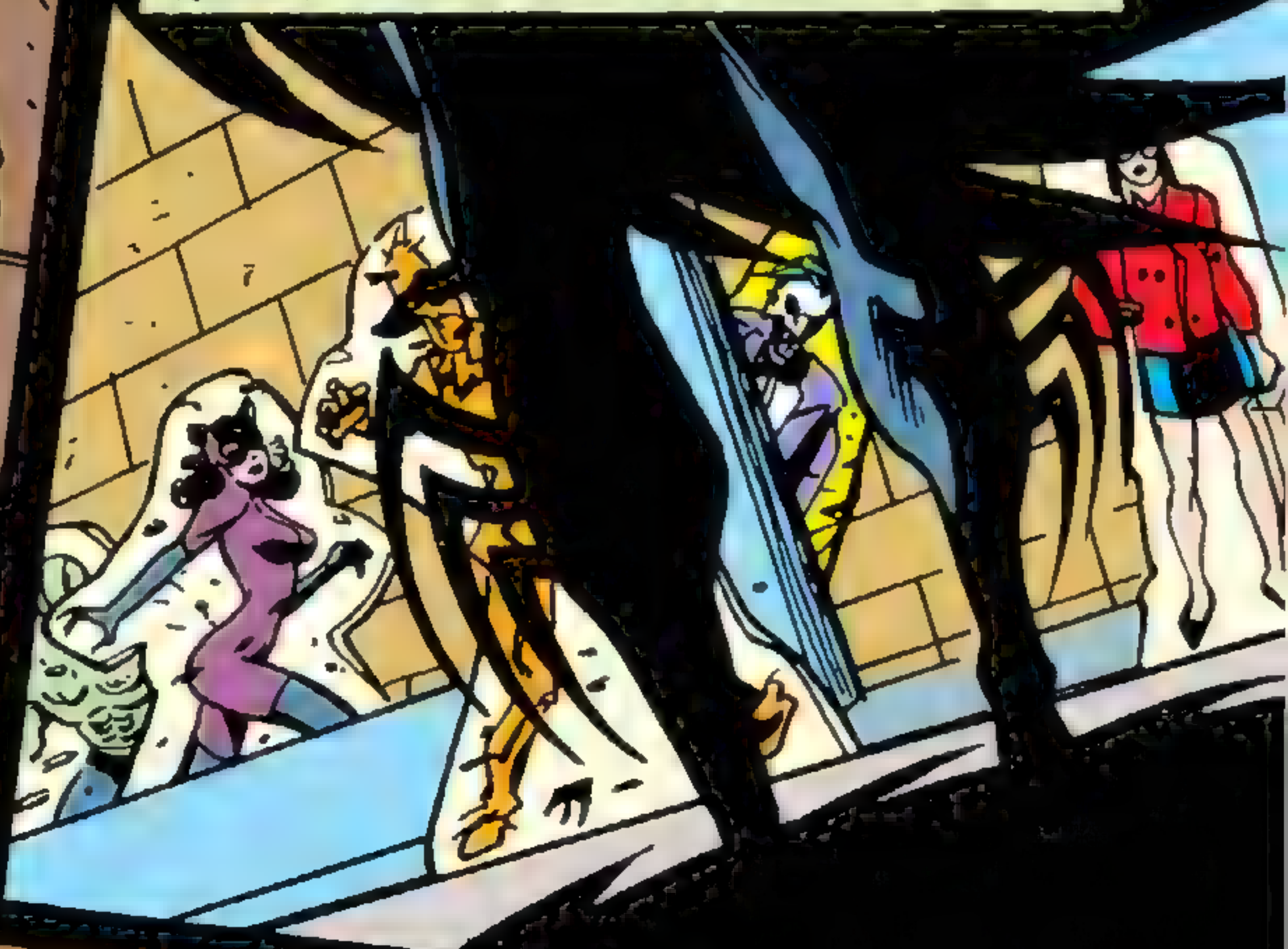
NOW, HE FEELS
SOMETHING
STIRRING IN HIS
BLOOD AT EVEN
THE FIRST HINT
OF DARKNESS--



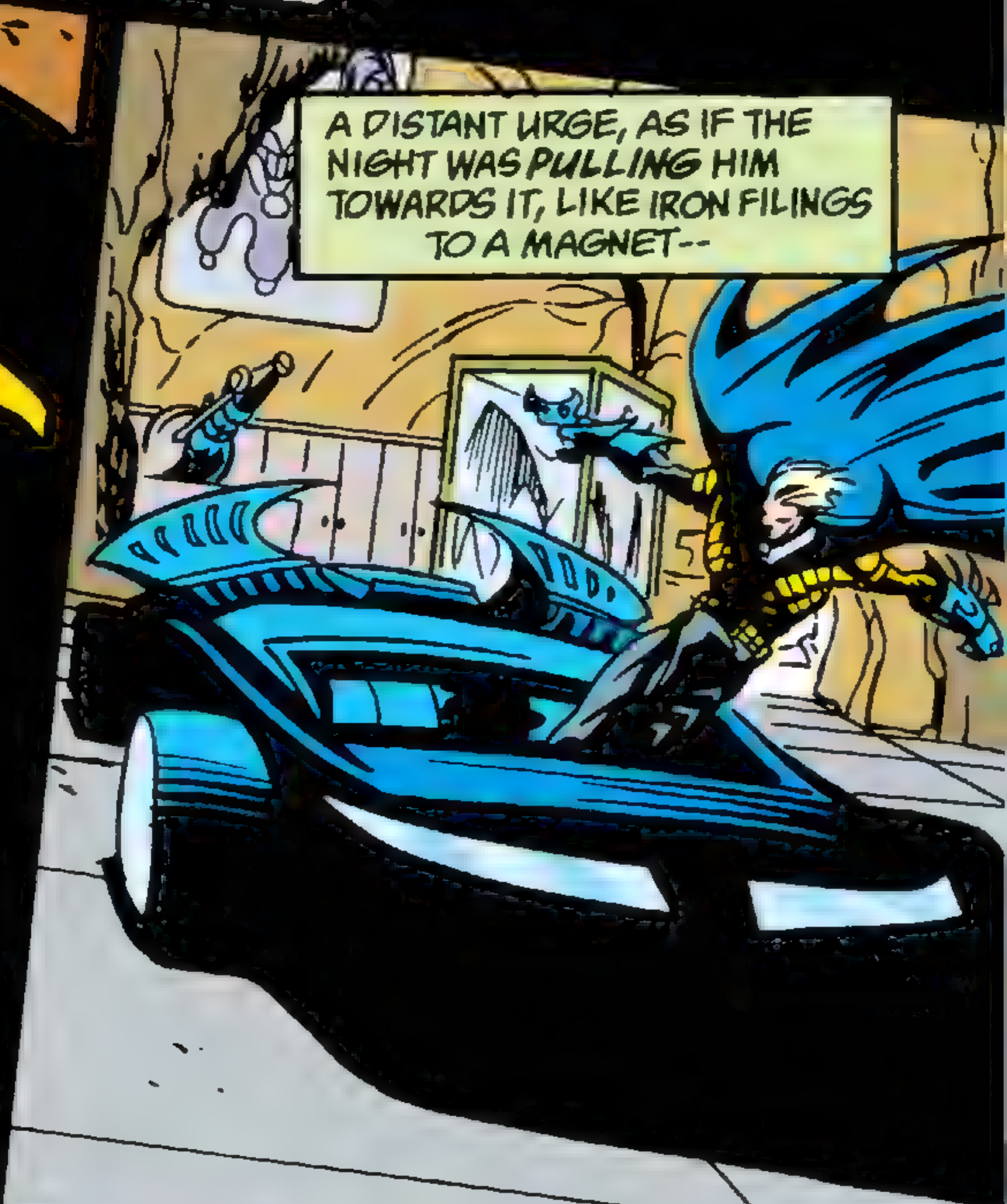
THEN HE PUTS ON THE MASK THAT SHOWS
HIS REAL SELF, AND WHATEVER HE FEELS--
WHETHER RELIEF, OR DESIRE, OR A
DANGER-TINGED THRILL-- IS LOST--



HE USED TO BE A CREATURE OF THE DAY.
THE HOURS BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND DAWN
WERE A CLOSED BOOK TO HIM.



A DISTANT URGE, AS IF THE
NIGHT WAS PULLING HIM
TOWARDS IT, LIKE IRON FILINGS
TO A MAGNET--



--AS HE RACES
TOWARDS HIS
DESTINY.

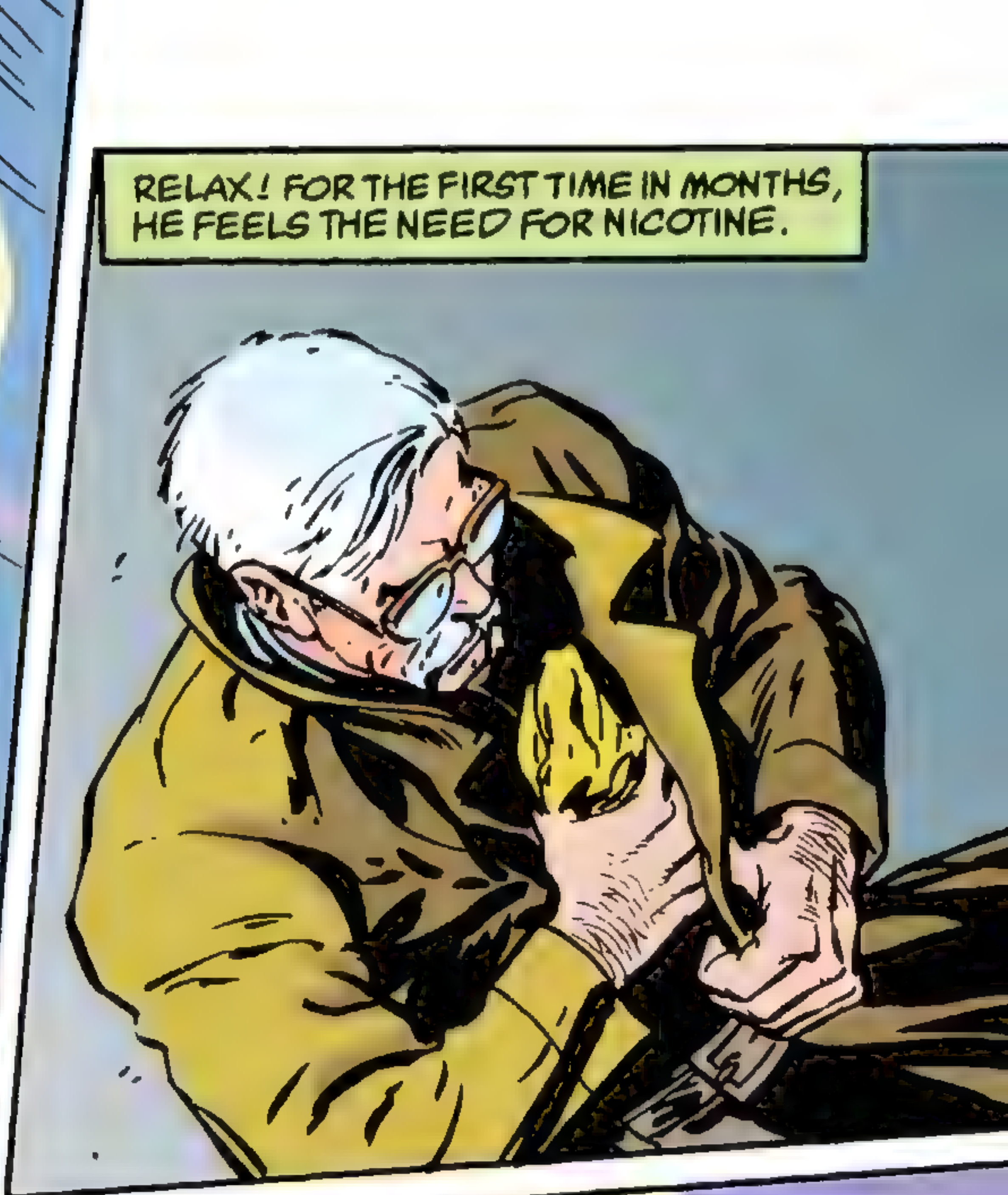




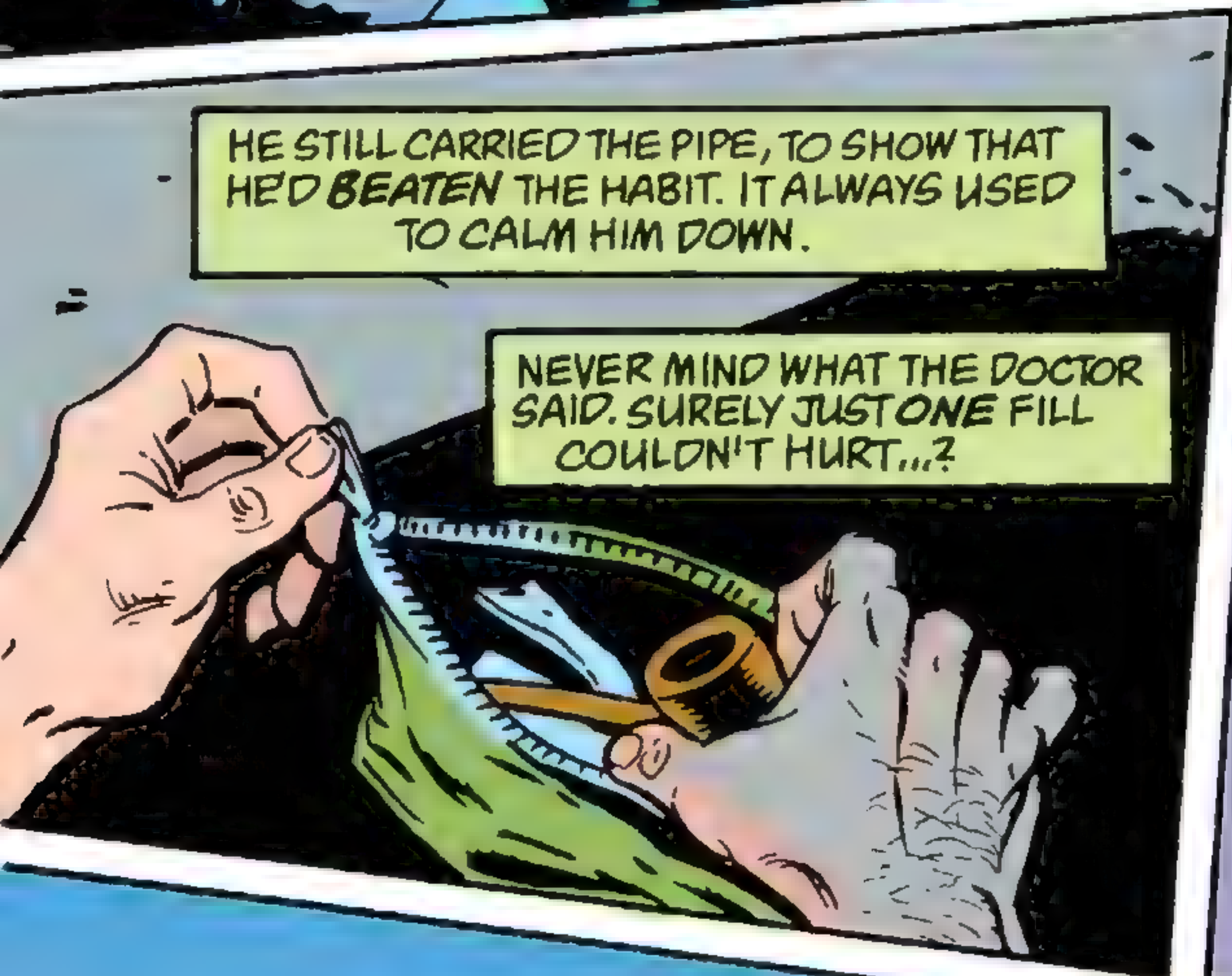




HE SCANS THE ROOFTOPS. HE'S BEEN CAUGHT TOO OFTEN. NOT TONIGHT.



RELAX! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MONTHS, HE FEELS THE NEED FOR NICOTINE.



HE STILL CARRIED THE PIPE, TO SHOW THAT HE'D BEATEN THE HABIT. IT ALWAYS USED TO CALM HIM DOWN.

NEVER MIND WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID. SURELY JUST ONE FILL COULDN'T HURT...?



NO! WHAT'S THE SENSE OF COMPOUNDING ONE STUPIDITY WITH ANOTHER?



I HOPE THIS IS IMPORTANT.

IT IS.

I WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE!





I KNOW YOU'RE NOT BATMAN-- NOT THE ONE WHO'S LOOKED OUT FOR THIS CITY! NOT THE ONE I KNOW!

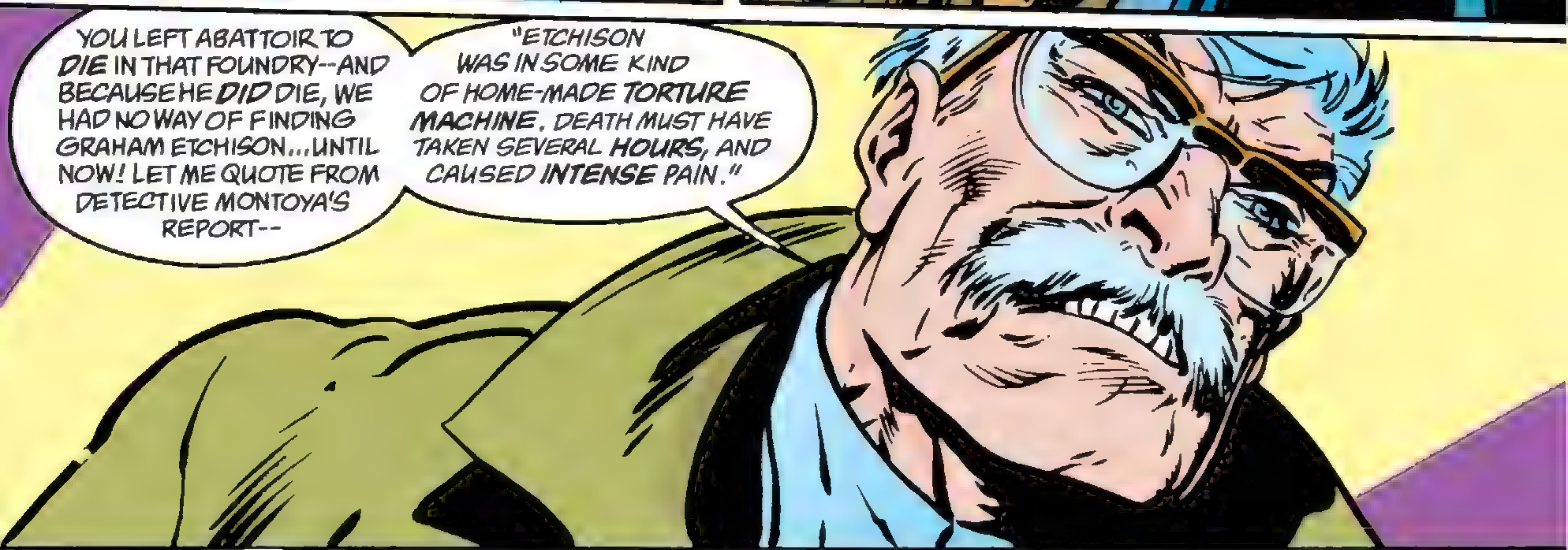
WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?



THE BATMAN I KNOW-- NOT THAT I KNOW HIM VERY WELL! -- WOULD NEVER BRING DISHONOR TO THE CAUSE HE SERVES. BATMAN WOULD NEVER COMMIT MURDER!

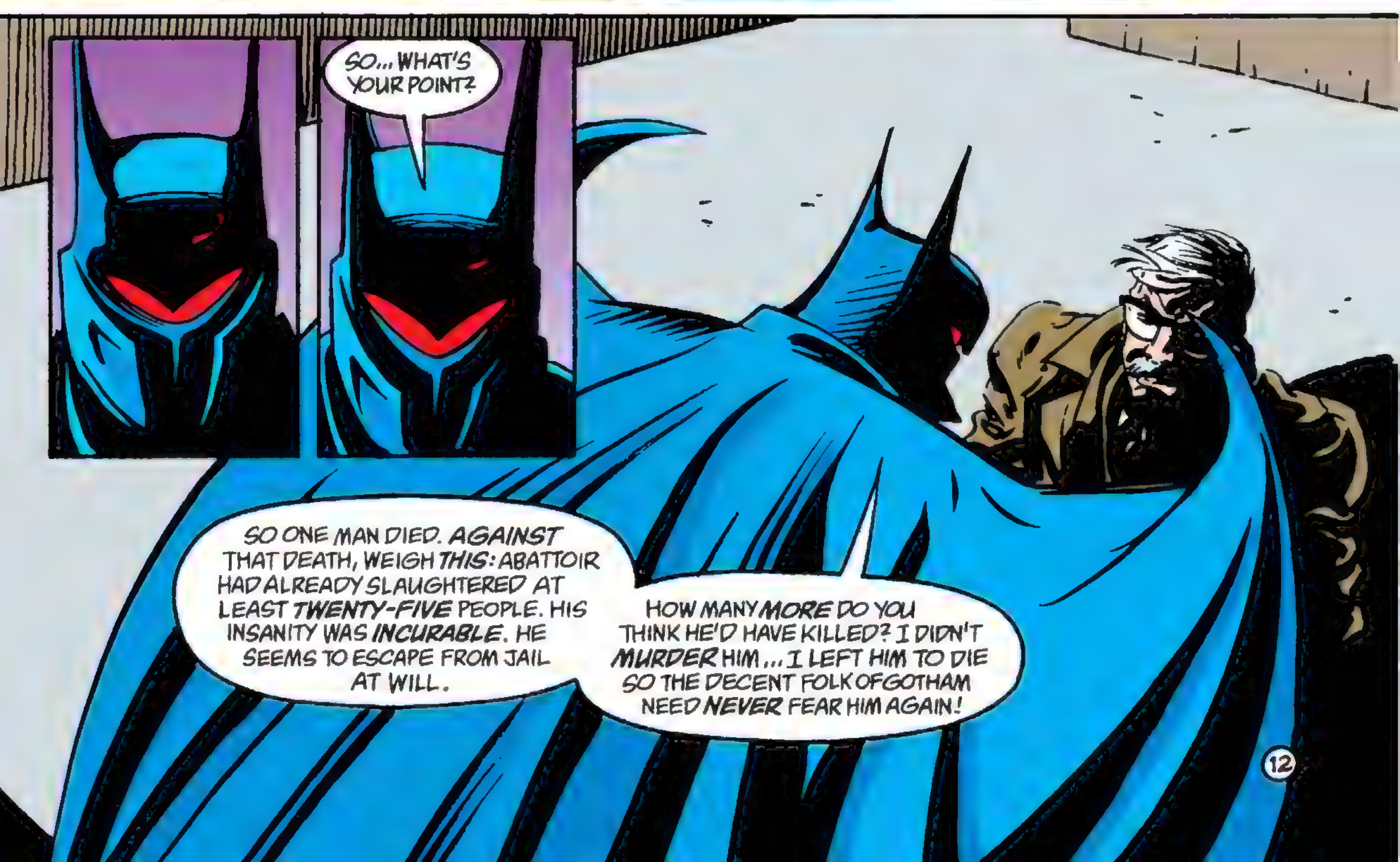
YOU'RE IMPLYING I WOULD?

I'M SAYING YOU HAVE!



YOU LEFT ABATTOIR TO DIE IN THAT FOUNDRY--AND BECAUSE HE DID DIE, WE HAD NO WAY OF FINDING GRAHAM ETCHISON...UNTIL NOW! LET ME QUOTE FROM DETECTIVE MONTOYA'S REPORT--

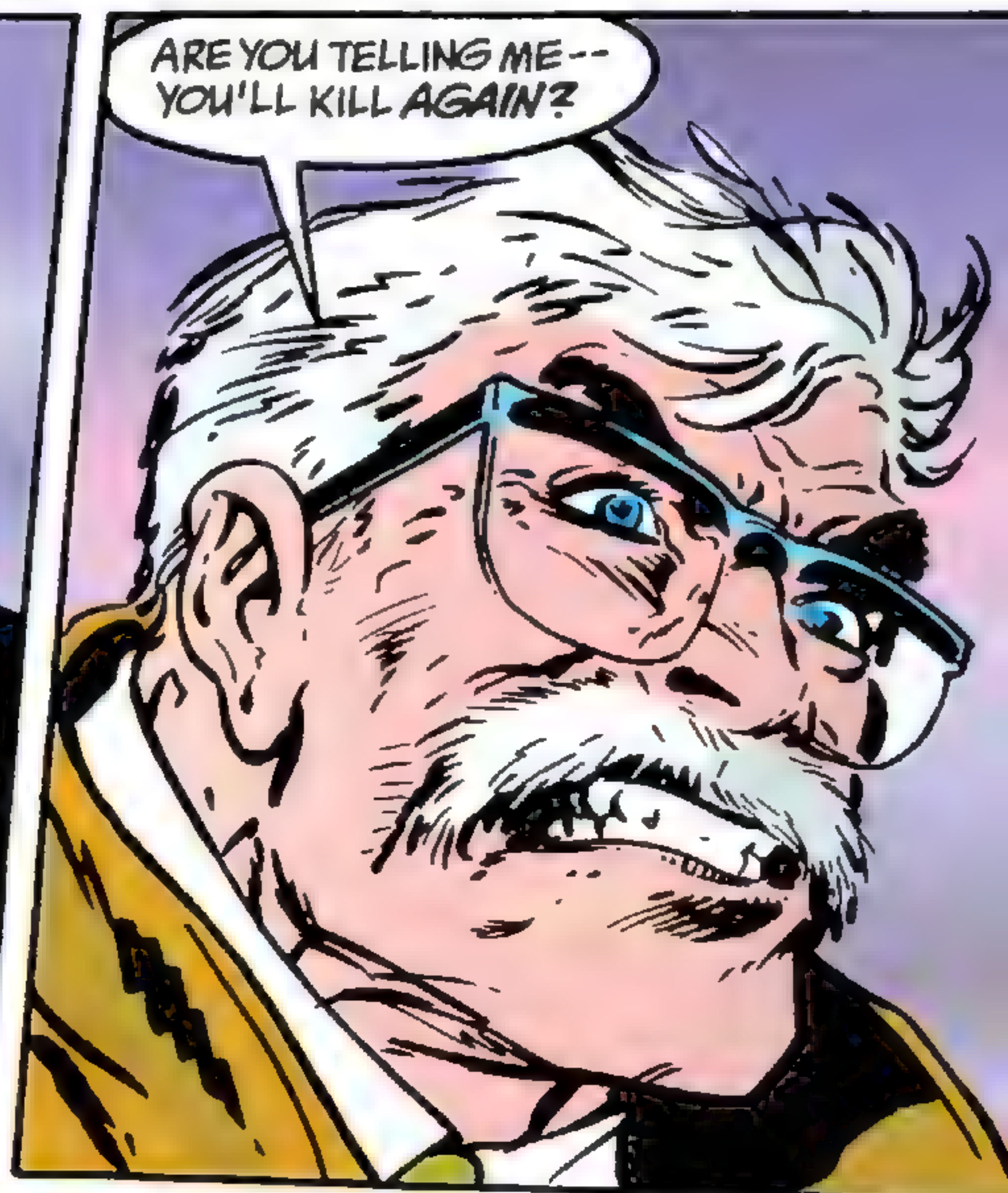
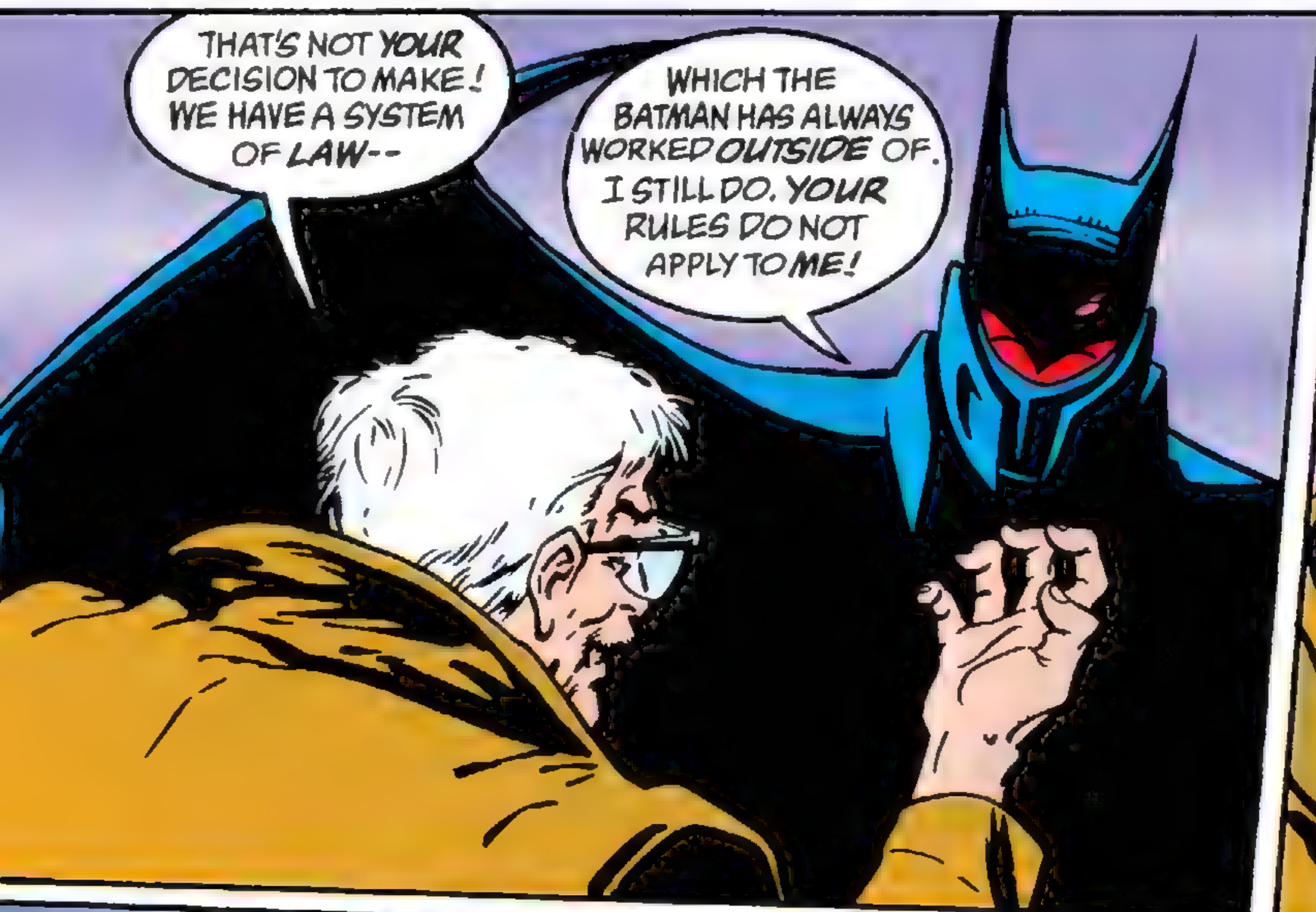
"ETCHISON WAS IN SOME KIND OF HOME-MADE TORTURE MACHINE. DEATH MUST HAVE TAKEN SEVERAL HOURS, AND CAUSED INTENSE PAIN."

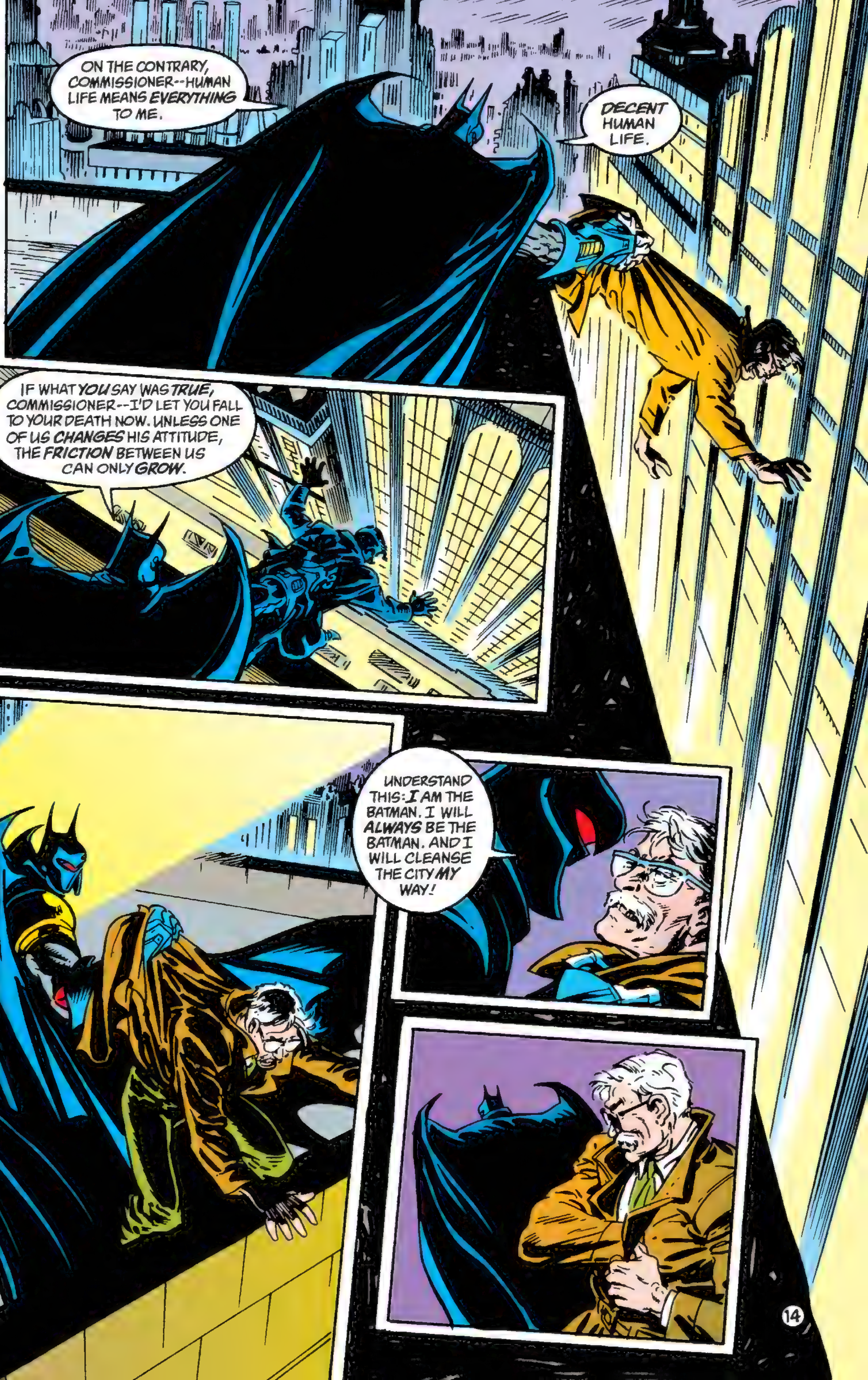


SO... WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

SO ONE MAN DIED. AGAINST THAT DEATH, WEIGH THIS: ABATTOIR HAD ALREADY SLAUGHTERED AT LEAST TWENTY-FIVE PEOPLE. HIS INSANITY WAS INCURABLE. HE SEEMS TO ESCAPE FROM JAIL AT WILL.

HOW MANY MORE DO YOU THINK HE'D HAVE KILLED? I DIDN'T MURDER HIM... I LEFT HIM TO DIE SO THE DECENT FOLK OF GOTHAM NEED NEVER FEAR HIM AGAIN!



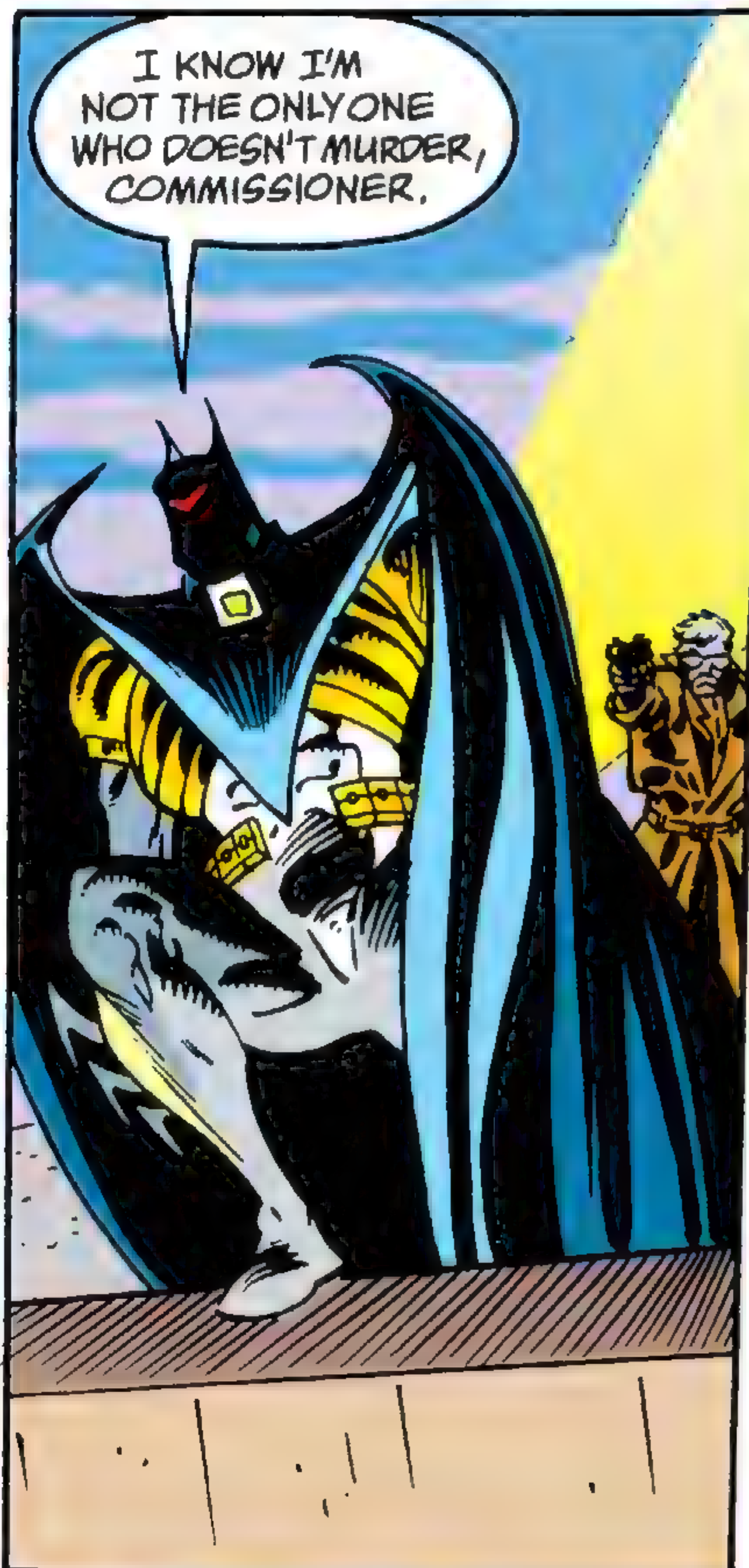
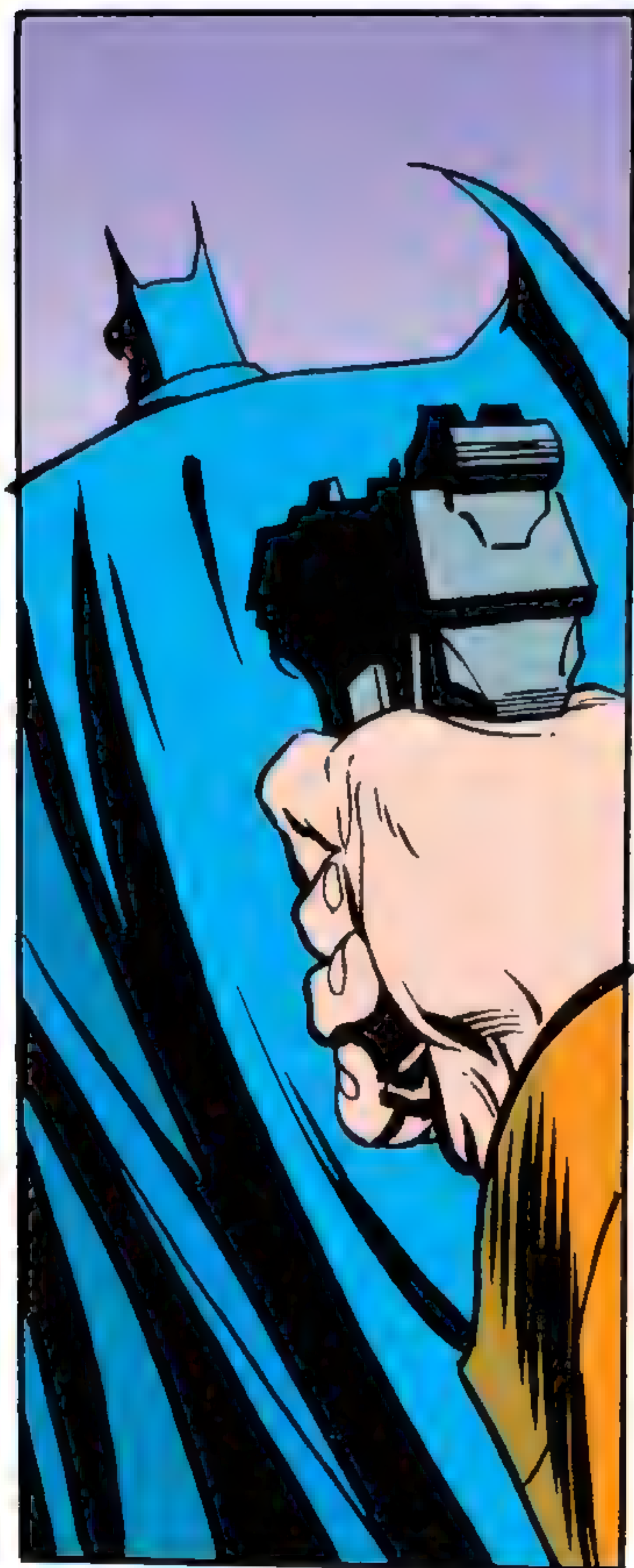


ON THE CONTRARY,
COMMISSIONER--HUMAN
LIFE MEANS EVERYTHING
TO ME.

DECENT
HUMAN
LIFE.

IF WHAT YOU SAY WAS TRUE,
COMMISSIONER---I'D LET YOU FALL
TO YOUR DEATH NOW. UNLESS ONE
OF US CHANGES HIS ATTITUDE,
THE FRICTION BETWEEN US
CAN ONLY GROW.

UNDERSTAND
THIS: I AM THE
BATMAN. I WILL
ALWAYS BE THE
BATMAN. AND I
WILL CLEANSE
THE CITY MY
WAY!





AWRIGHT,
YOU RATS--ARE
YA READY?



YEAH!

READY,
VERM!

'S DO IT,
MAN!



REMEMBER--ANY O' US
IS ATTACKED, EVERYBODY HELPS
HIM OUT! SMASH WHAT YA WANT,
AN WHO YA WANT--TH' WORSE
WE MAKE IT, TH' MORE THEY'LL
BE WILLIN' TA PAY!



HE FEELS ICY CALM, CRYSTAL CLEAR,
PLEASED THAT HE KEPT THE LID ON
THINGS WITH GORDON.



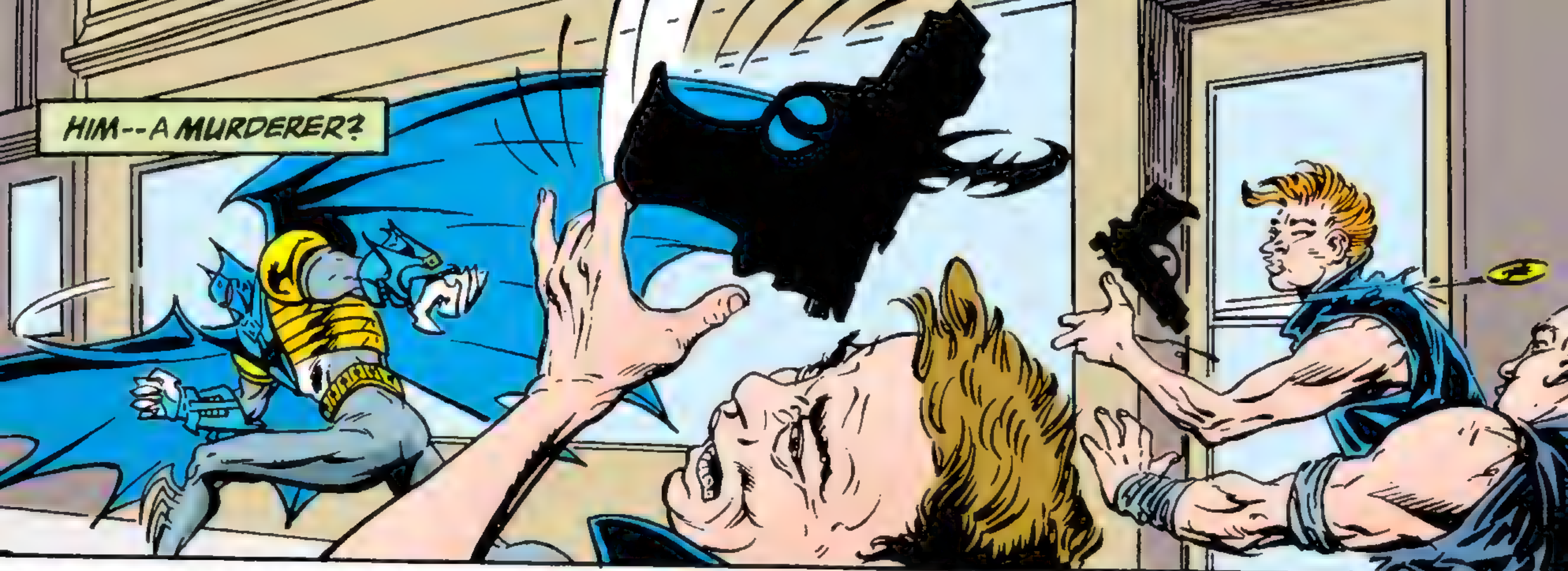
THEN SUDDENLY
HE SEES THEM--



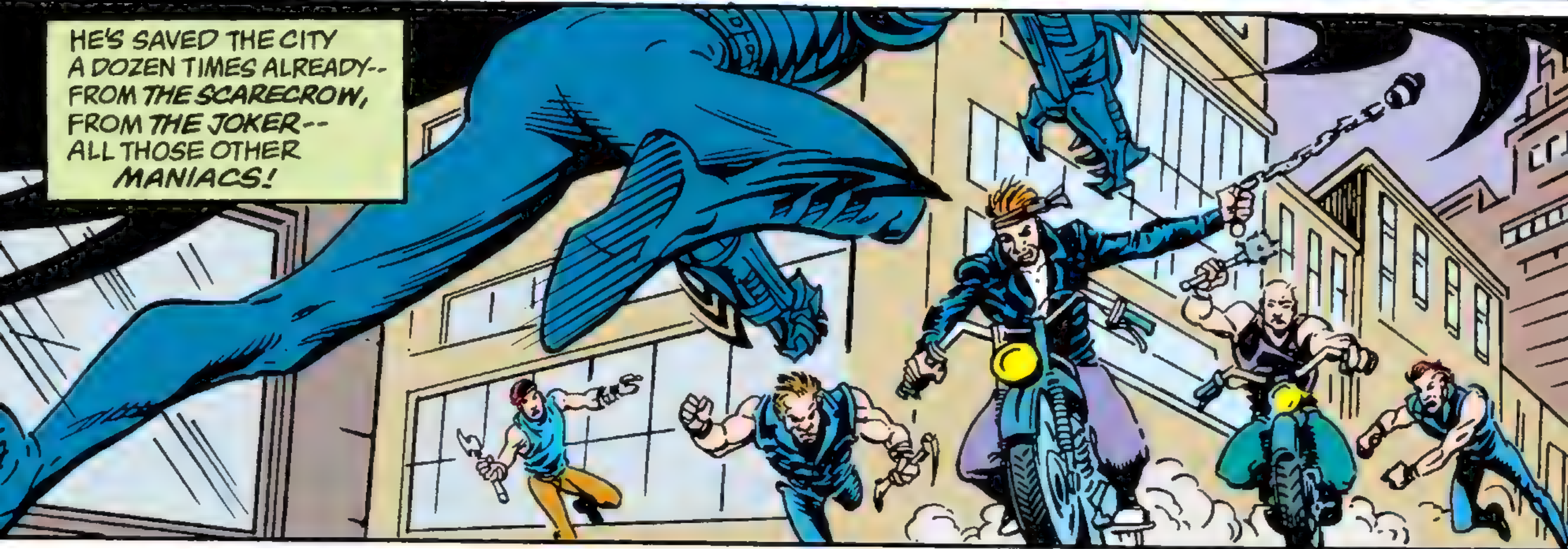
--AND RAGE
ERUPTS LIKE
A VOLCANO!

UNGH!

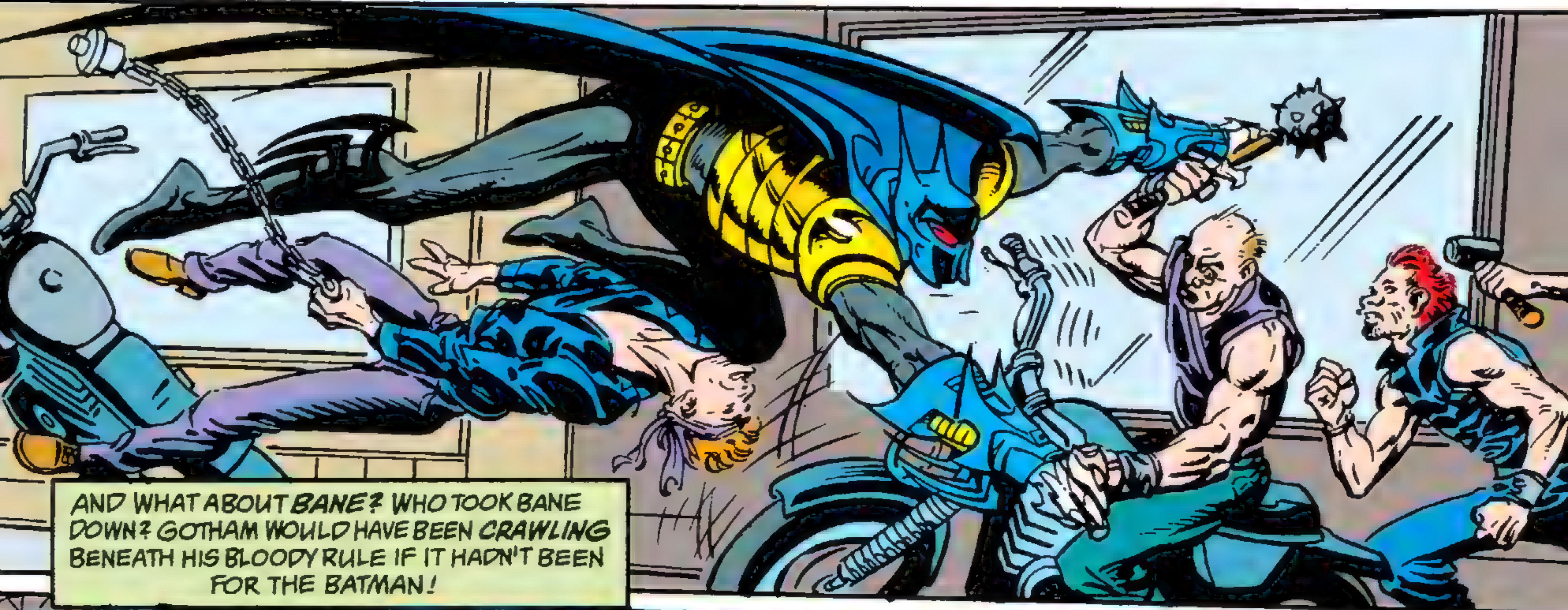




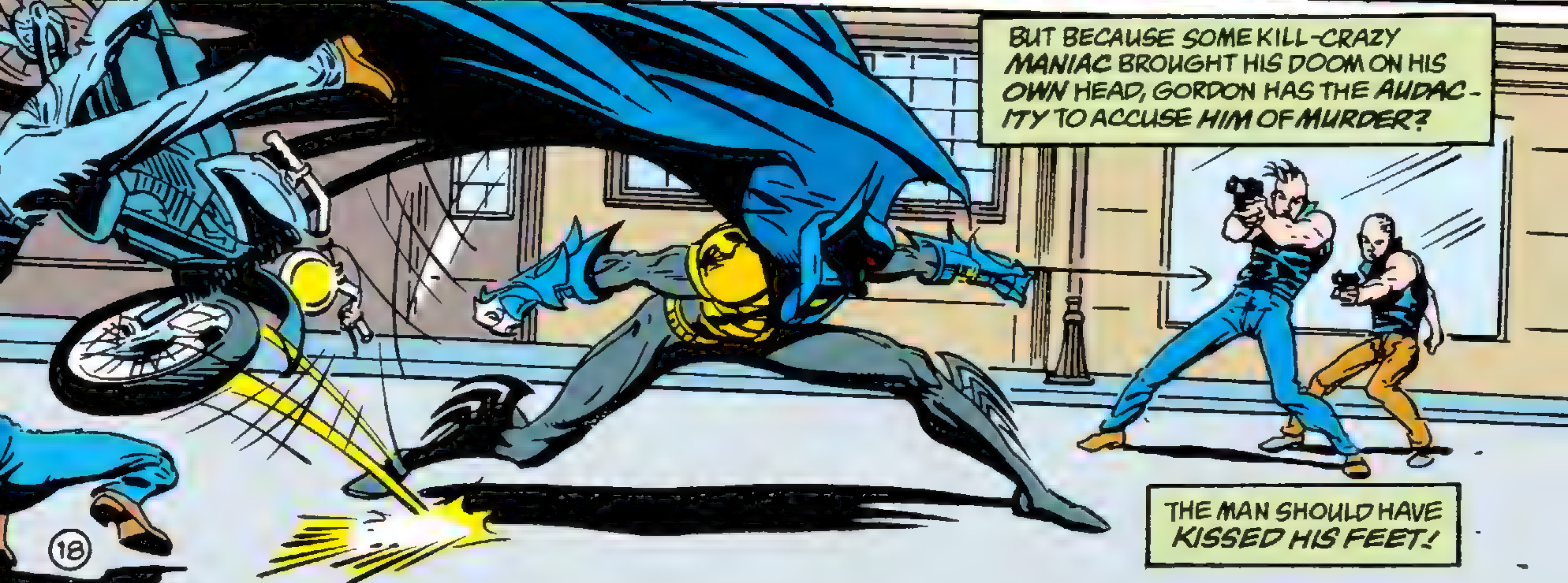
HIM--A MURDERER?



HE'S SAVED THE CITY
A DOZEN TIMES ALREADY--
FROM THE SCARECROW,
FROM THE JOKER--
ALL THOSE OTHER
MANIACS!

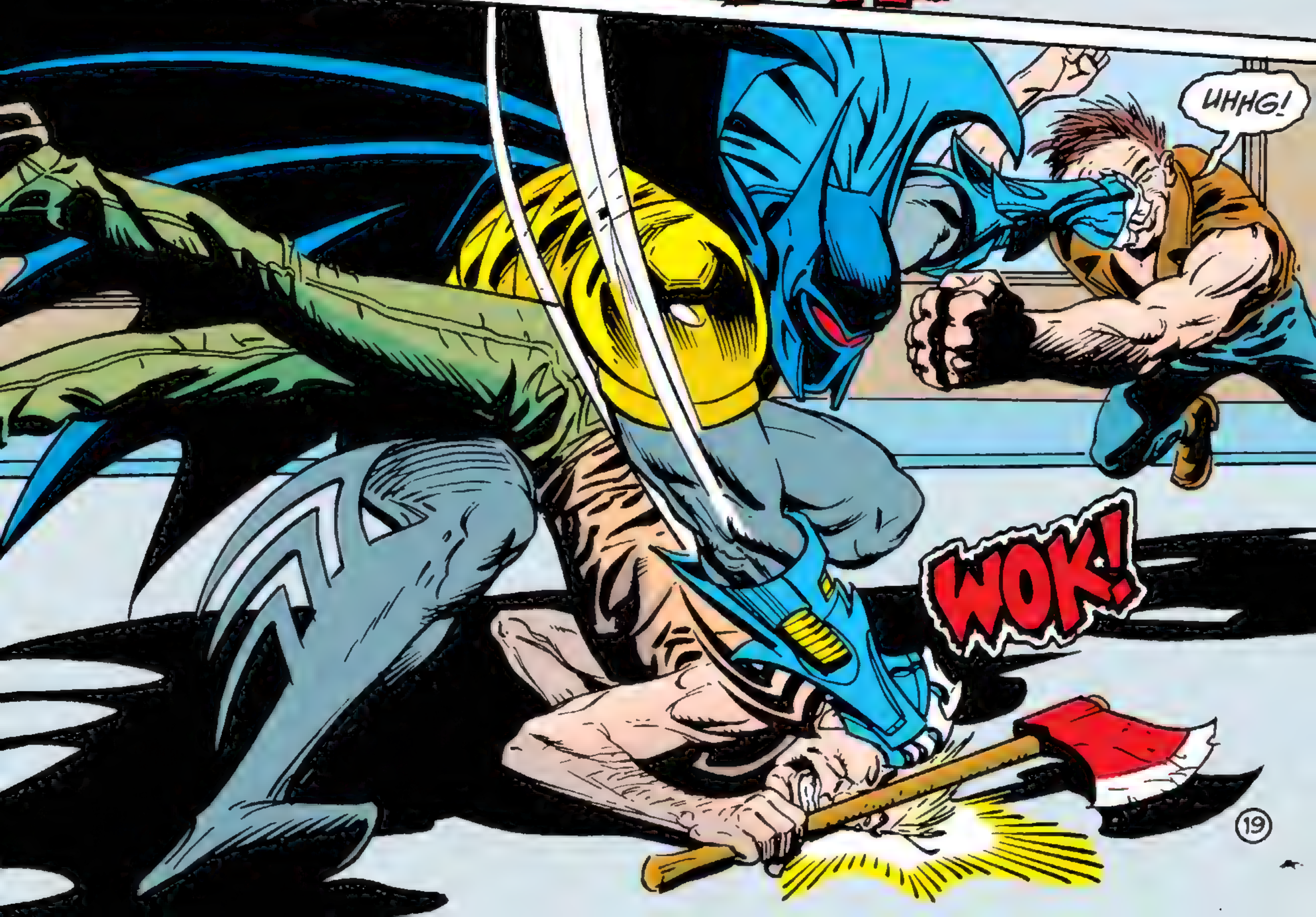
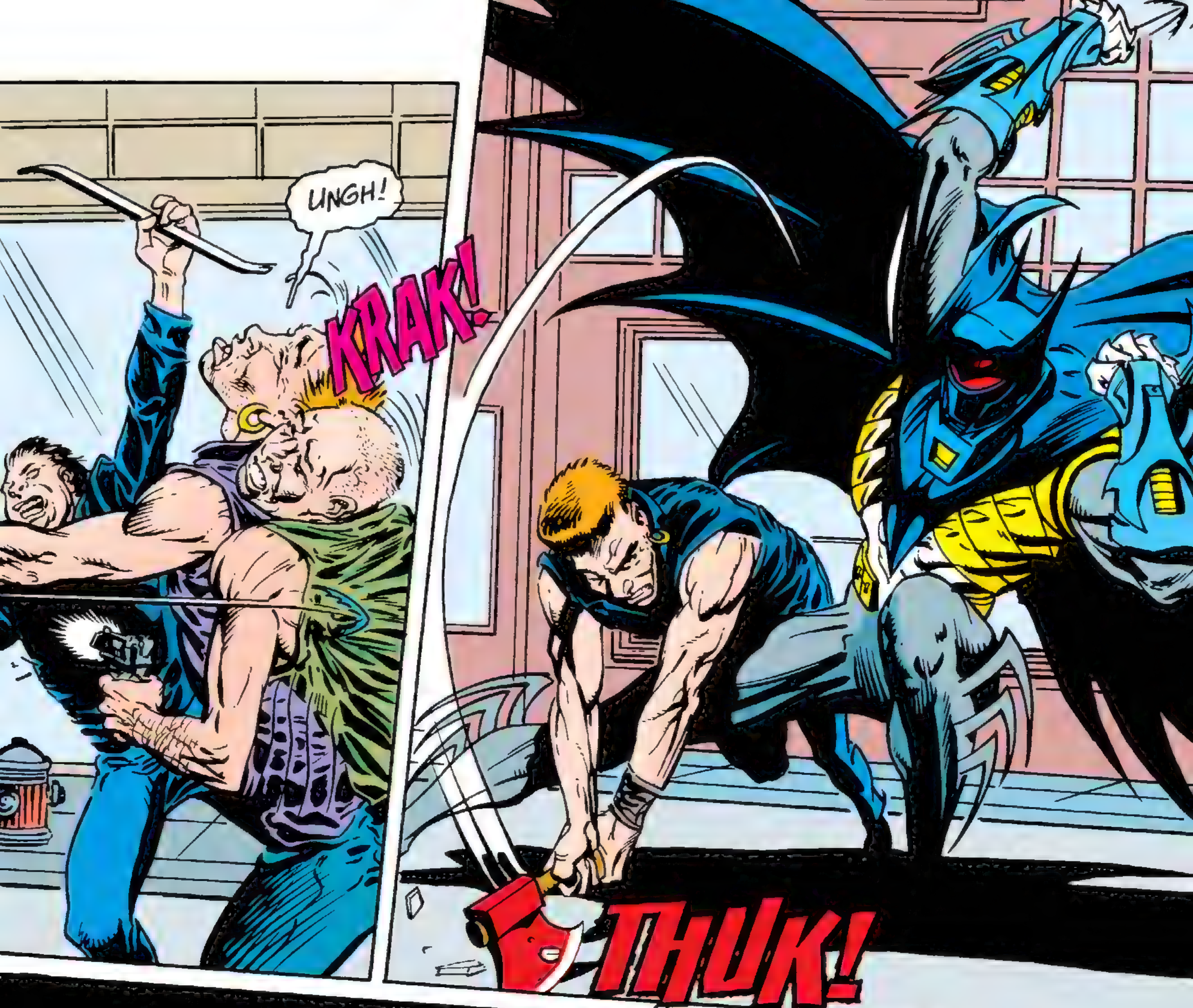


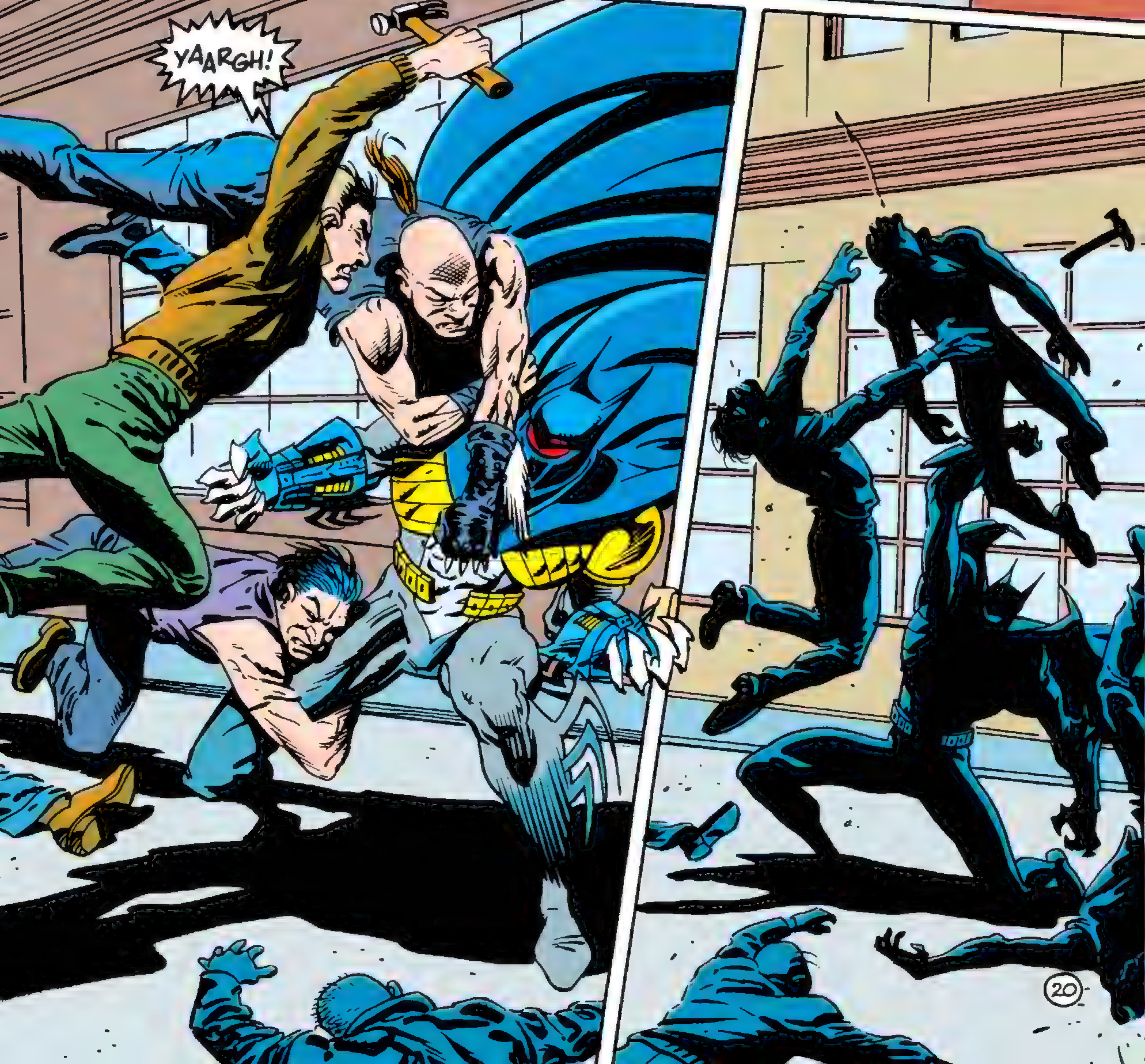
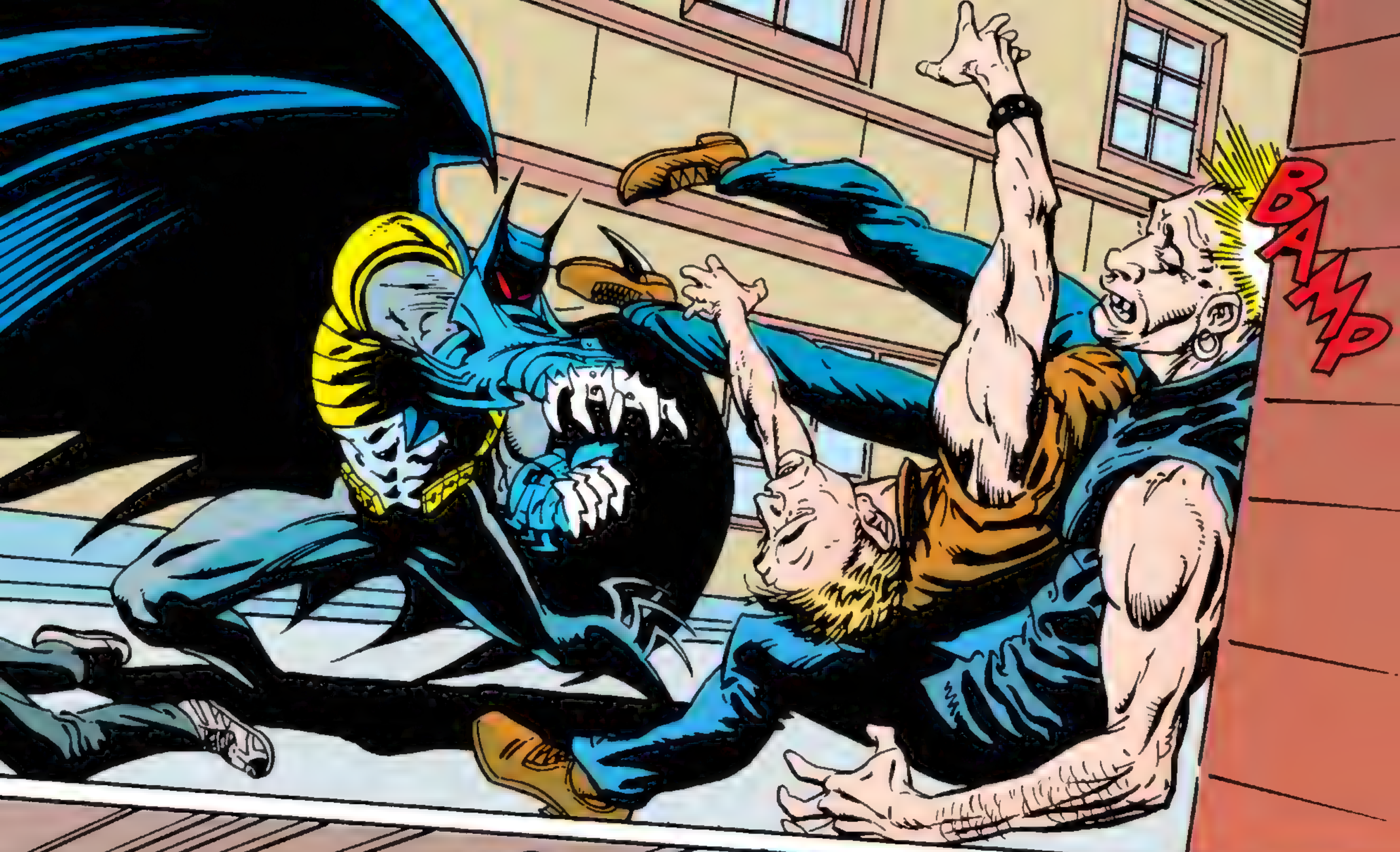
AND WHAT ABOUT BANE? WHO TOOK BANE
DOWN? GOTHAM WOULD HAVE BEEN CRAWLING
BENEATH HIS BLOODY RULE IF IT HADN'T BEEN
FOR THE BATMAN!

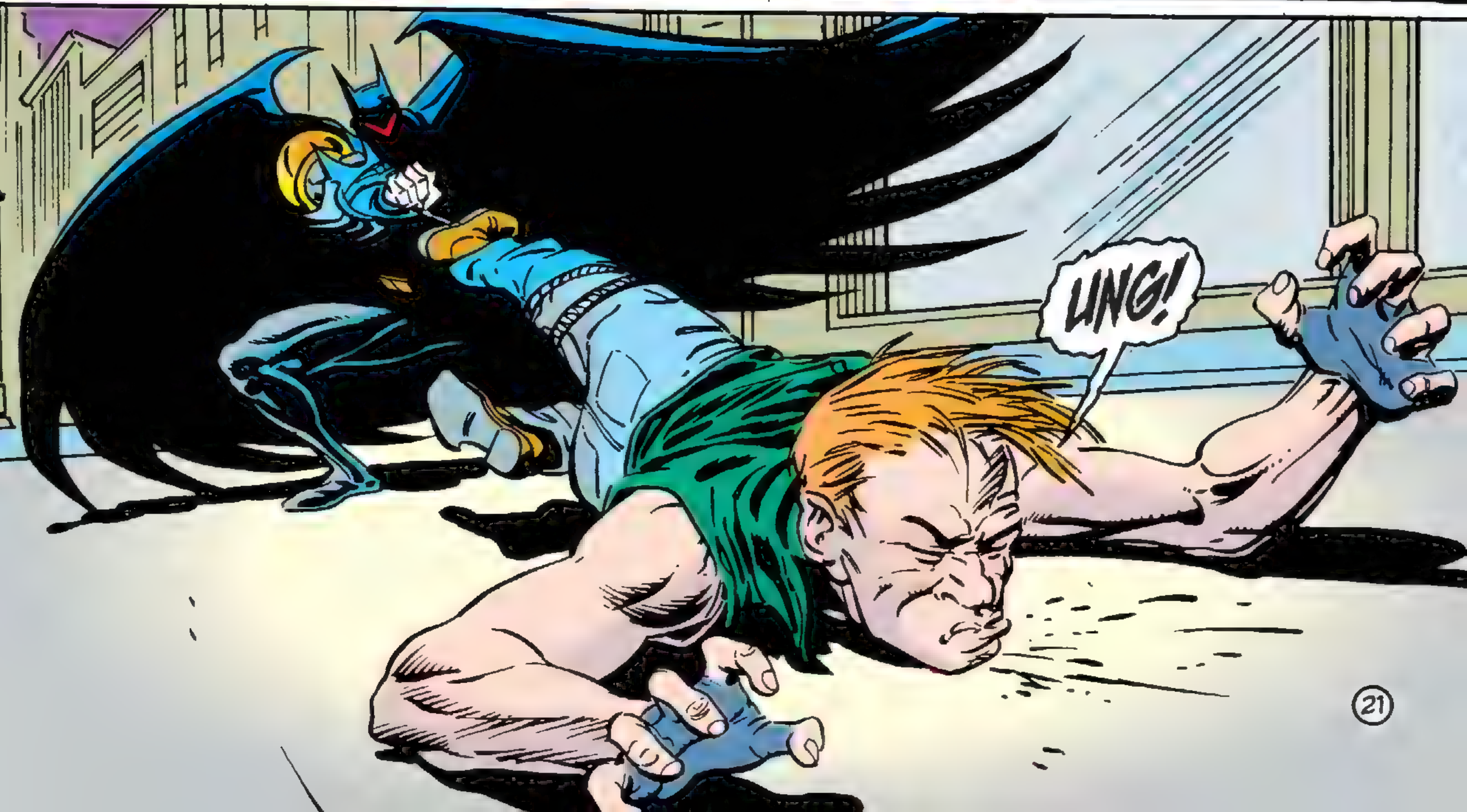
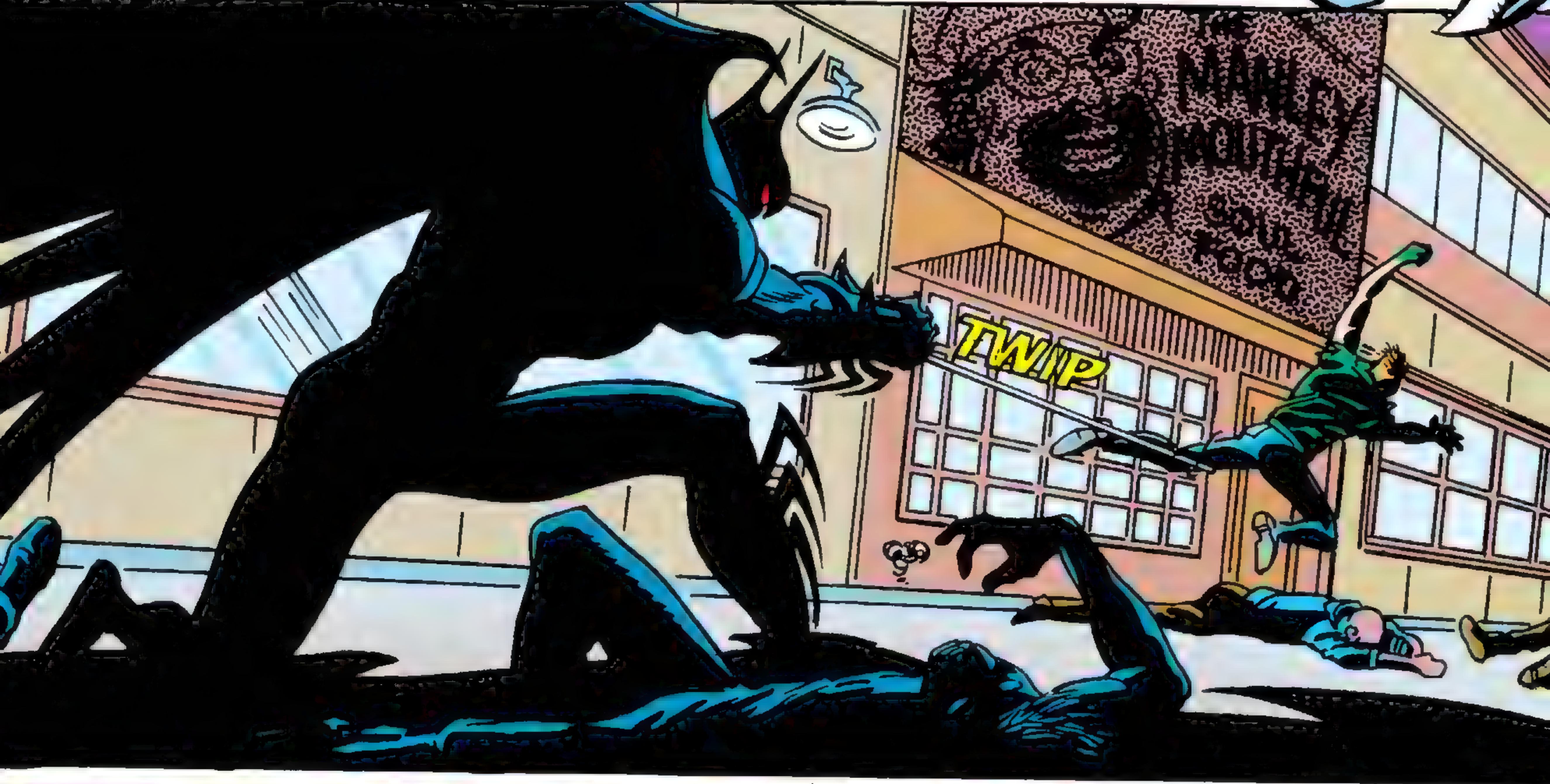
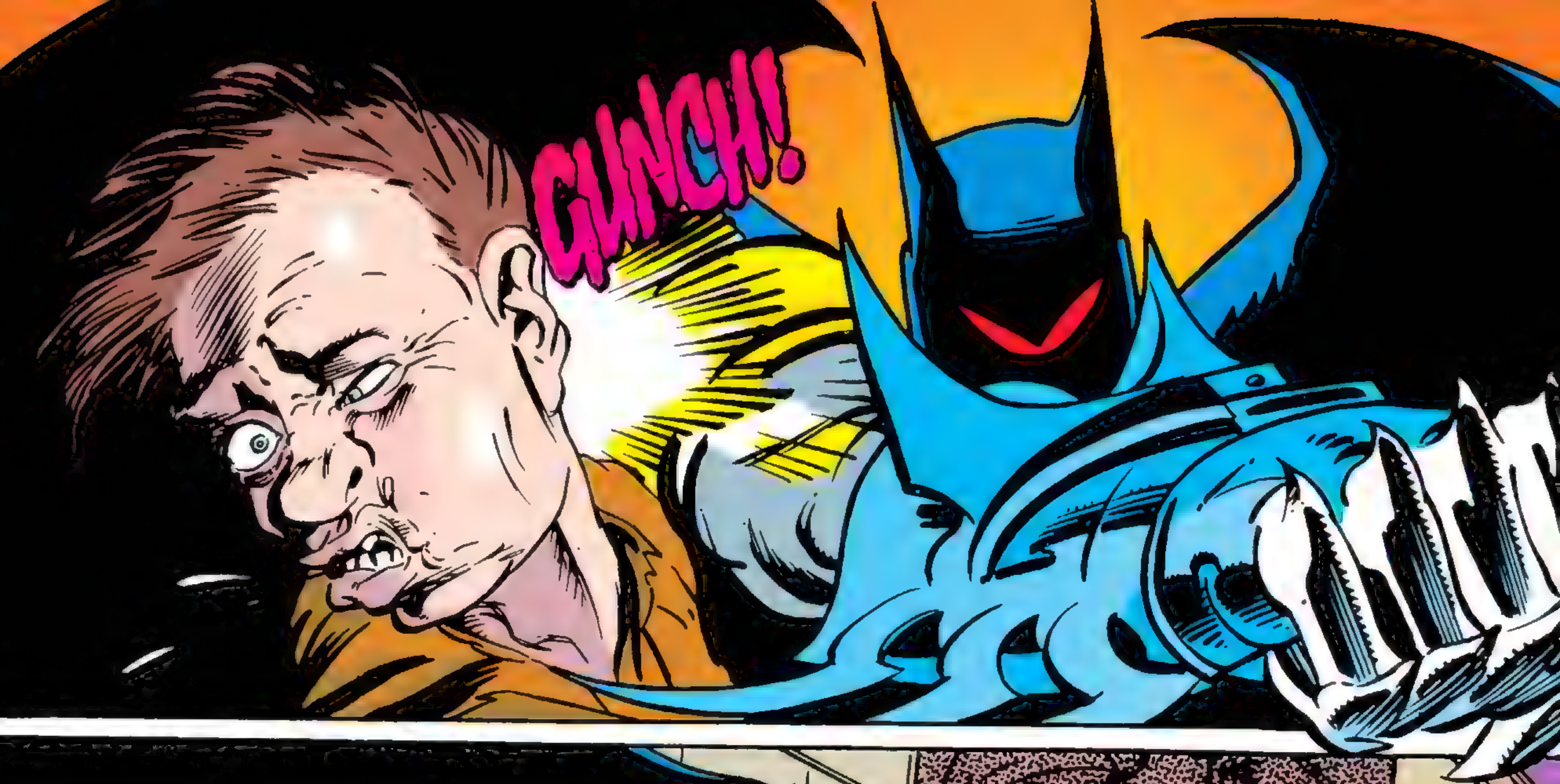


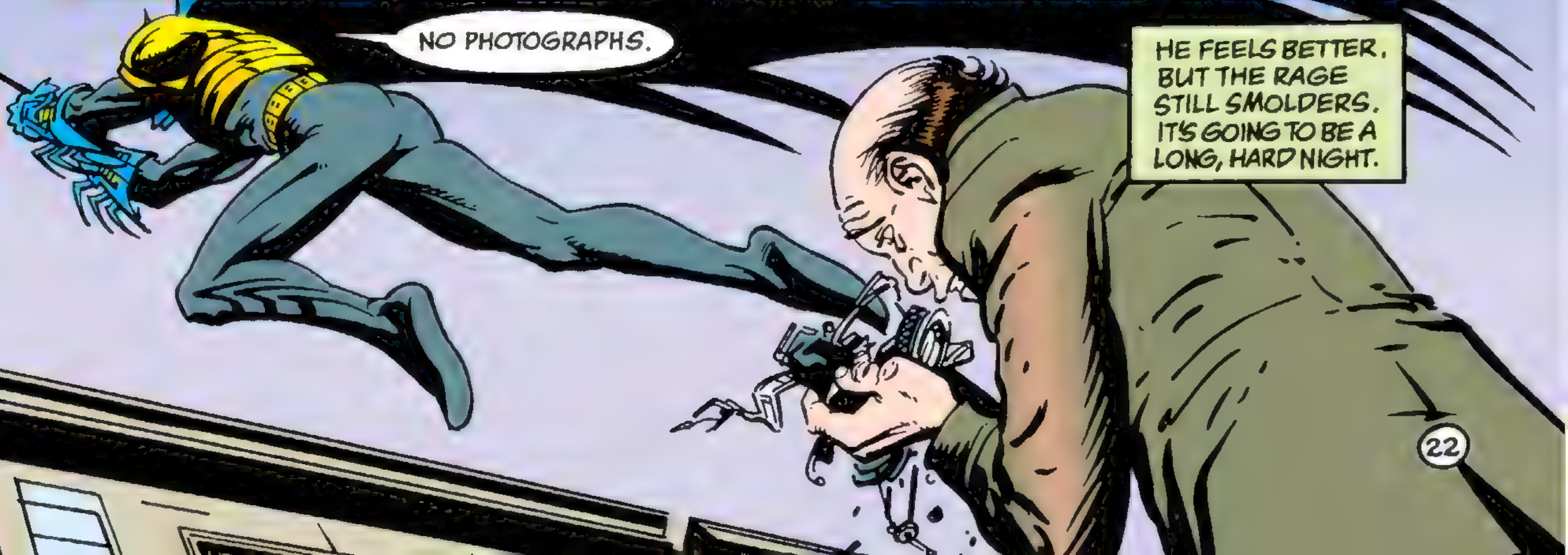
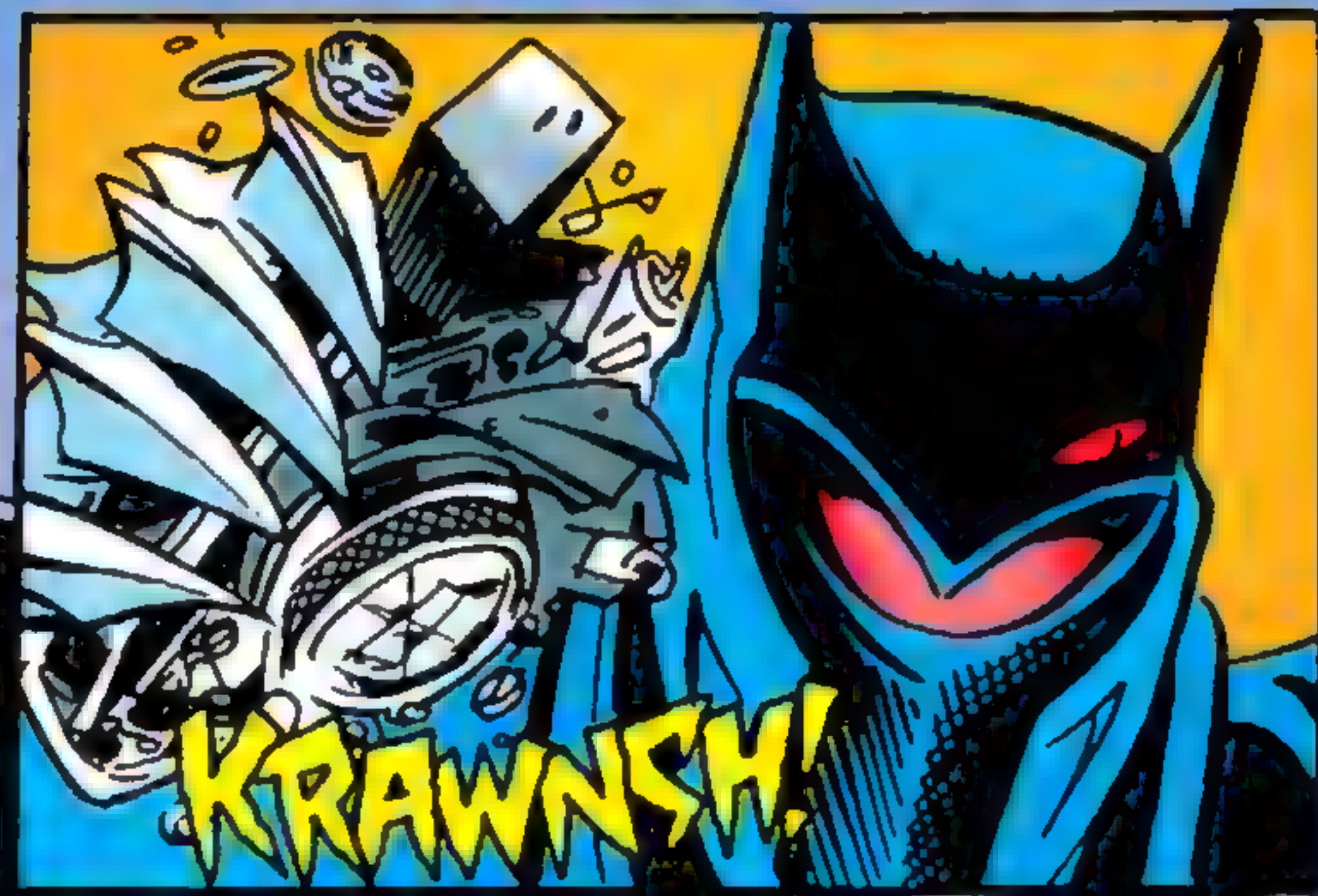
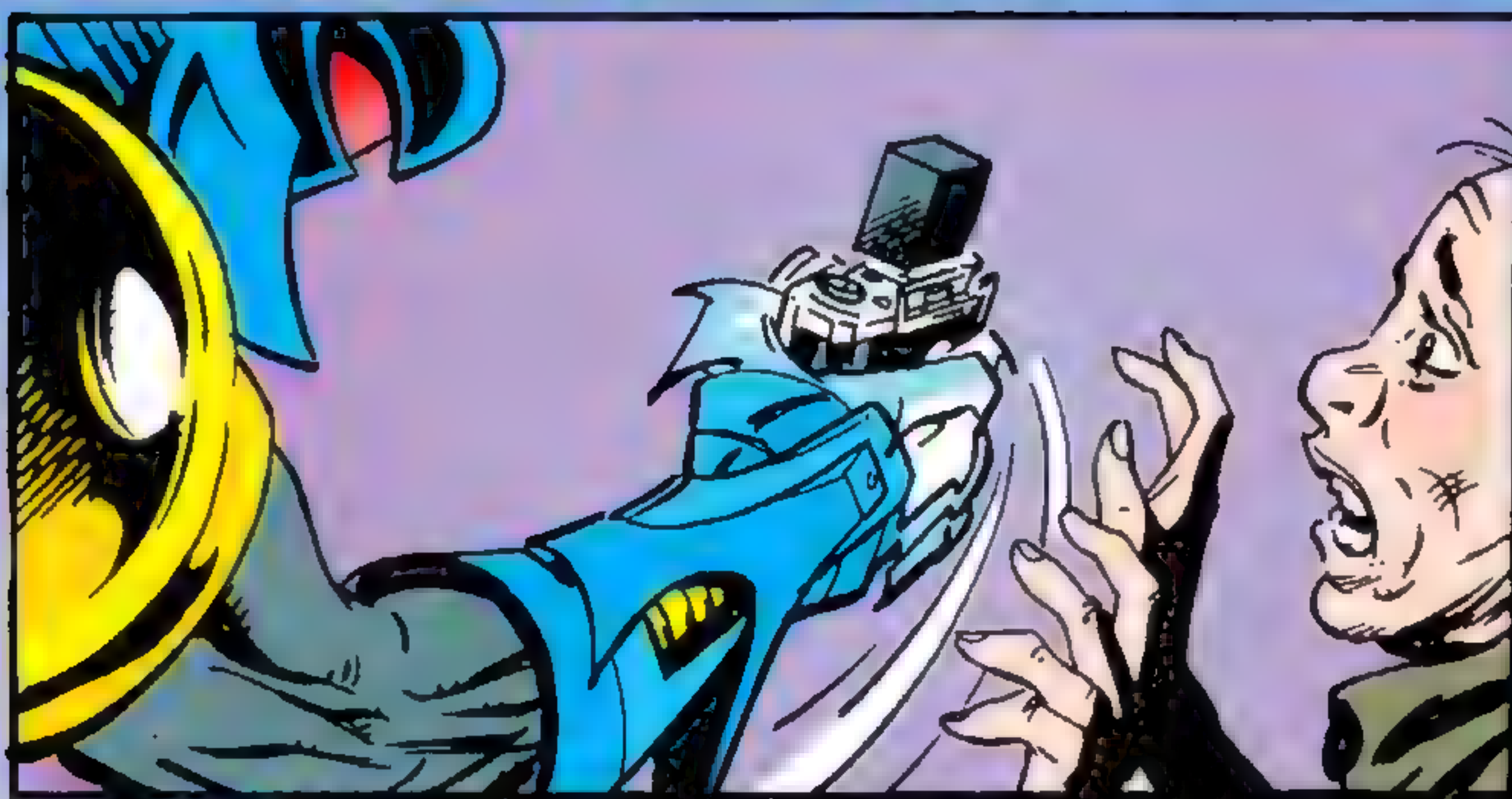
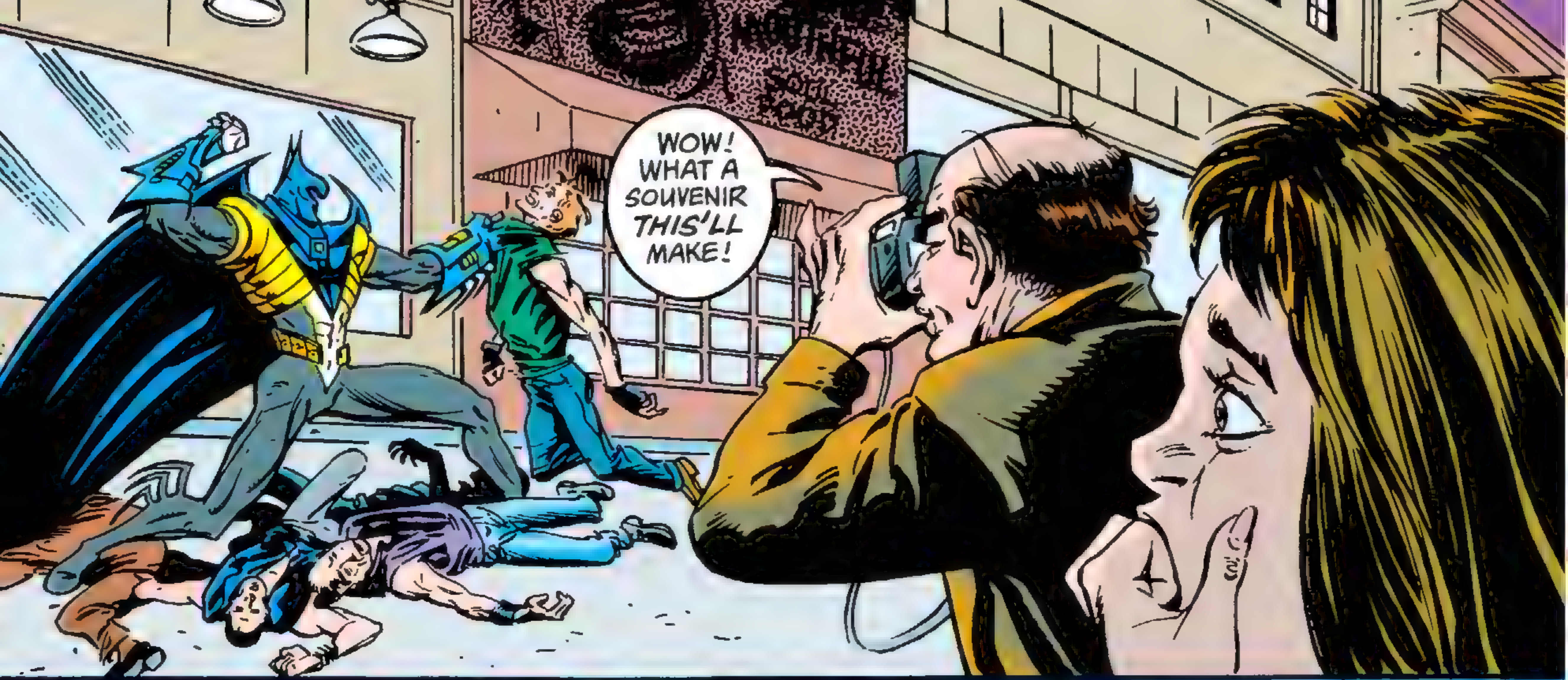
BUT BECAUSE SOME KILL-CRAZY
MANIAC BROUGHT HIS DOOM ON HIS
OWN HEAD, GORDON HAS THE AUDAC-
ITY TO ACCUSE HIM OF MURDER?

THE MAN SHOULD HAVE
KISSED HIS FEET!









NO PHOTOGRAPHS.

HE FEELS BETTER, BUT THE RAGE STILL SMOLDERS. IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG, HARD NIGHT.

--BURGLAR HERE WITH CRUSHED
KNUCKLES. CLAIMS BATMAN
STAMPED ON 'EM!

--AMBULANCE REQUIRED,
ORIOLE PLAZA! VICTIM IS
SUSPECTED DRUG-DEALER--



--WITH A WELDING TORCH!
I'M TELLING YOU, THIS CREEP IS
CHAINED TO THE RAILINGS!

--WANTED ON EIGHT COUNTS
OF ASSAULT! AND GET THIS--
BOTH ARMS ARE BROKEN!



DISTURBANCE REPORTED,
LUIGI FUENTE'S RESTAURANT!
GUNSHOTS HEARD!



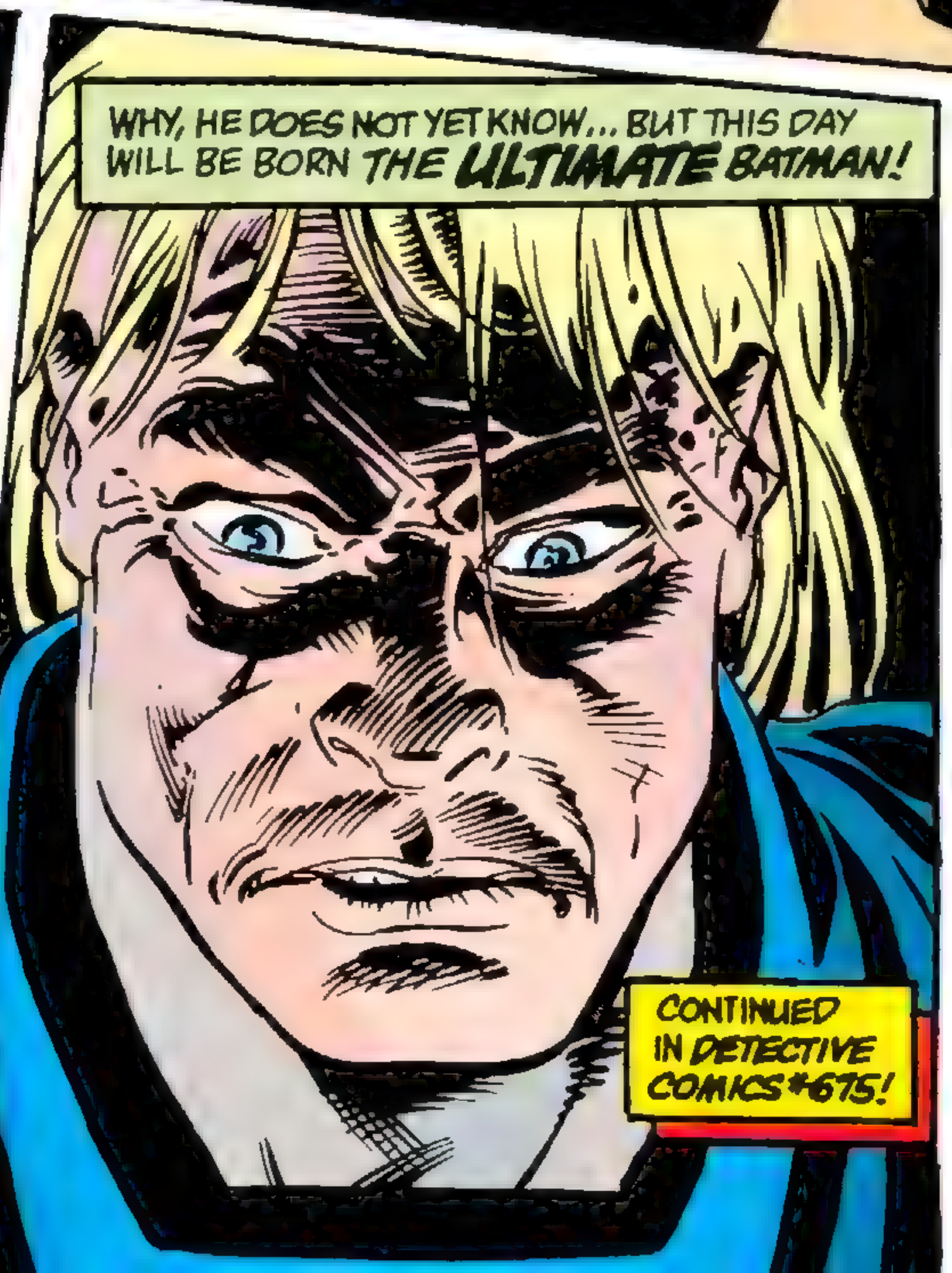
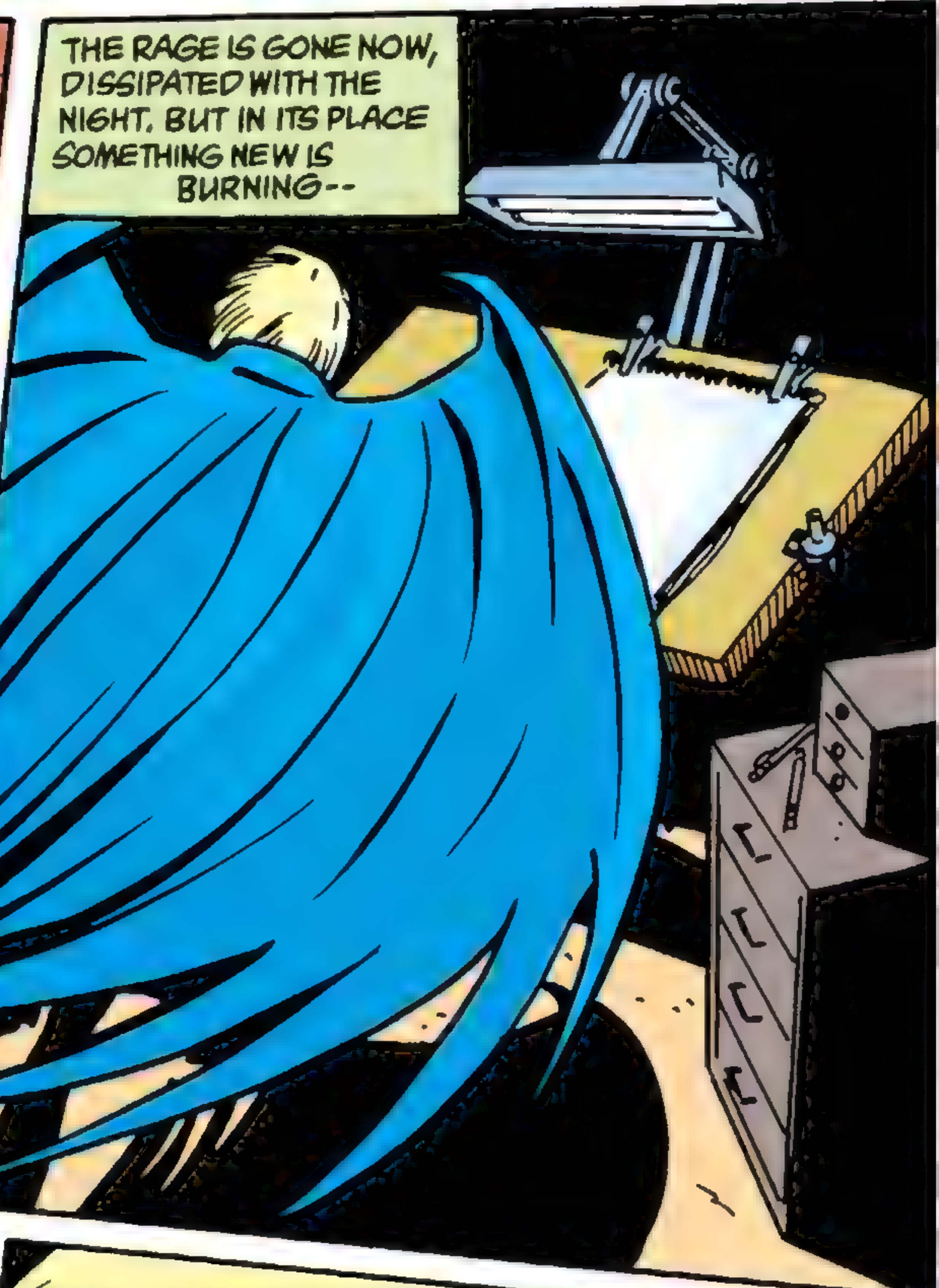
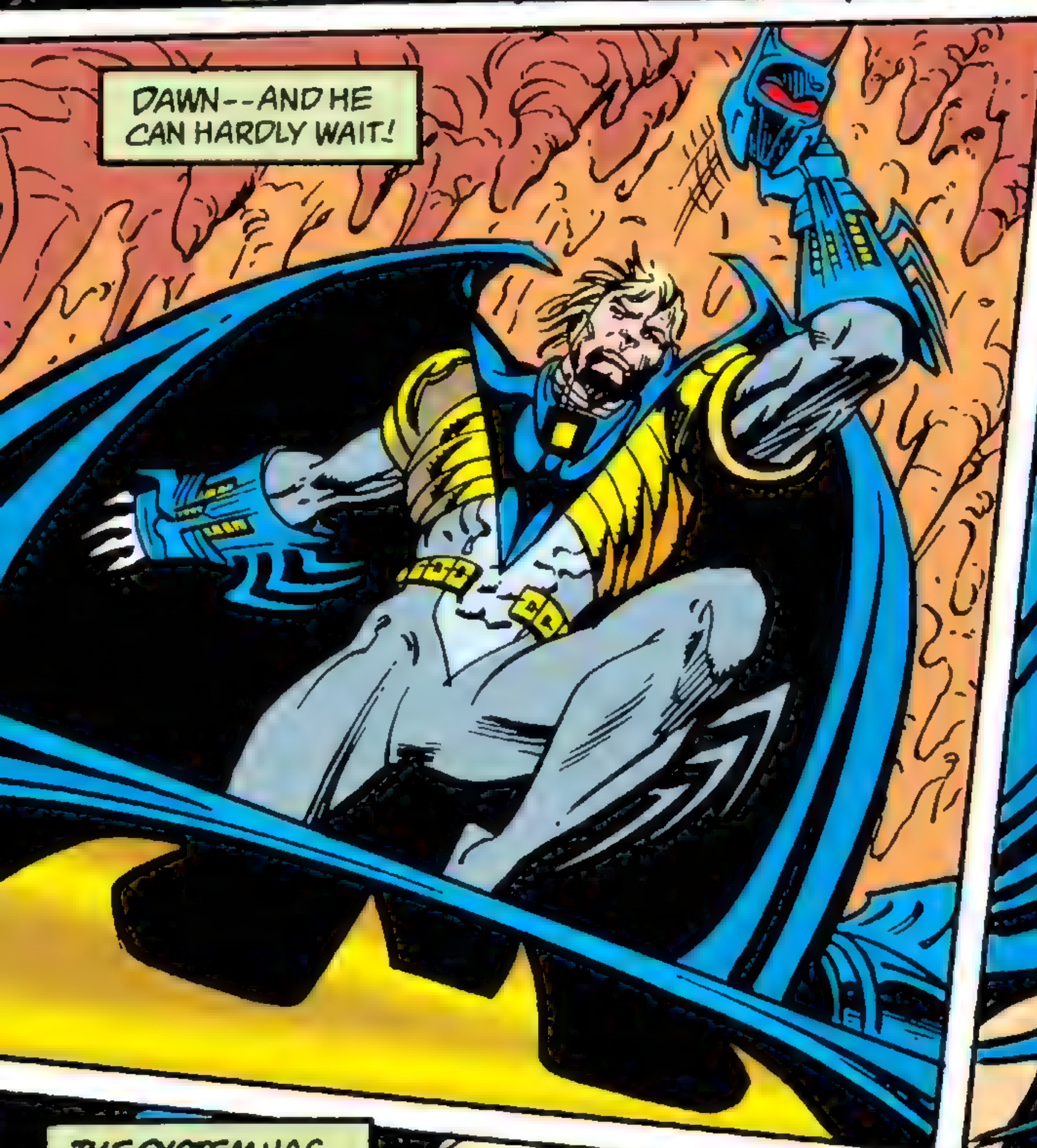
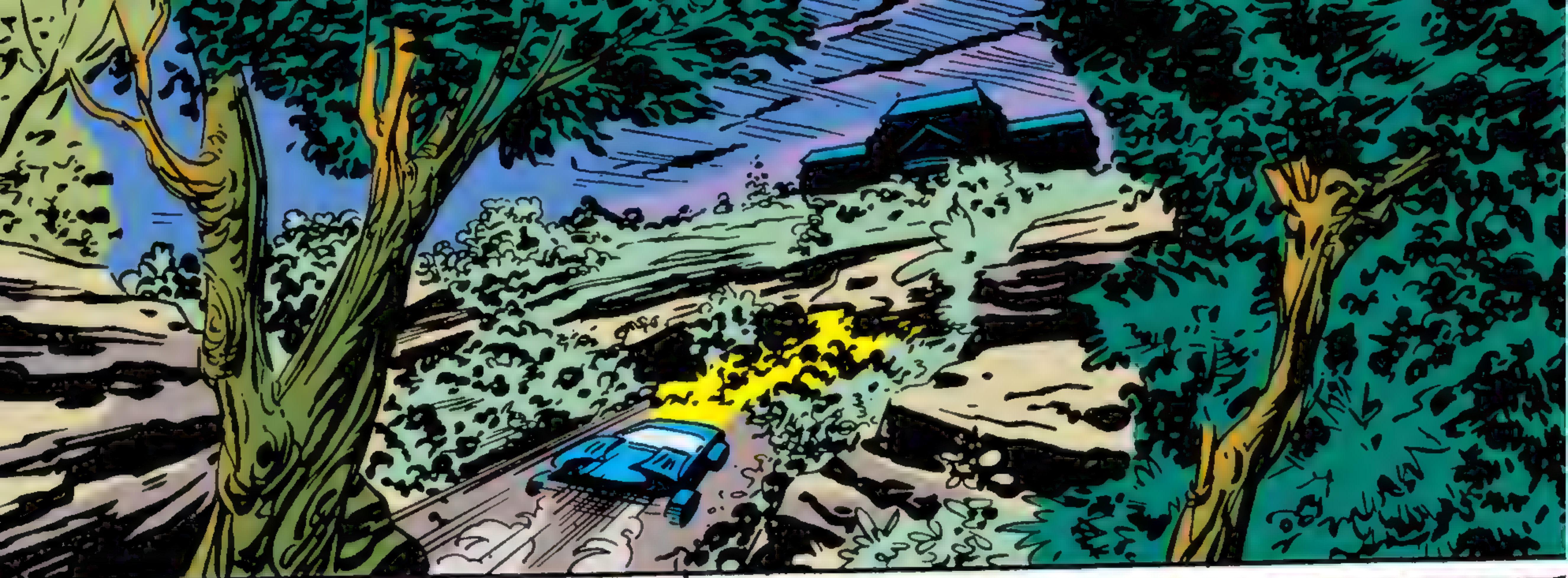
HE FEELS OLD
BEFORE HIS TIME.
WEARY.

HE TELLS HIMSELF EVERY-
THING CHANGES. THIS IS THE
MODERN WORLD. THINGS
HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT.

BUT HE WONDERS WHY ALL THE CHANGES
SEEM TO BE FOR THE WORSE. HE WONDERS
WHY A WEEK DOESN'T PASS WITHOUT HIS MEN
BRINGING IN SOME 11-YEAR-OLD WITH A GUN
ALREADY SPORTING NOTCHES.

HE WONDERS WHERE HIS FRIEND WENT,
WHY HE FEELS SO HELPLESSLY ALONE--

-- WHY HE FEELS SO
BETRAYED.



DAWN--AND HE
CAN HARDLY WAIT!

THE RAGE IS GONE NOW,
DISSIPATED WITH THE
NIGHT, BUT IN ITS PLACE
SOMETHING NEW IS
BURNING--

THE SYSTEM HAS
KICKED IN. HIS MIND
HAS LARSED INTO A
LIGHT TRANCE, AND
INSTRUCTIONS
IMPLANTED BY HIS
FATHER LONG AGO
COME BUBBLING
TO THE SURFACE.

WHY, HE DOES NOT YET KNOW... BUT THIS DAY
WILL BE BORN **THE ULTIMATE BATMAN!**

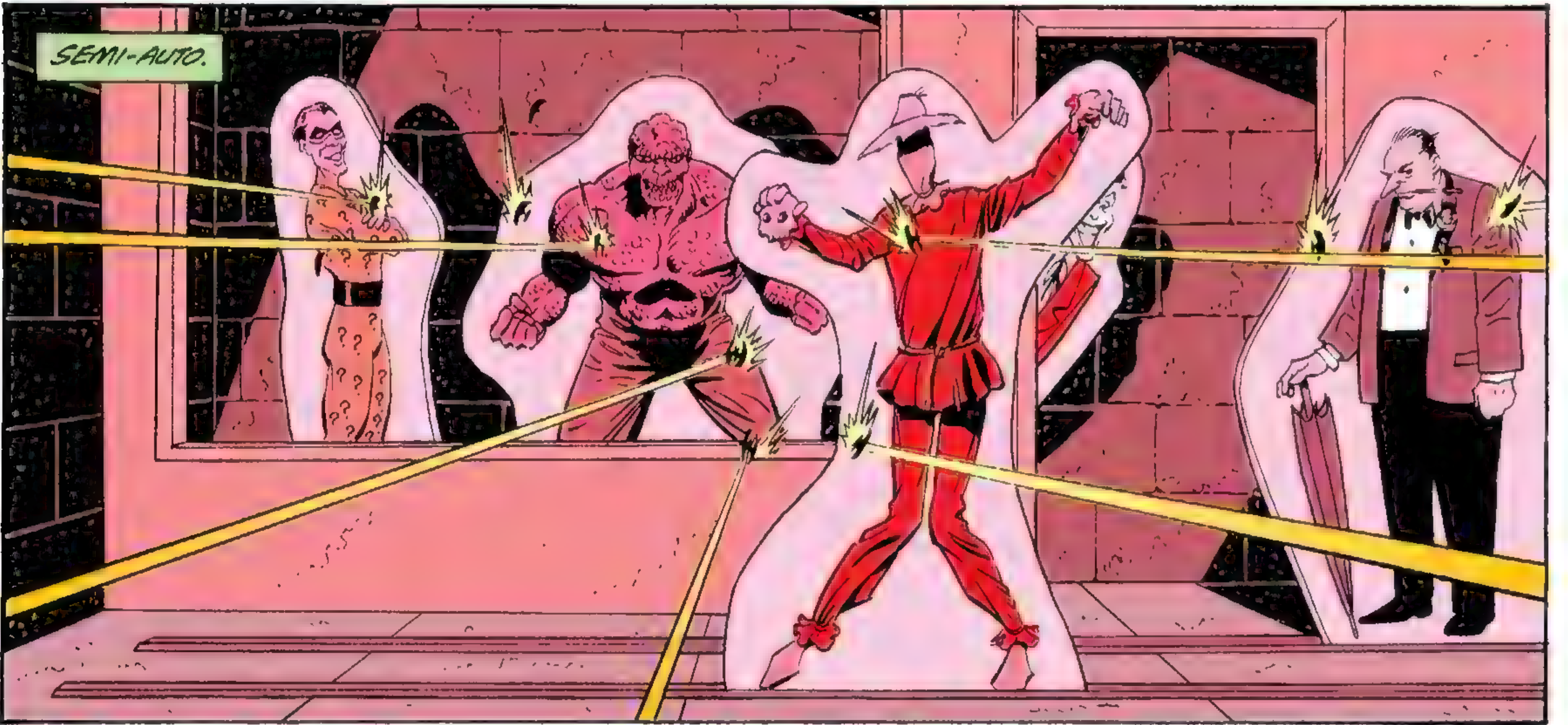
CONTINUED
IN DETECTIVE
COMICS #675!



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

DIXON
NOLAN
HANNA

K. JONES
BEATTY



MIDNIGHT DUEL

HE FORGED
NEW ARMOR.

HE BUILT A
NEW WEAPON.

THE CRUSADE
GOES INTO ITS
FINAL STAGE
NOW.

IT HAS CLAIMED ITS
FIRST VICTIM--THE
ANIMAL IN HUMAN
GUISE CALLED
ABATTOIR.

THE FINAL CAMPAIGN
FOR THE DARK CITY
BEGINS.

CHUCK DIXON GRAMHAM NOLAN SCOTT HANNA
writer penciller inker
ADRIENNE ROY JOHN COSTANZA DARREN VINCENZO
colorist letterer ass't editor
SCOTT PETERSON, editor
BATMAN created by BOB KANE



DEATH OR VICTORY.

NO COMPROMISE.

NO QUARTER.

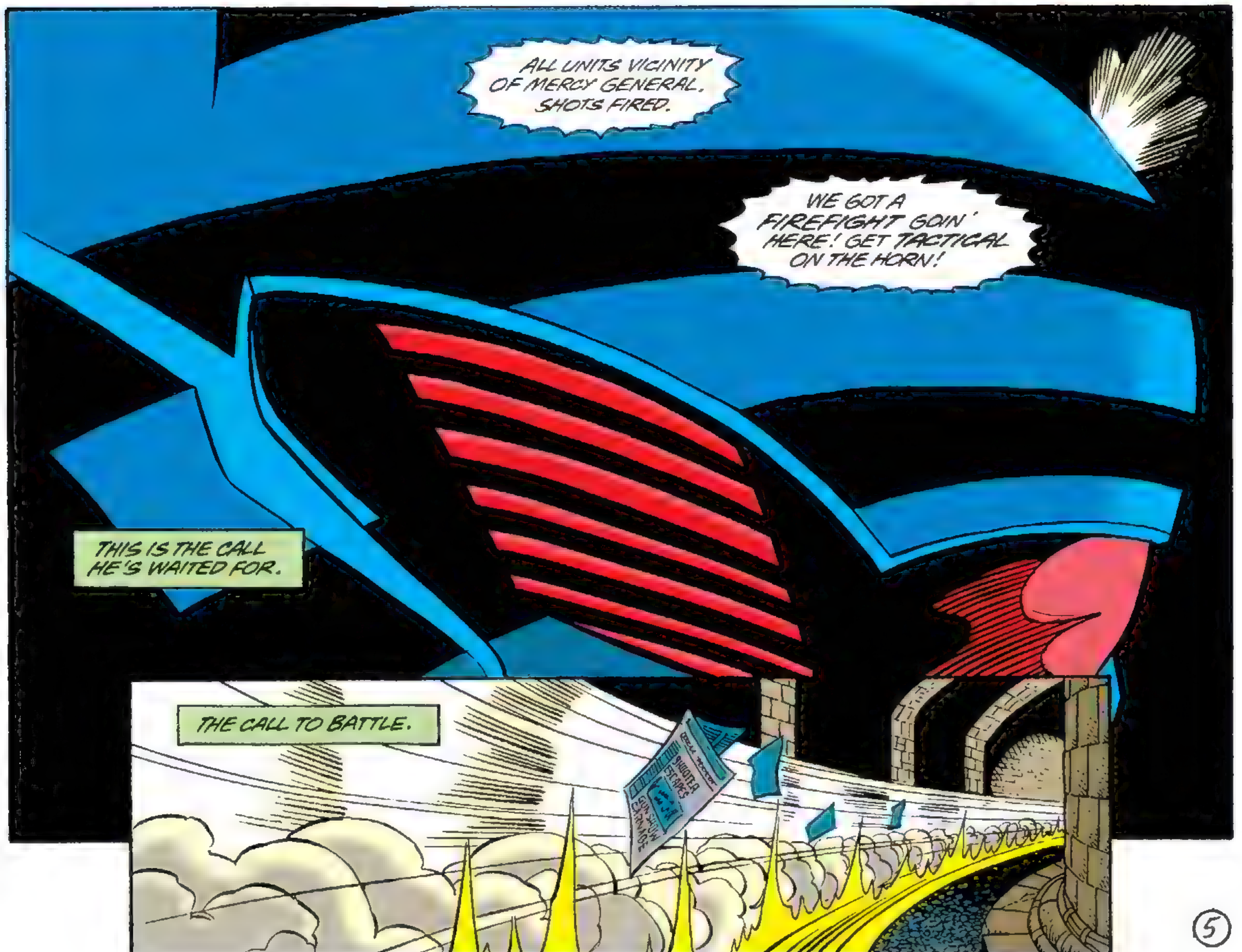
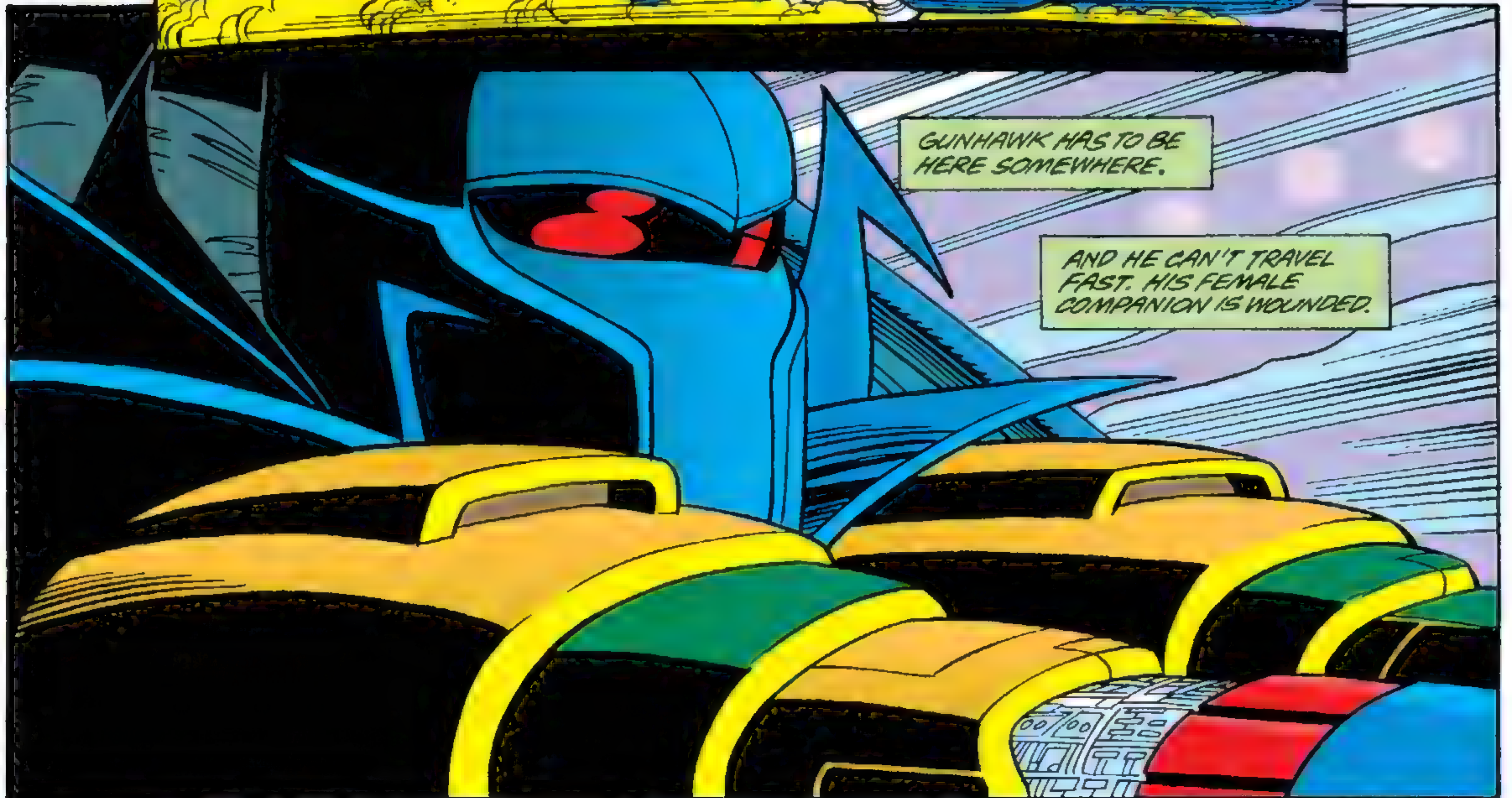
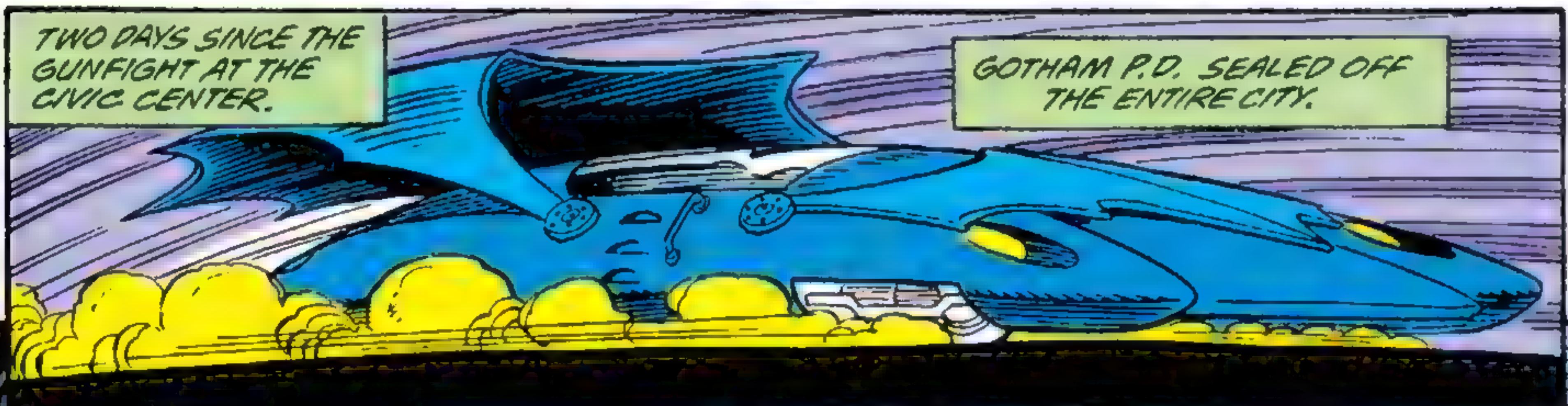
ABATTOIR DIED
FOR HIS SINS
AGAINST THE
CITY.



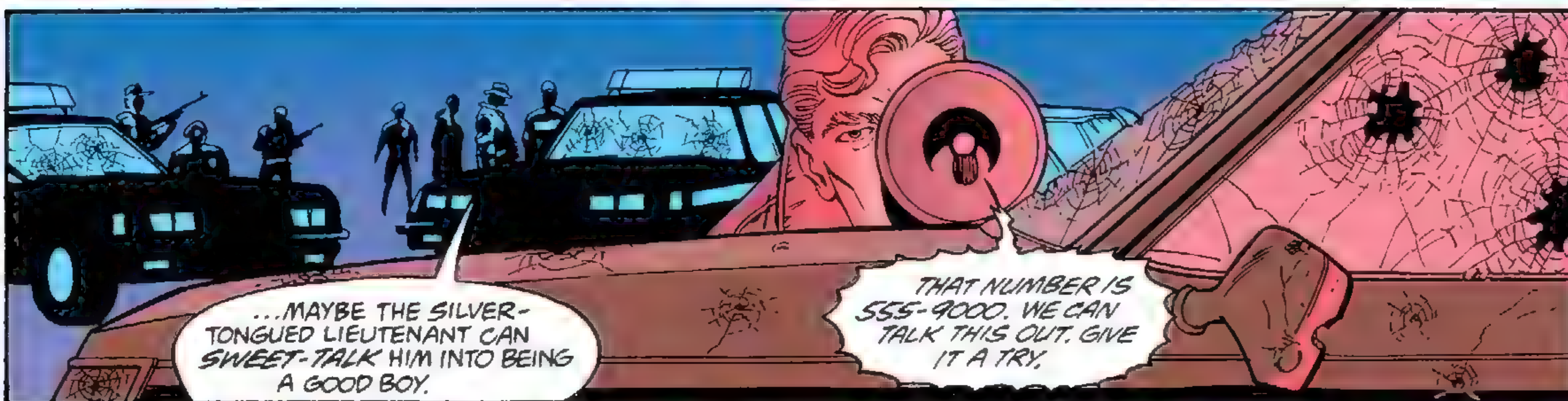
HE LETS THE SYSTEM
TAKE HIM.

HE SURRENDERS
TO ITS FURY.







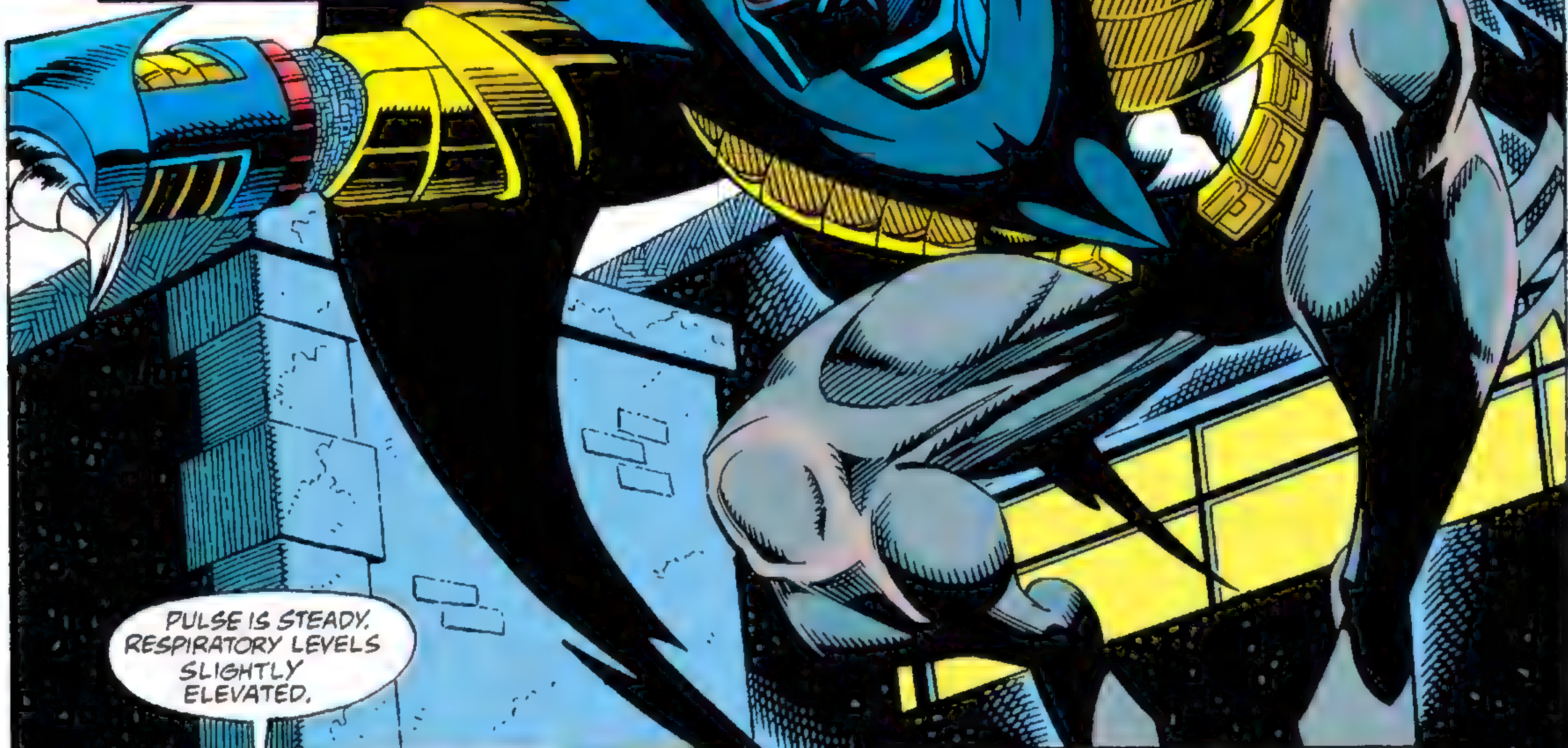




HEY! I HAD
A TARGET!

NOT
THAT TARGET,
BUDDY.

"THAT GUY'S
AN HONORARY
MEMBER OF
TACTICAL."



PULSE IS STEADY.
RESPIRATORY LEVELS
SLIGHTLY
ELEVATED.



YOU JUST MAKE
SURE YOU DO YOUR
BEST, DOC.

I COULD WORK
BETTER WITHOUT
YOU BREATHING OVER
MY SHOULDER.



YOU HEAR THAT?
A KIND OF BOOMING
NOISE.

YOU
FOLKS
KEEP
WORKING
ON MY
GIRL...



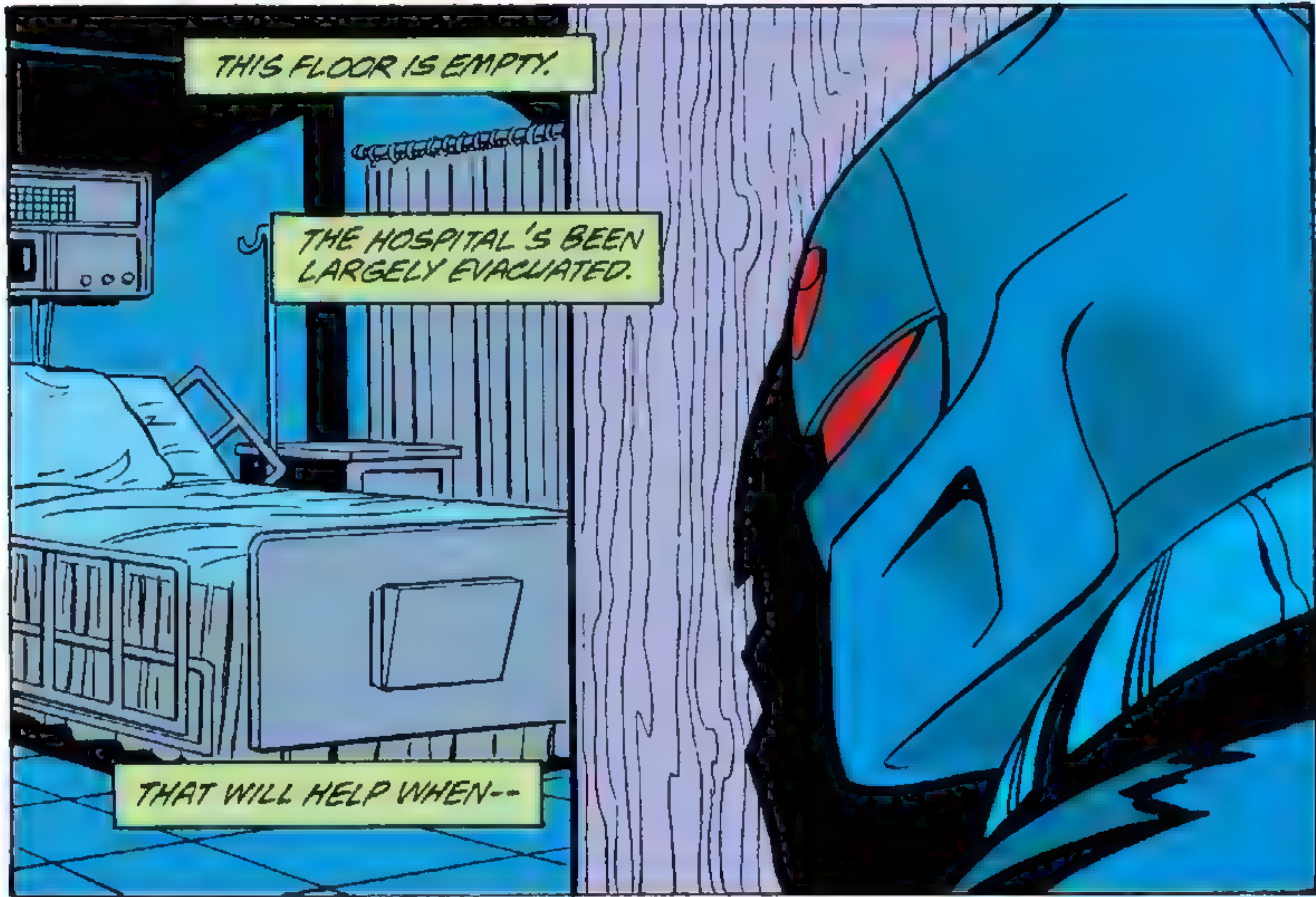
HE COULDN'T RISK ANY OF THE STAIRWELLS.

SOMEONE LIKE GLINHAWK MIGHT HAVE TRICKED THEM OUT.



HE WOULD APPROACH EVERYTHING AS A MILITARY PROBLEM.

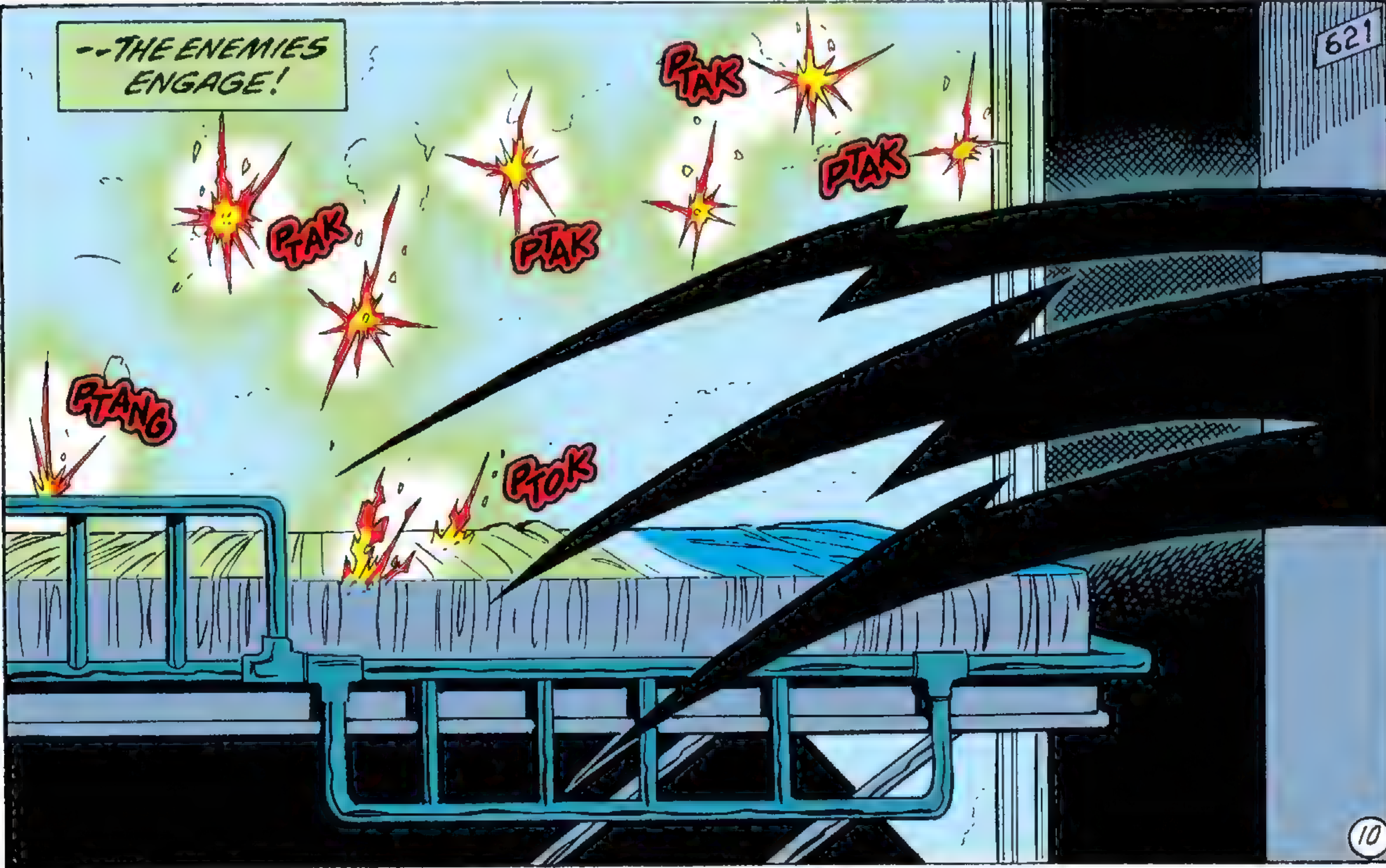
WORK OUT ALL THE CONTINGENCIES.



THIS FLOOR IS EMPTY!

THE HOSPITAL'S BEEN LARGELY EVACUATED.

THAT WILL HELP WHEN--



--THE ENEMIES ENGAGE!

PTAK

PTAK

PTAK

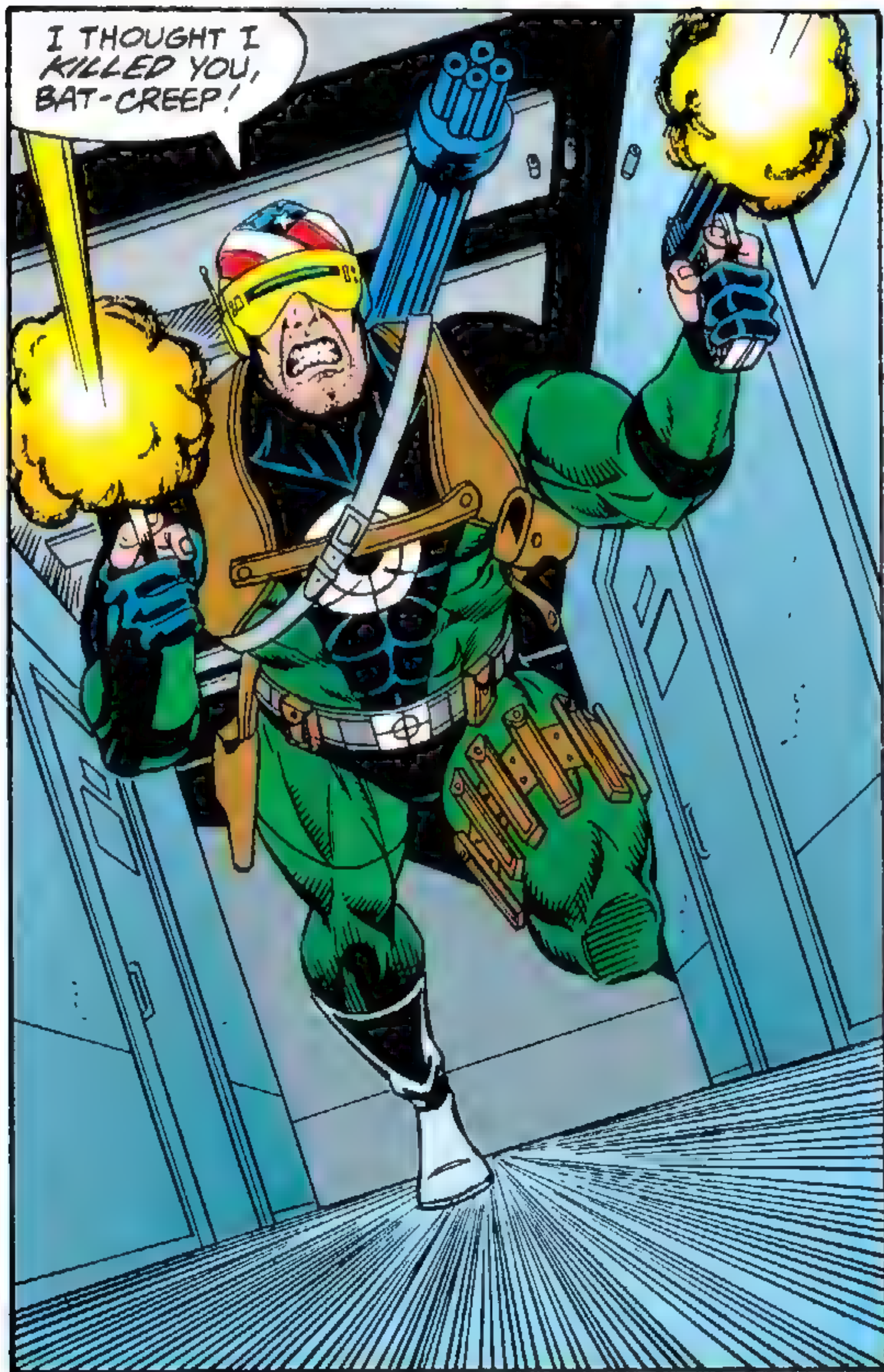
PTAK

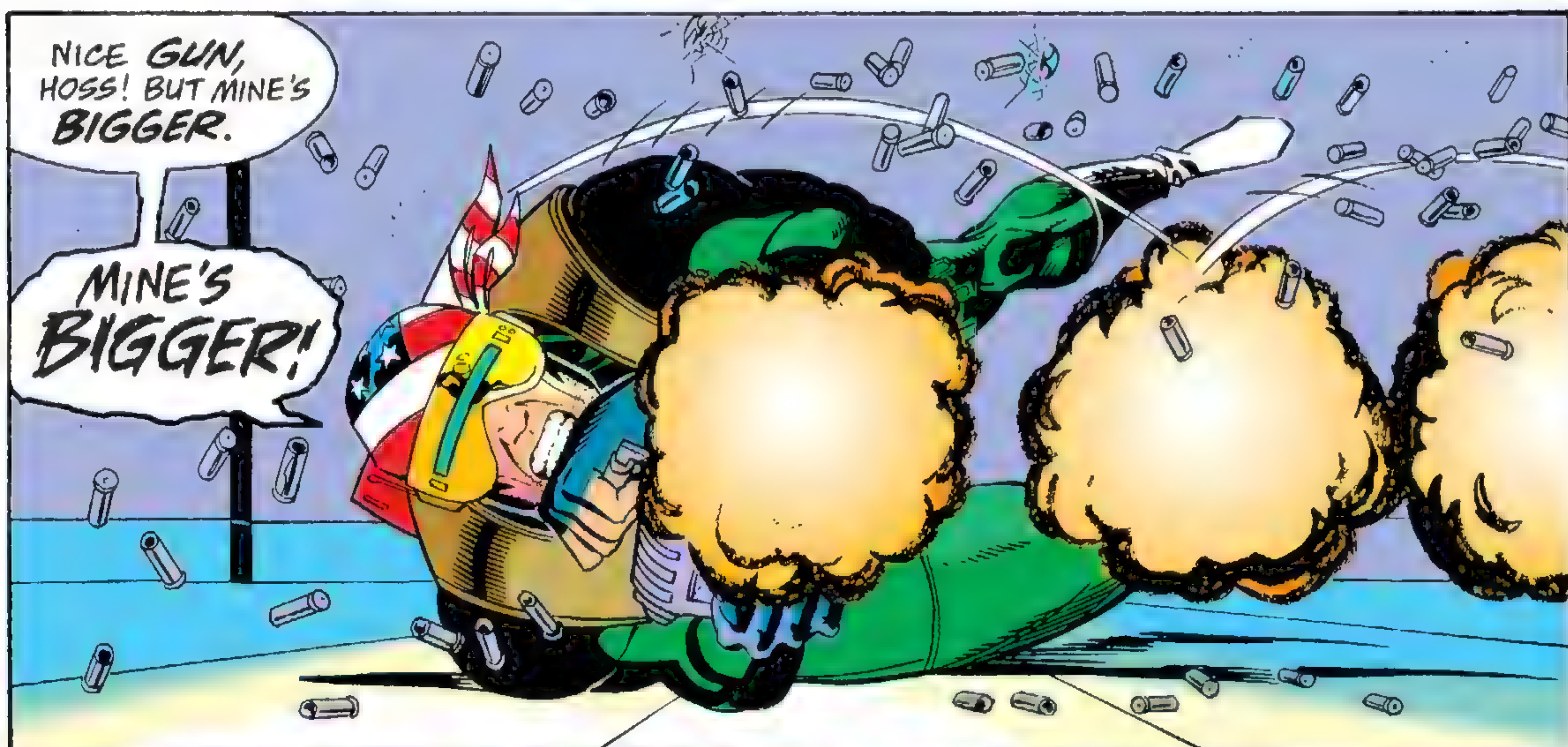
PTANG

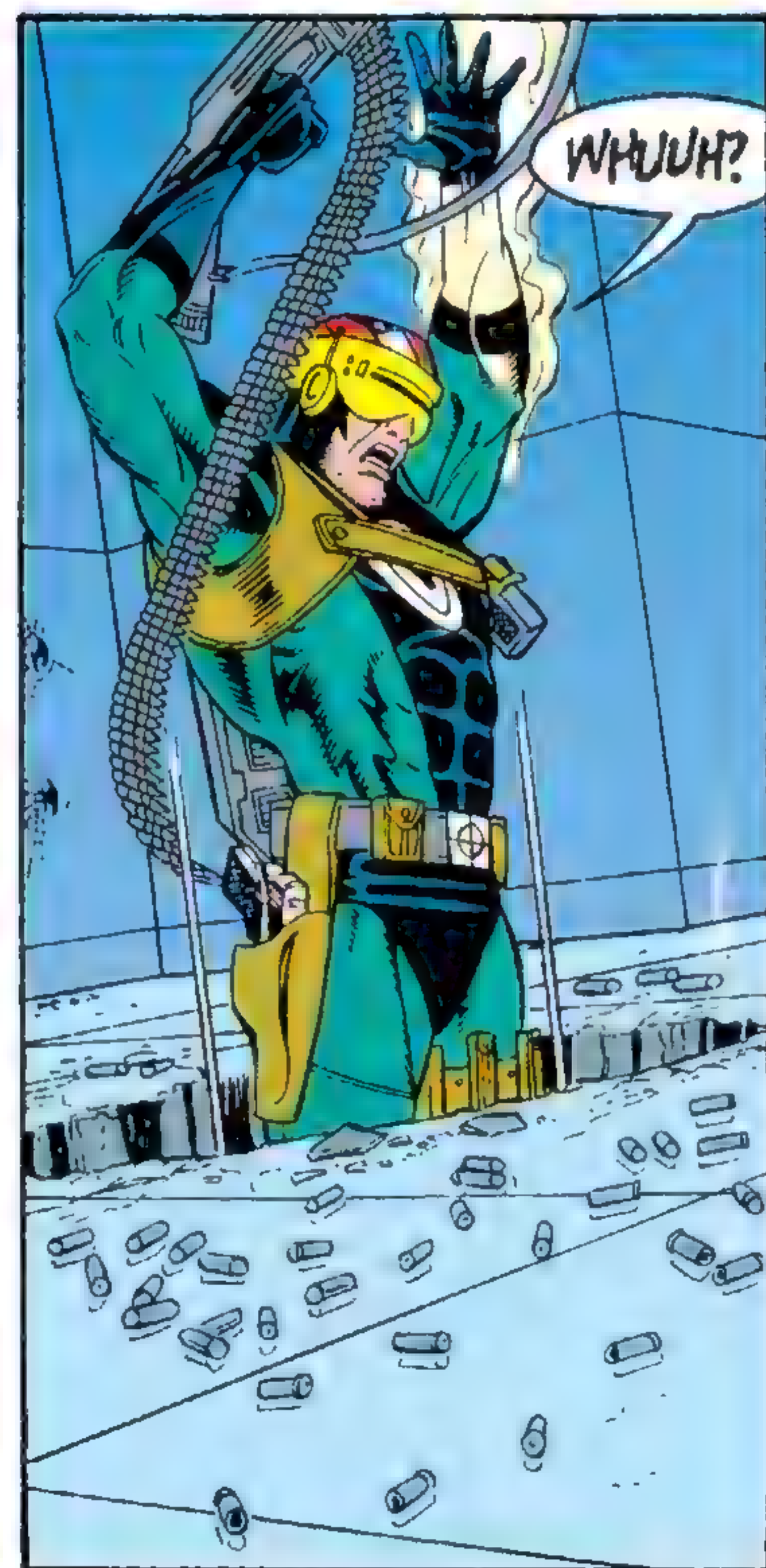
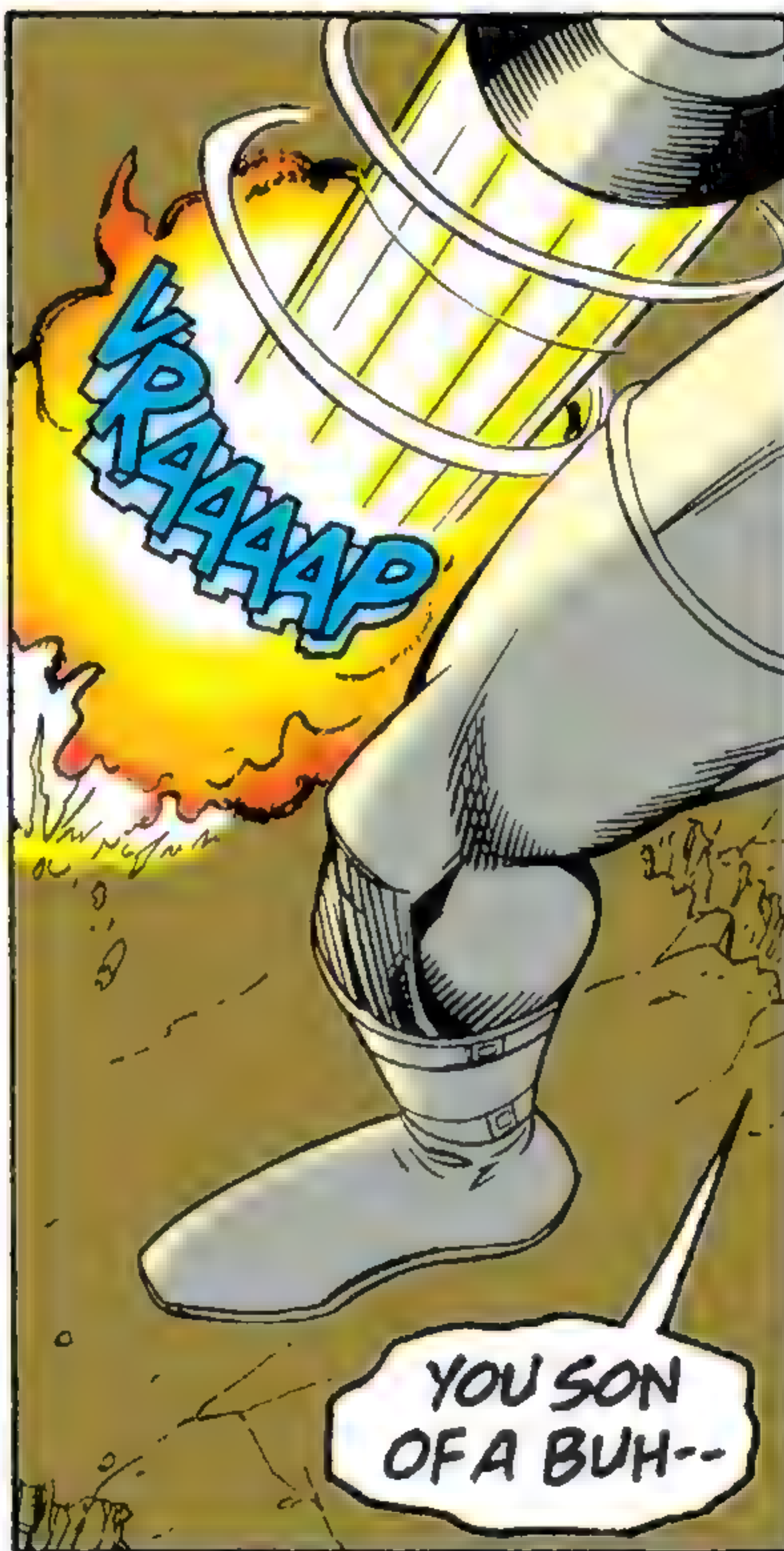
PTOK

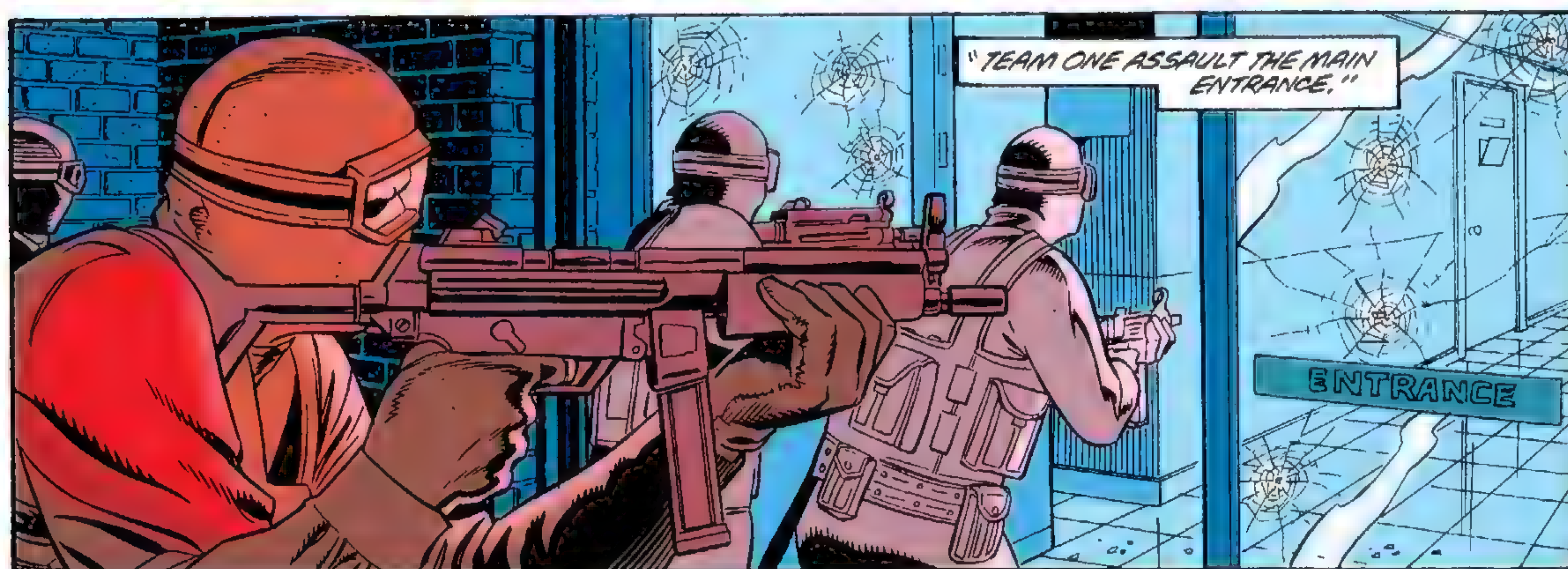
621

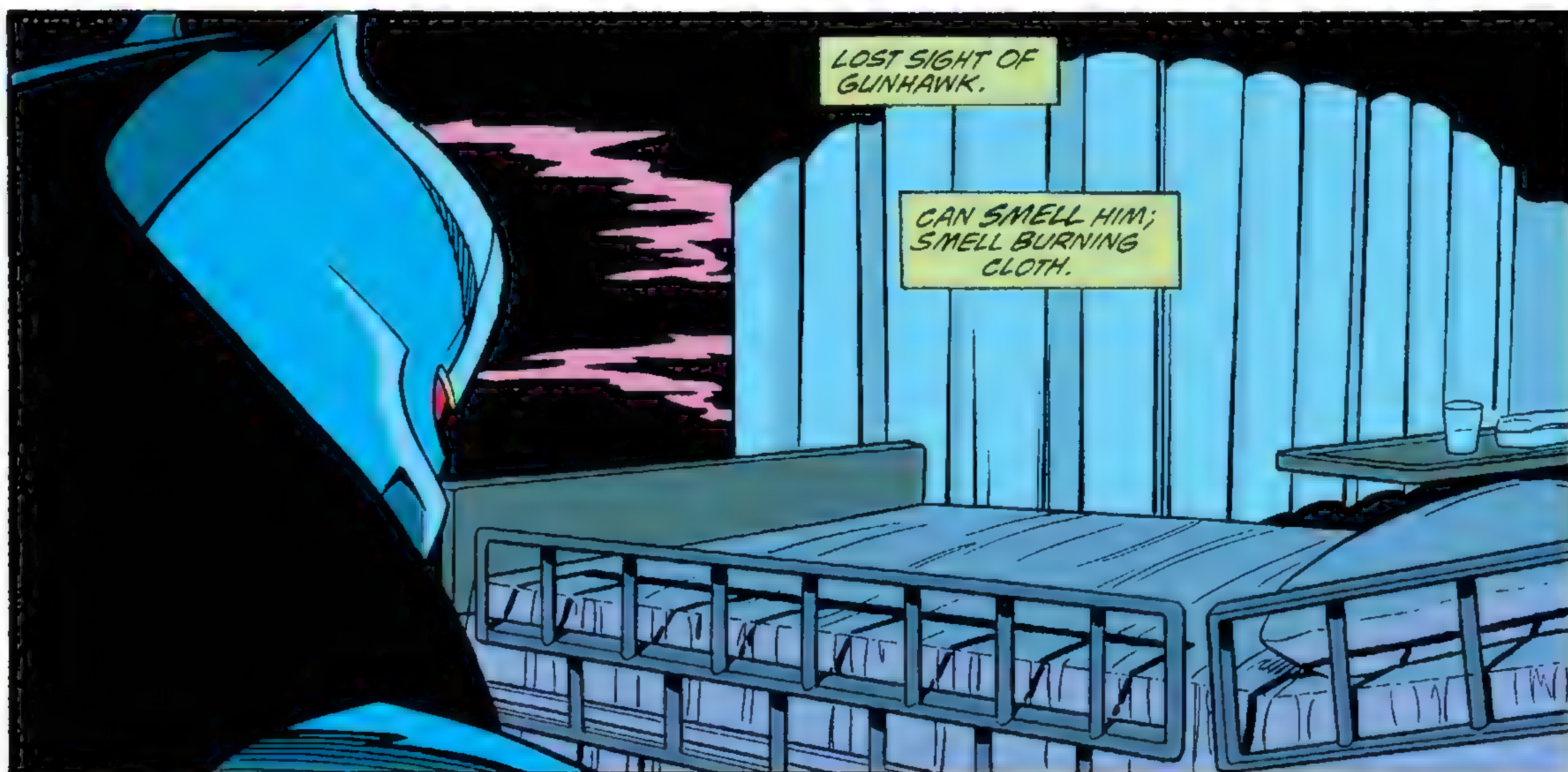
10











LOST SIGHT OF
GUNHAWK.

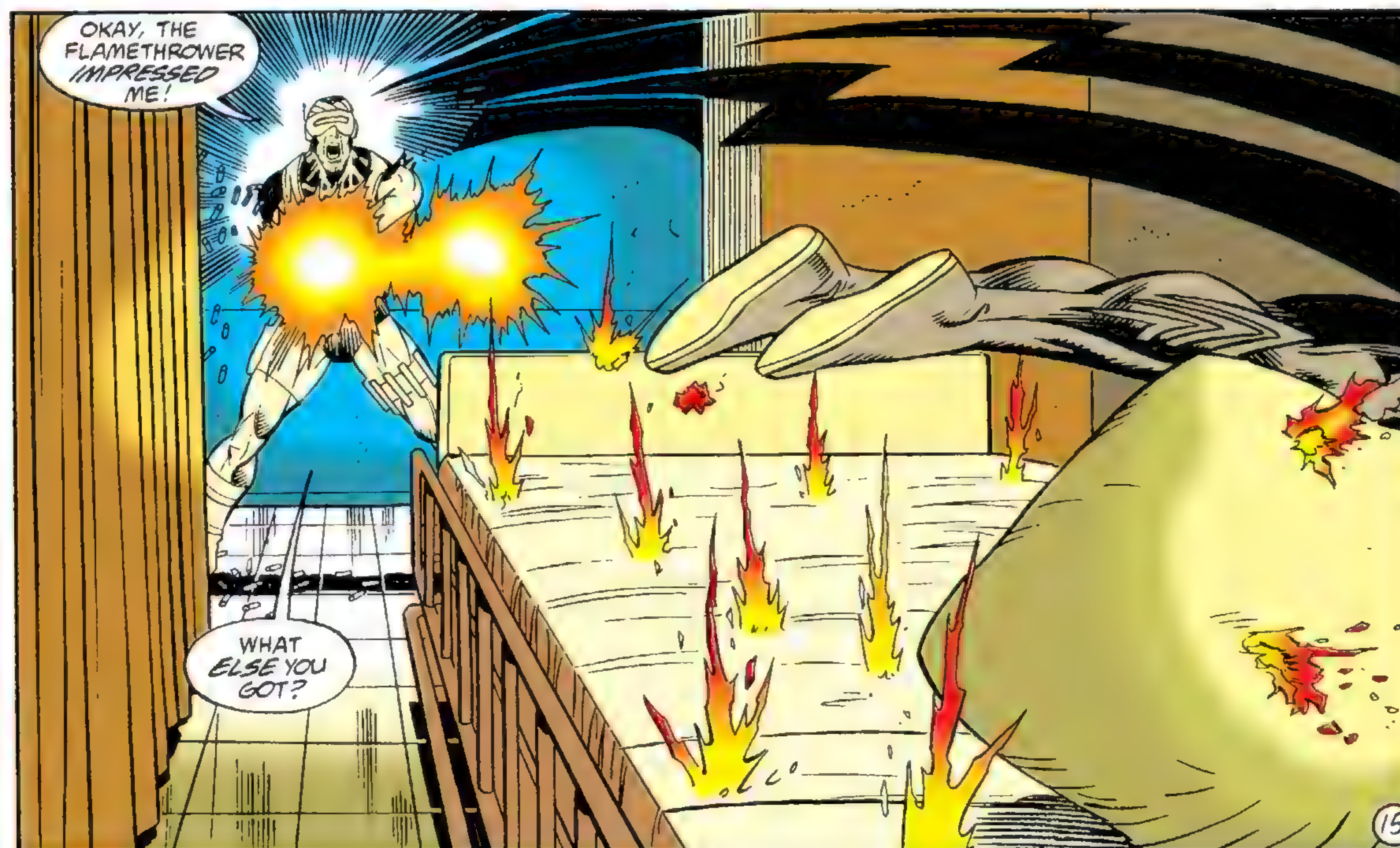
CAN SMELL HIM;
SMELL BURNING
CLOTH.



A BLIND.

THAT MEANS HE'S
PROBABLY--

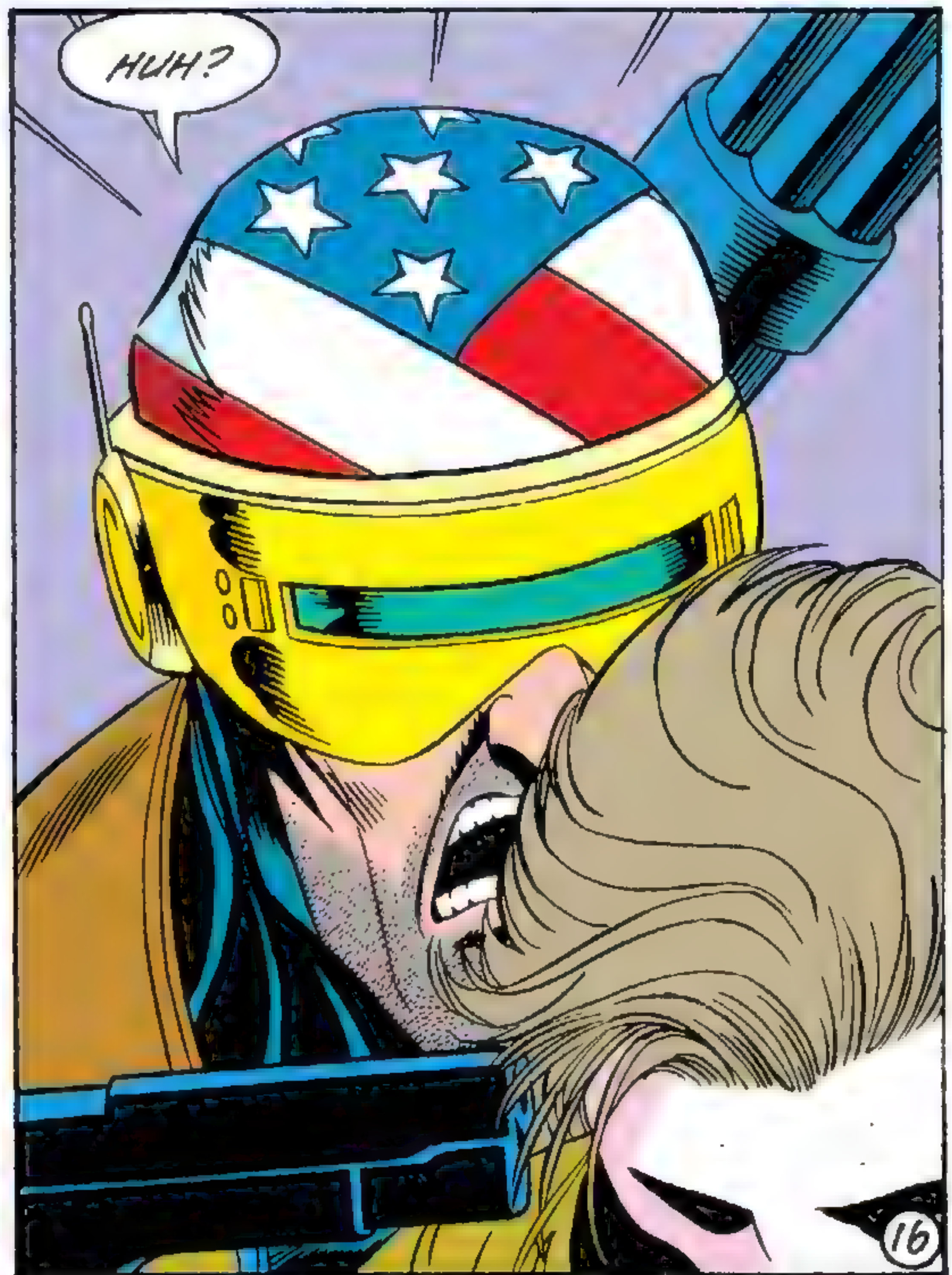
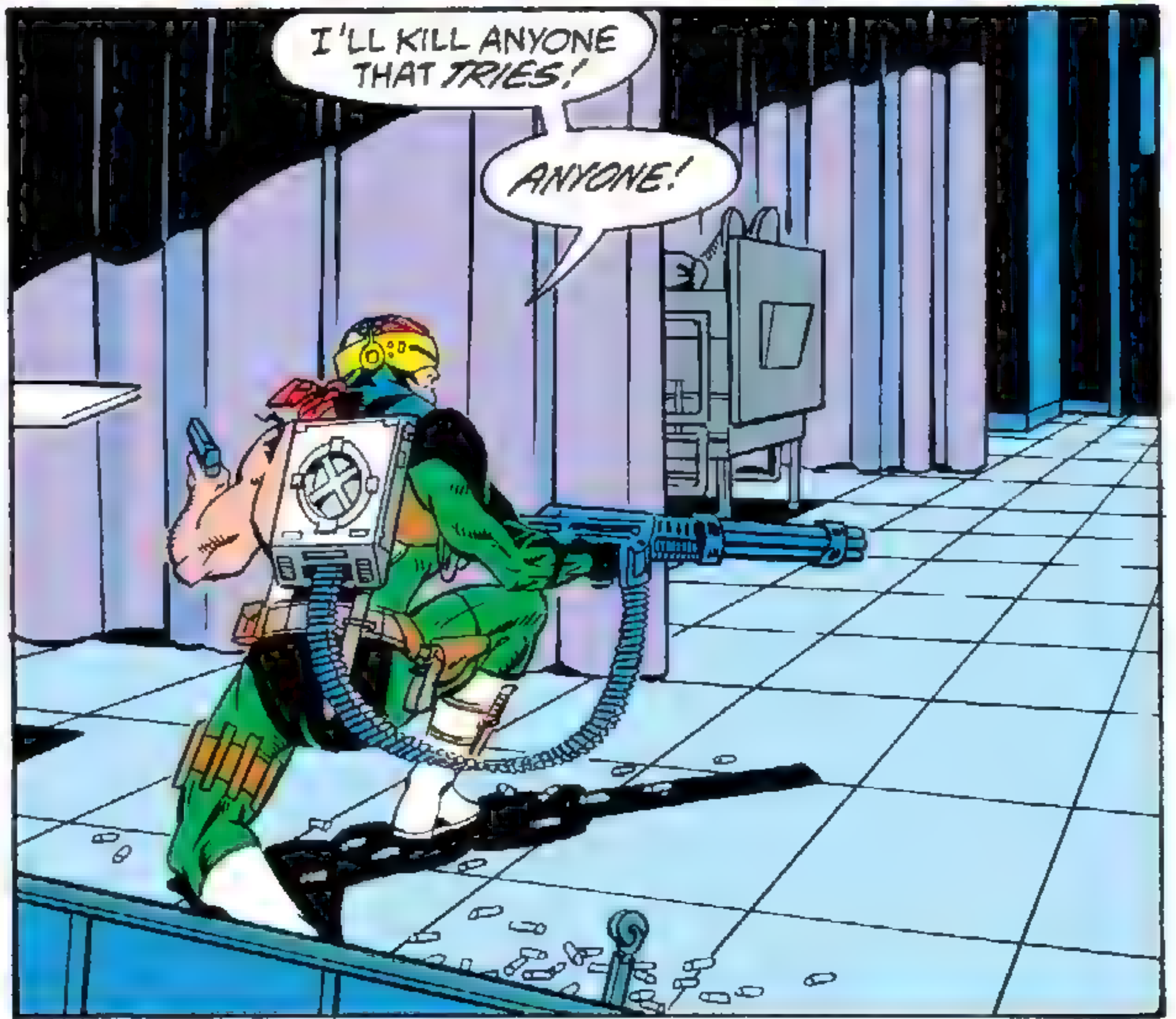
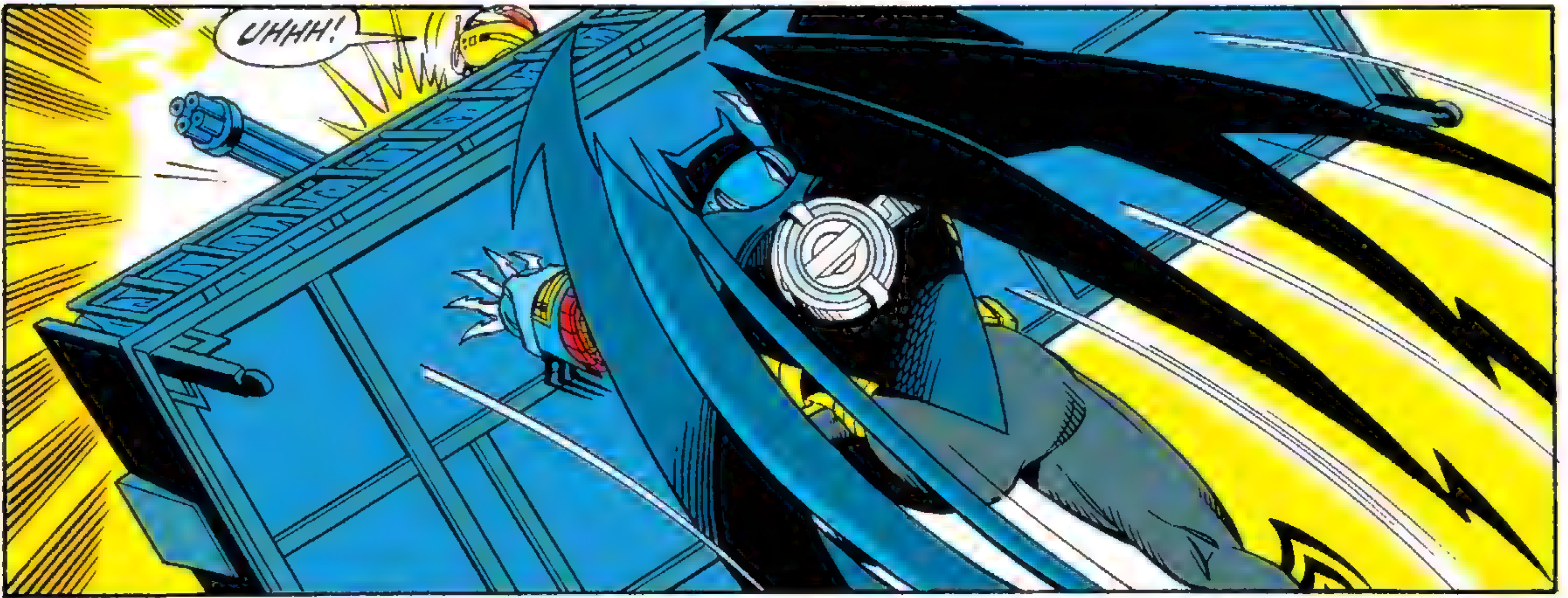
GOT ANY
MORE TRICKS
I HAVEN'T
SEEN?



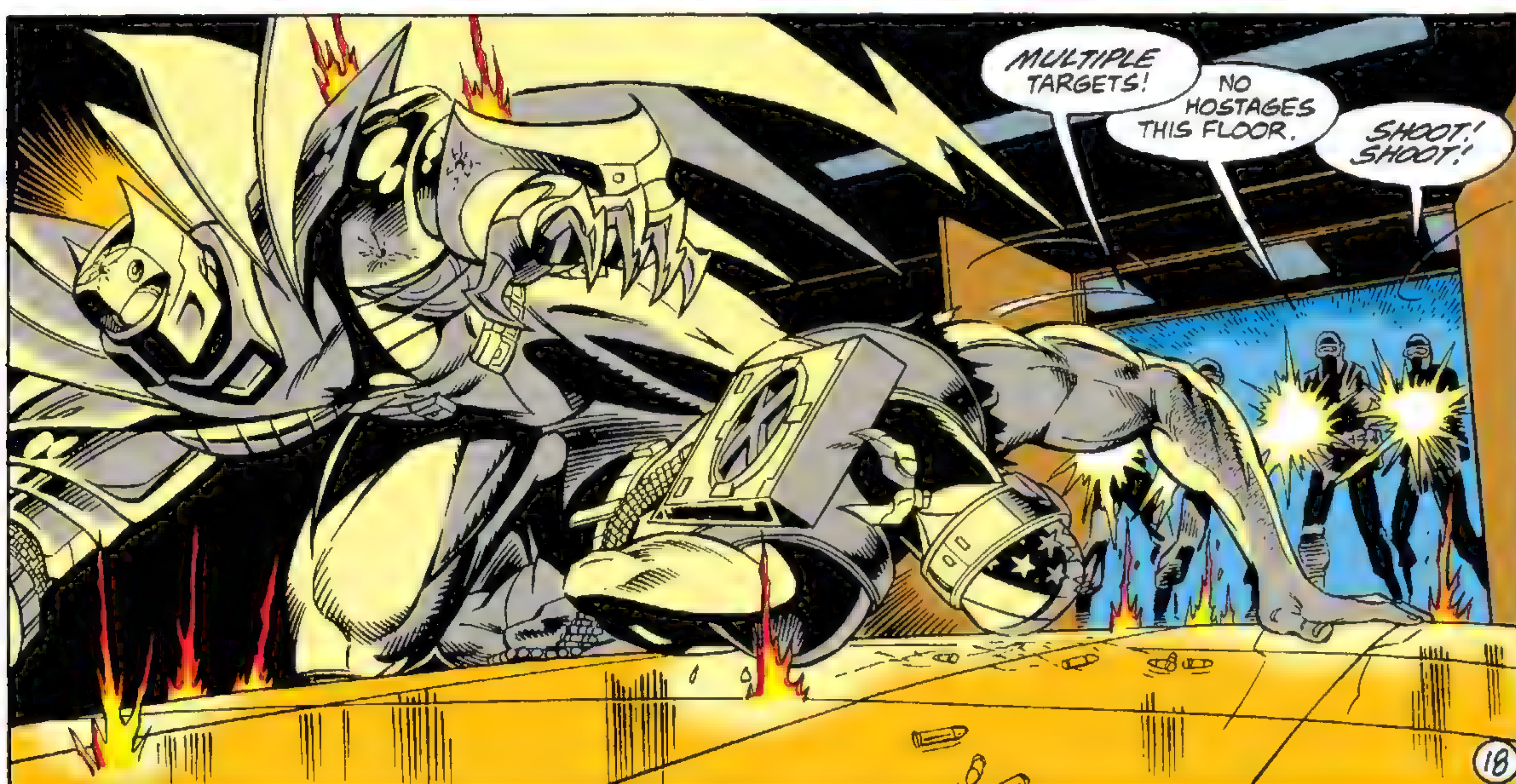
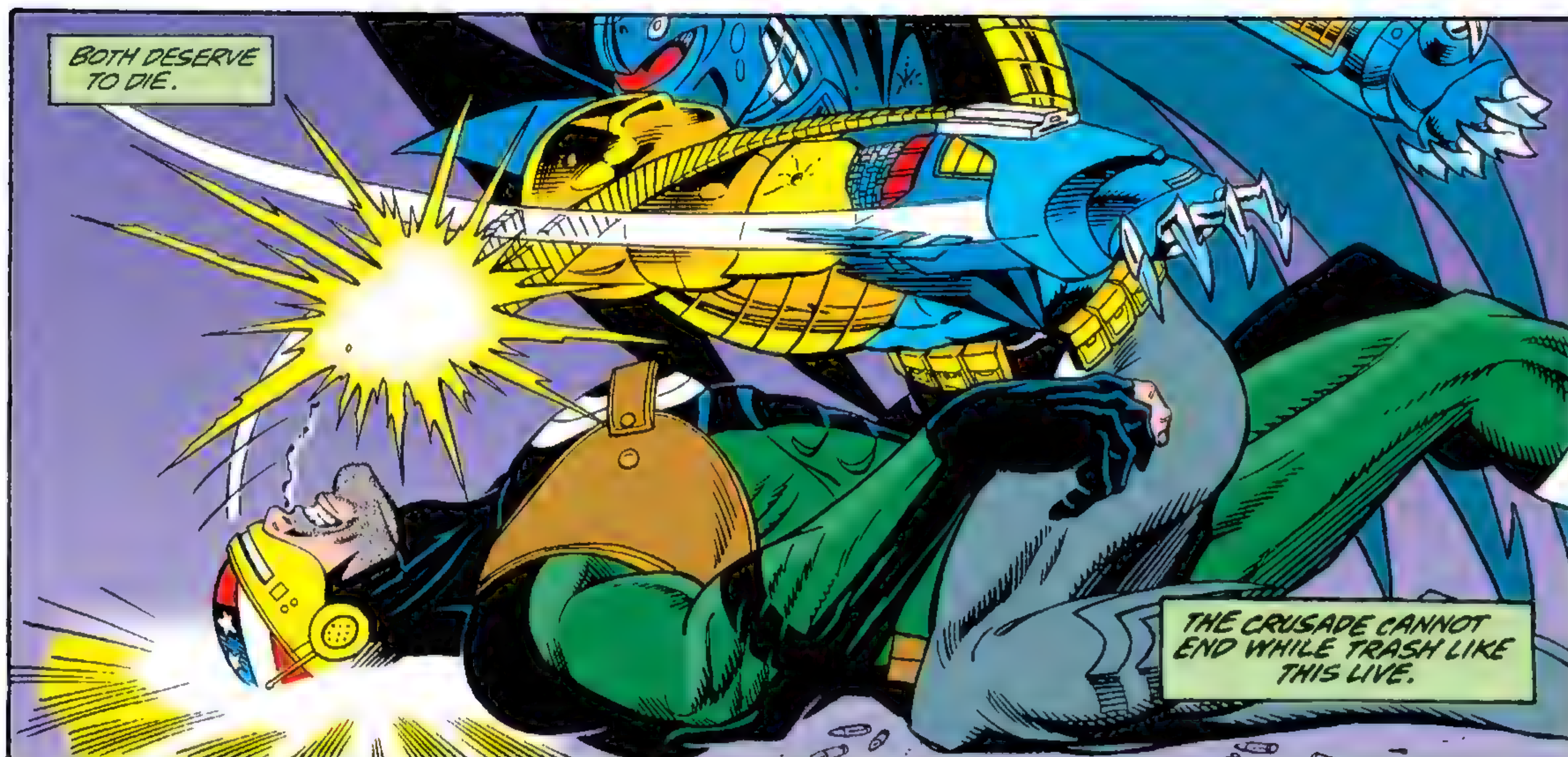
OKAY, THE
FLAMETHROWER
IMPRESSED
ME!

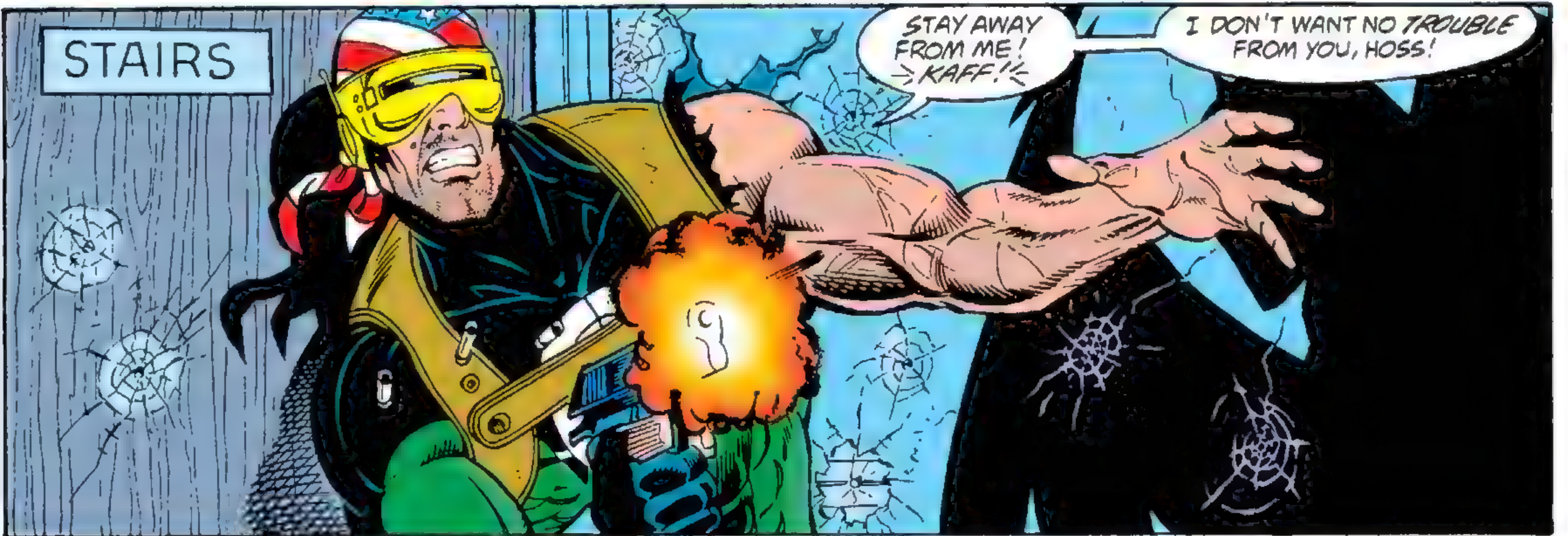
WHAT
ELSE YOU
GOT?

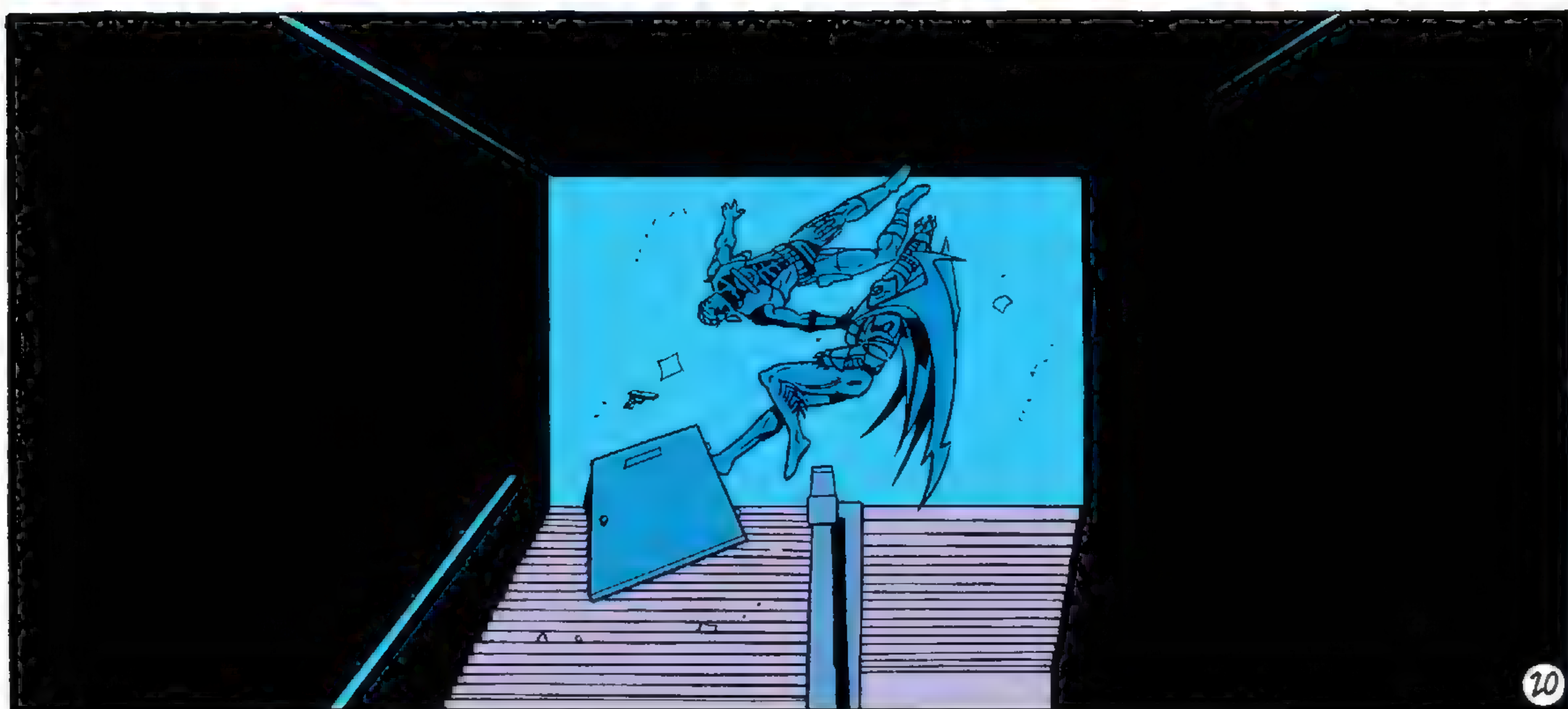
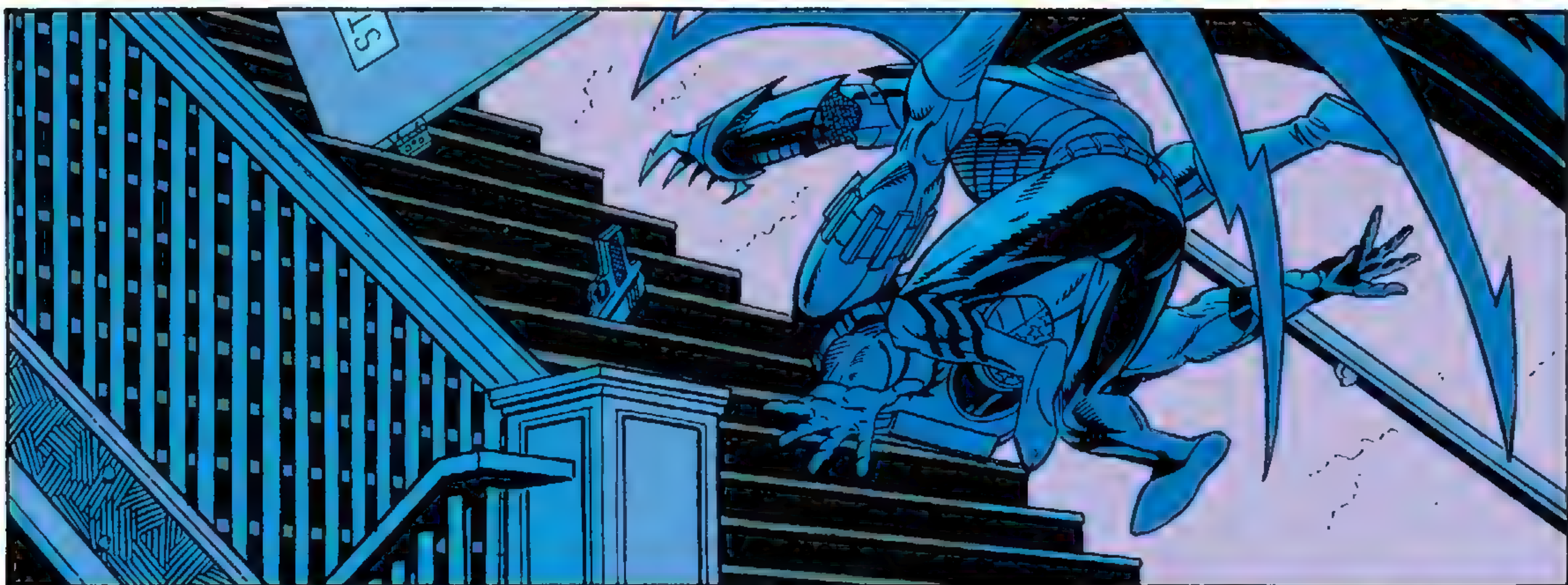
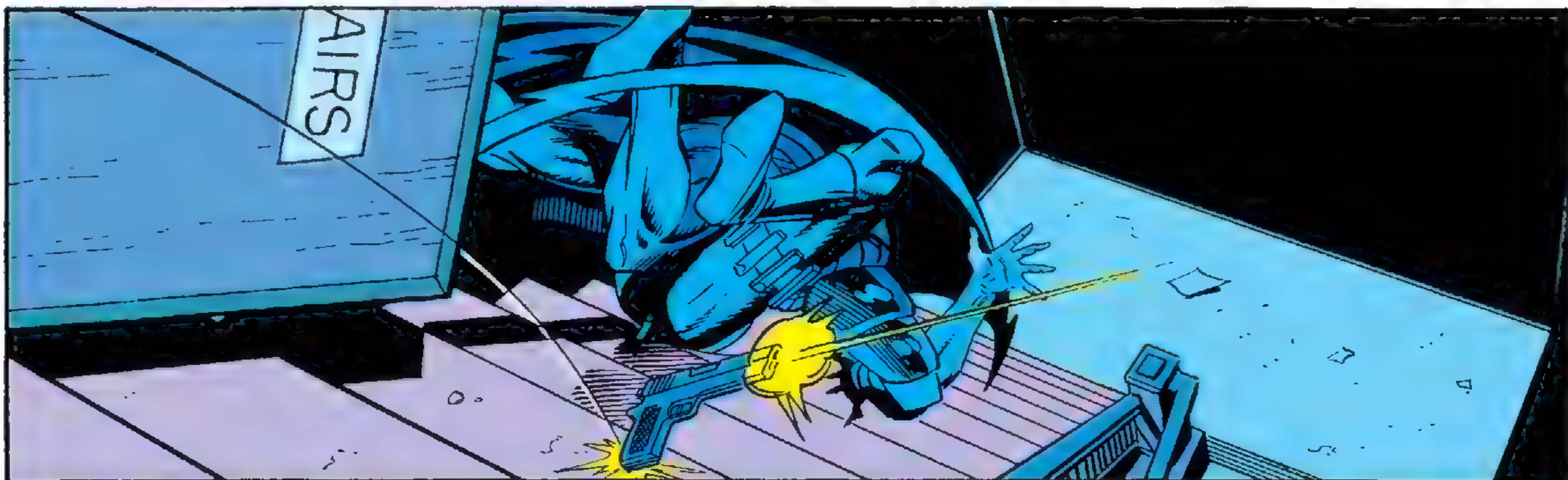
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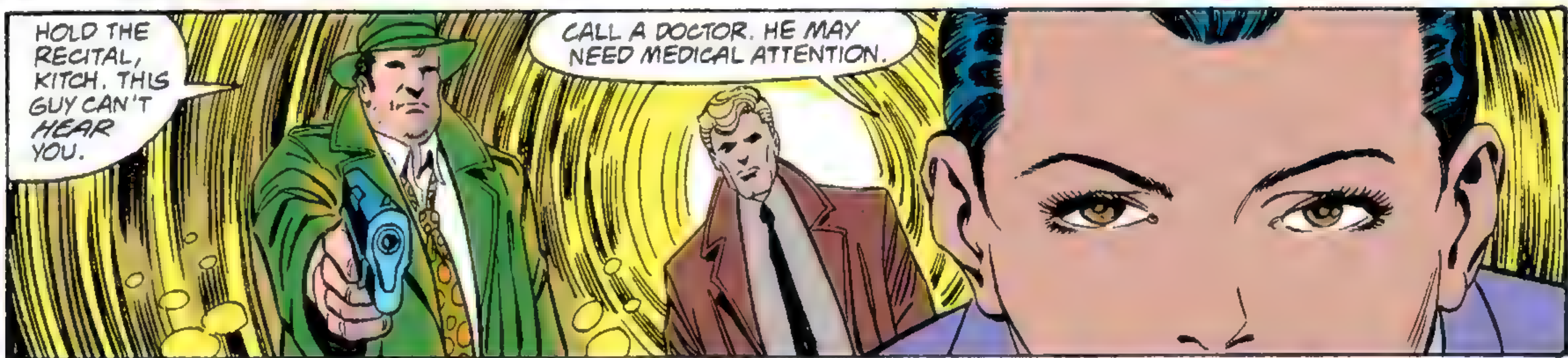














YOU
MEAN CALL
IT **THE**
BATMAN.

JEALOUS,
LIEUTENANT?

THAT I DON'T
HAVE A PSYCHOTIC
MASKED MAN
SHUFFLING IN
MY SHADOW?

HARDLY
JEALOUS,
BULLOCK.

**NEXT:
TURNING POINT!**



Cover art by TOM GRUMMETT AND RAY KRYSSING



TURNING POINT

TIMOTHY!

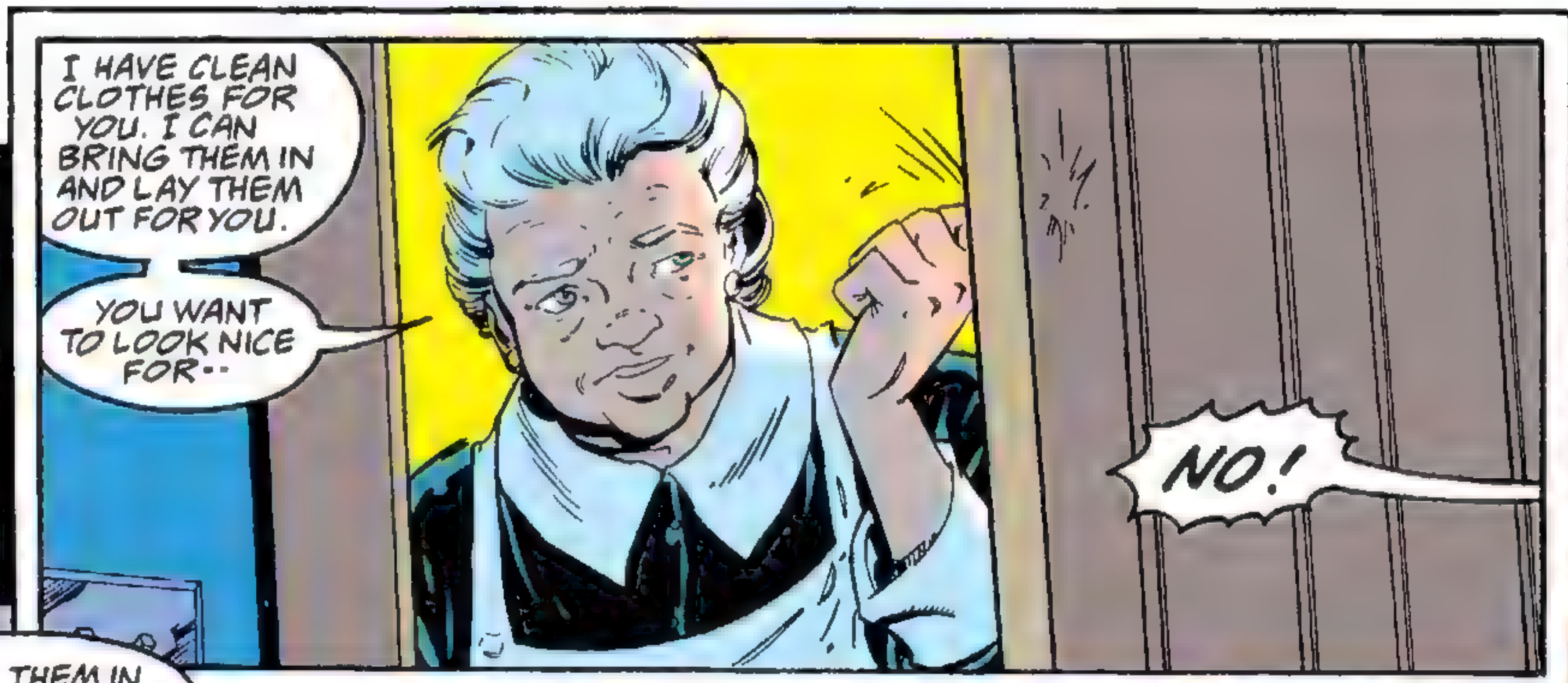
IT'S PAST TIME YOU
WERE GETTIN' UP, SON!
YOUR FATHER'S DUE
AT THE AIRPORT IN
AN HOUR.

UH OH.

CAME IN LAST NIGHT
AND CRASHED WITHOUT
CHANGING.

VERY DUMB
MOVE.

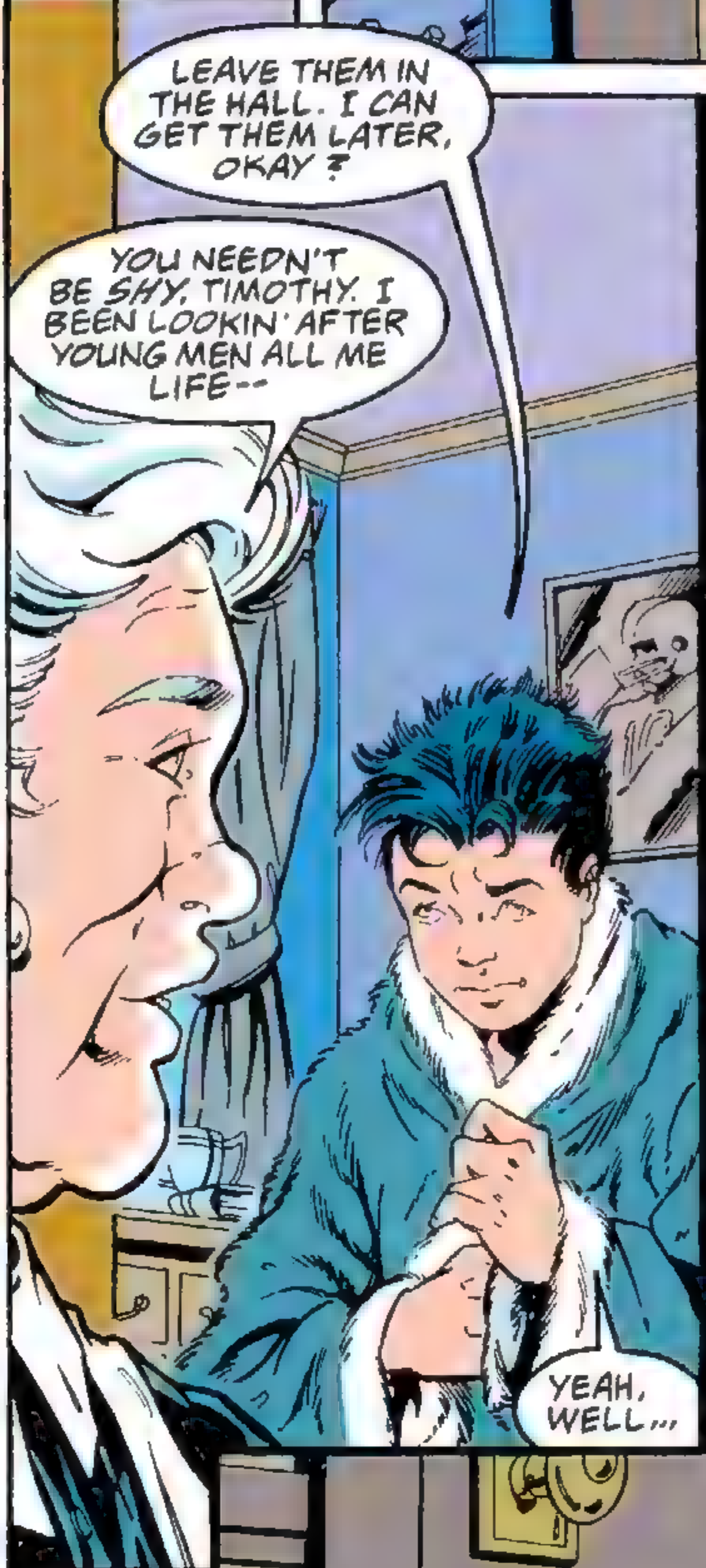
CHUCK DIXON
STORY
TOM GRUMMETT
PENCILS
RAY KRYSSING
INKS
ADRIENNE ROY
COLORS
ALBERT DEGUZMAN
LETTERS
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL
ASSISTANT EDITOR
DENNY O'NEIL
EDITOR



I HAVE CLEAN CLOTHES FOR YOU. I CAN BRING THEM IN AND LAY THEM OUT FOR YOU.

YOU WANT TO LOOK NICE FOR--

NO!



LEAVE THEM IN THE HALL. I CAN GET THEM LATER, OKAY?

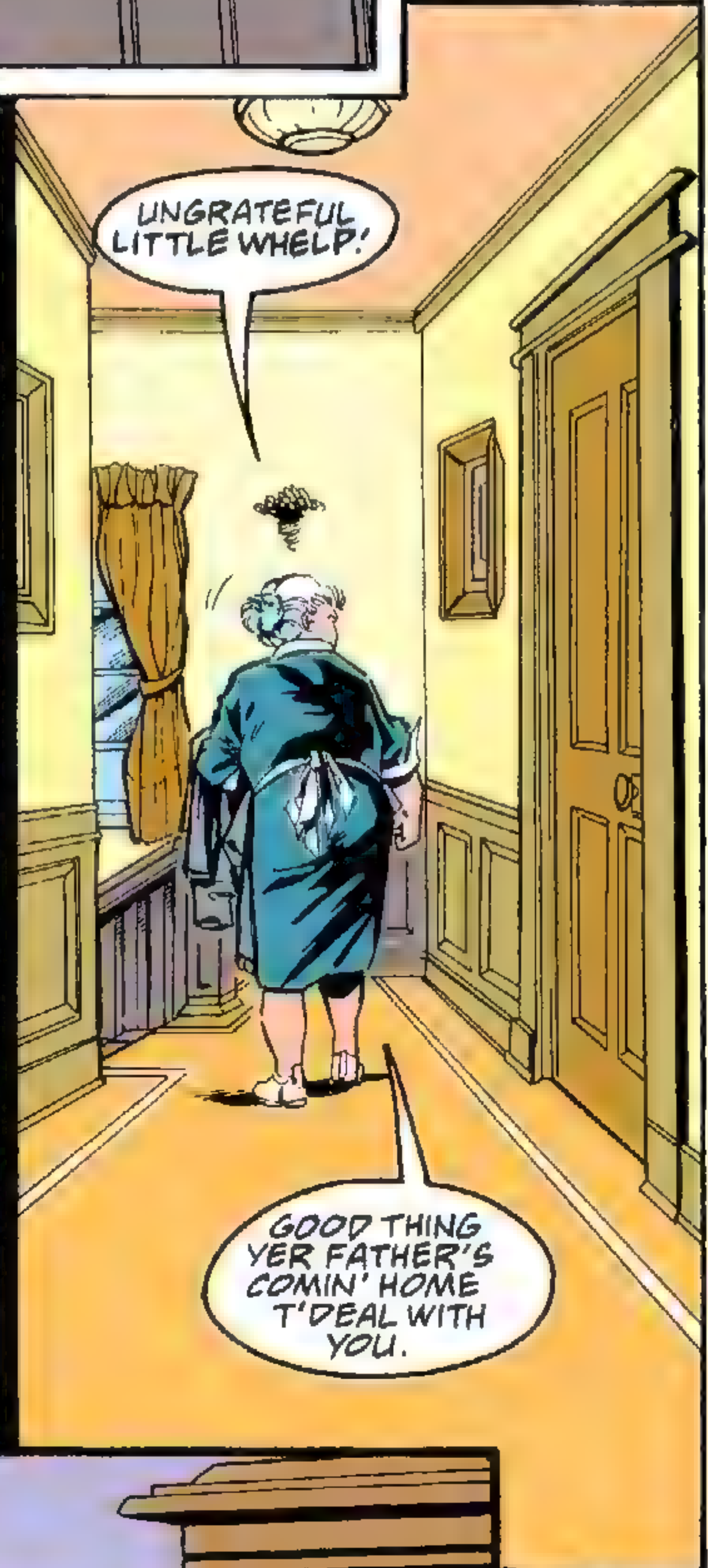
YOU NEEDN'T BE SHY, TIMOTHY. I BEEN LOOKIN' AFTER YOUNG MEN ALL ME LIFE--

YEAH, WELL...



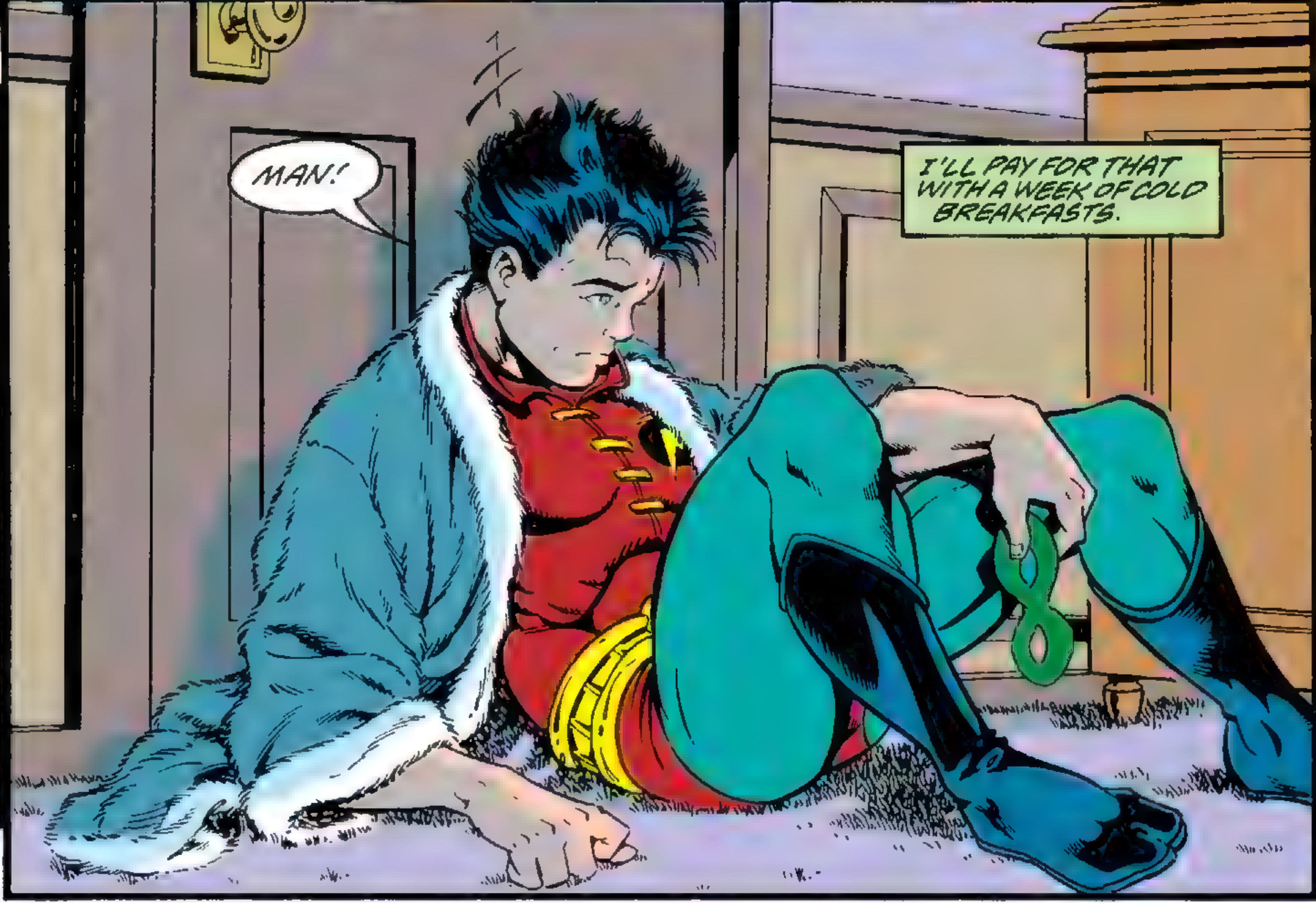
NO THANK YOU!

WELL!



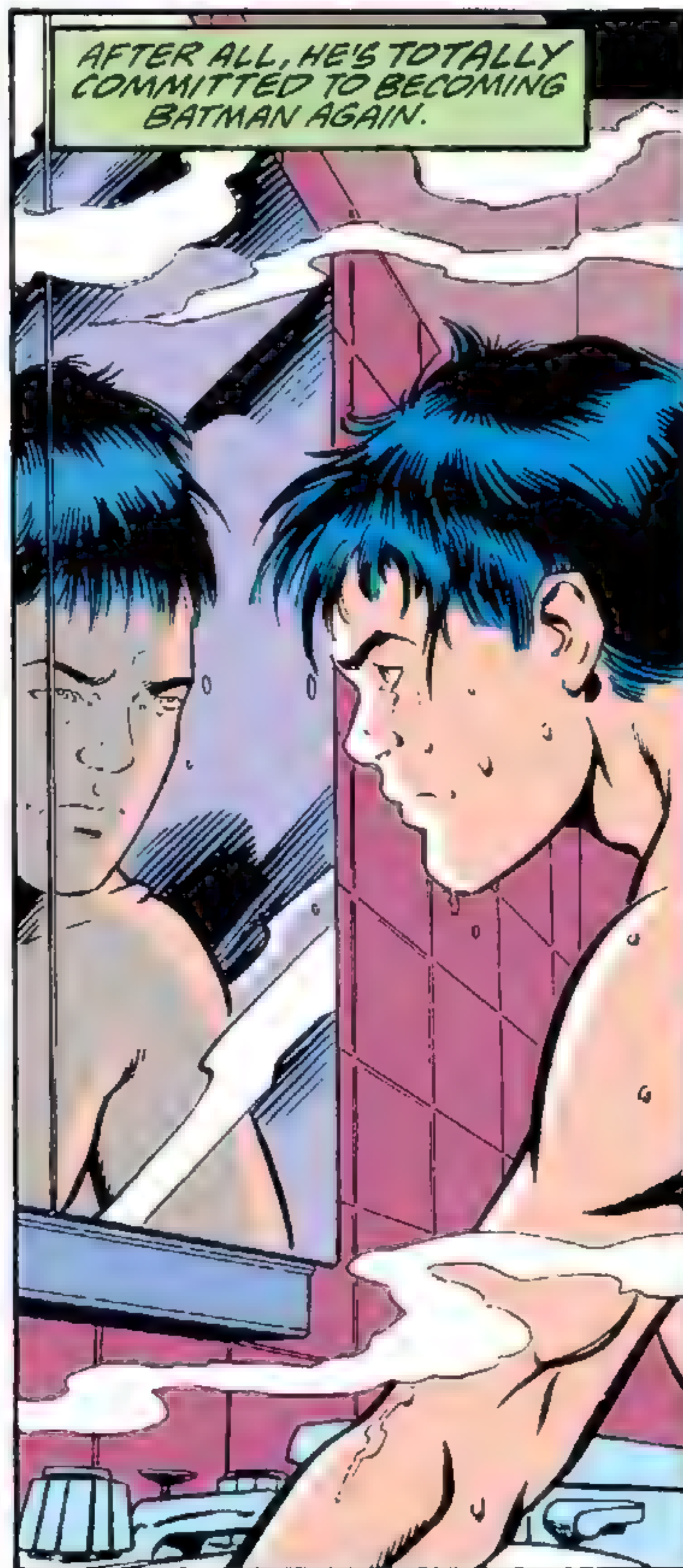
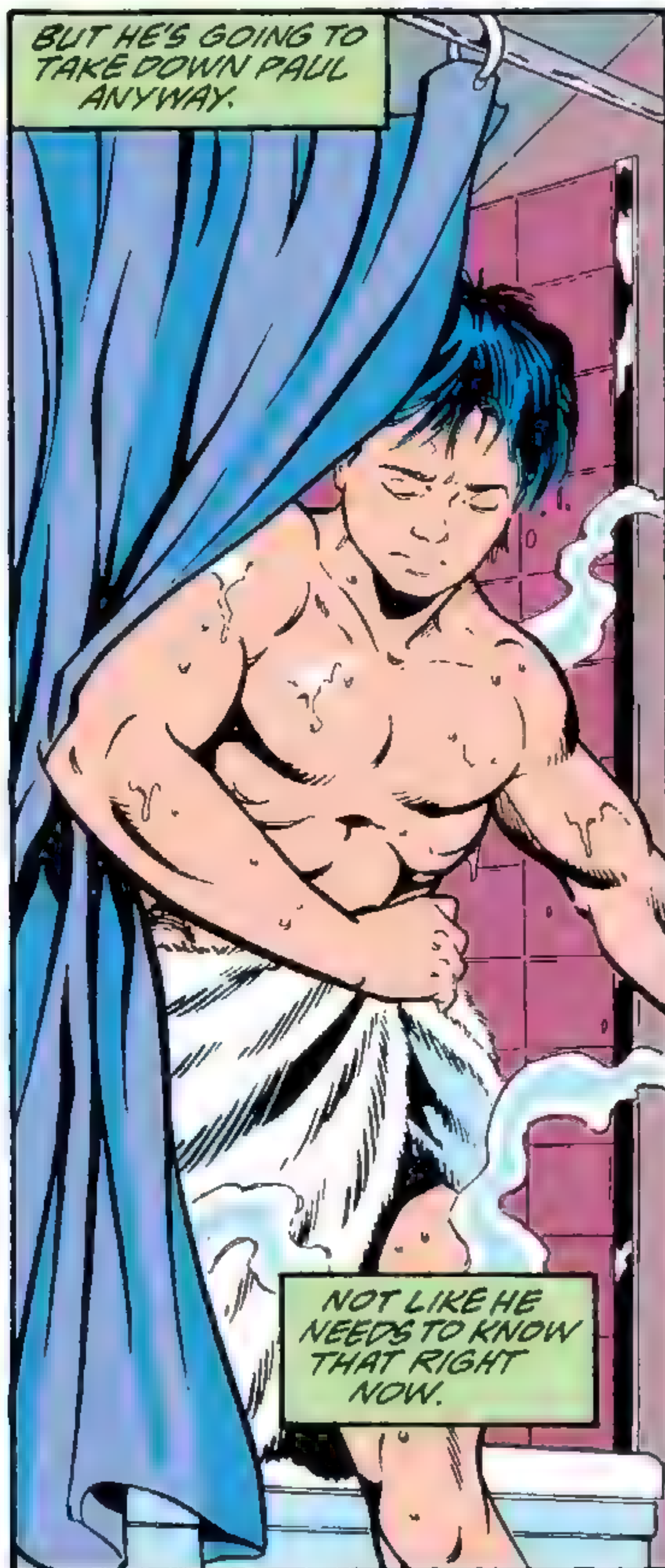
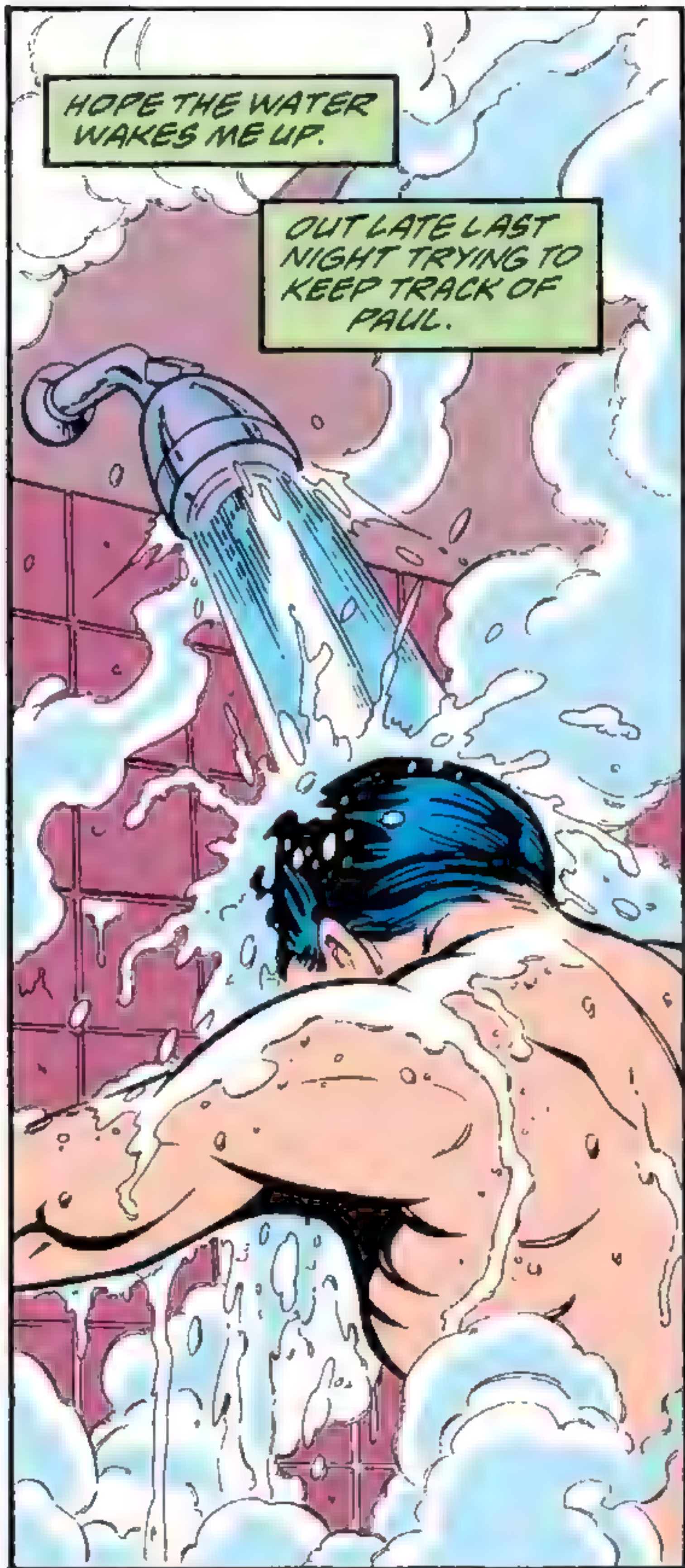
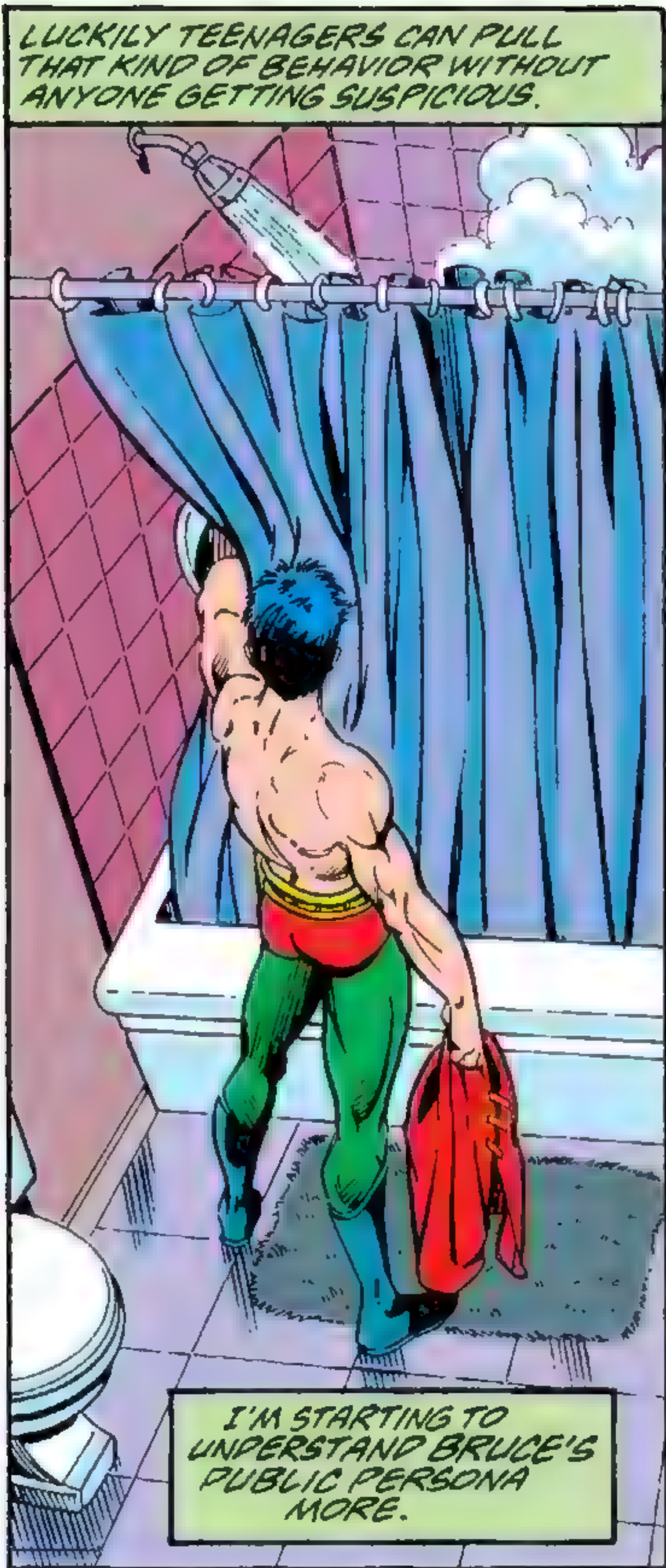
UNGRATEFUL LITTLE WHELP!

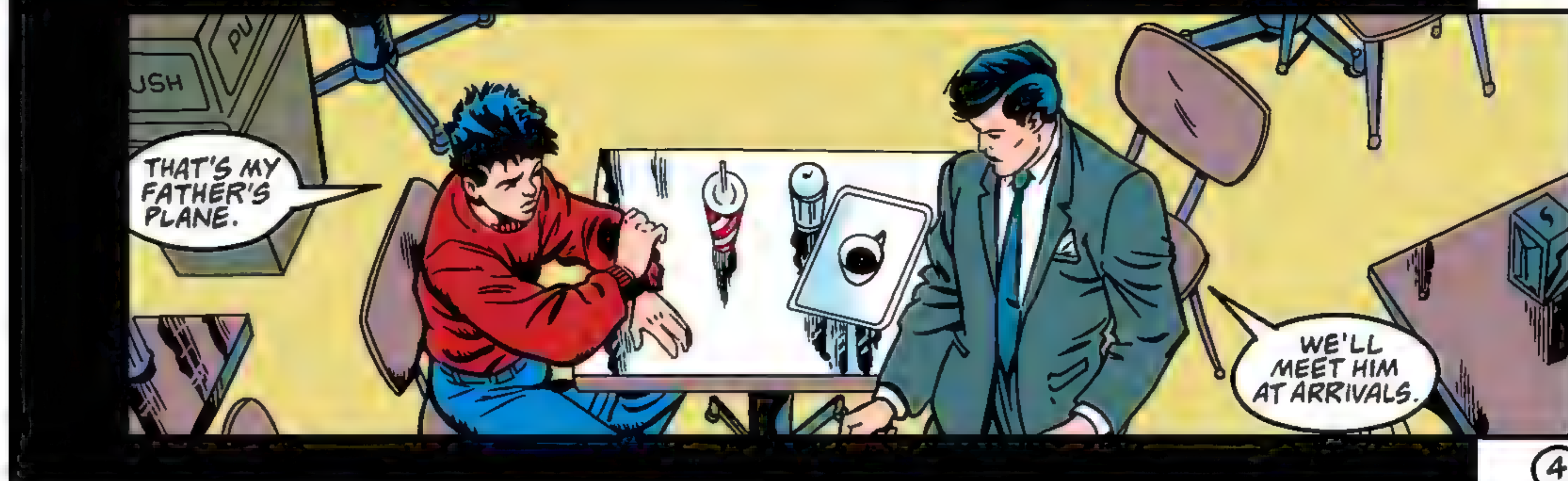
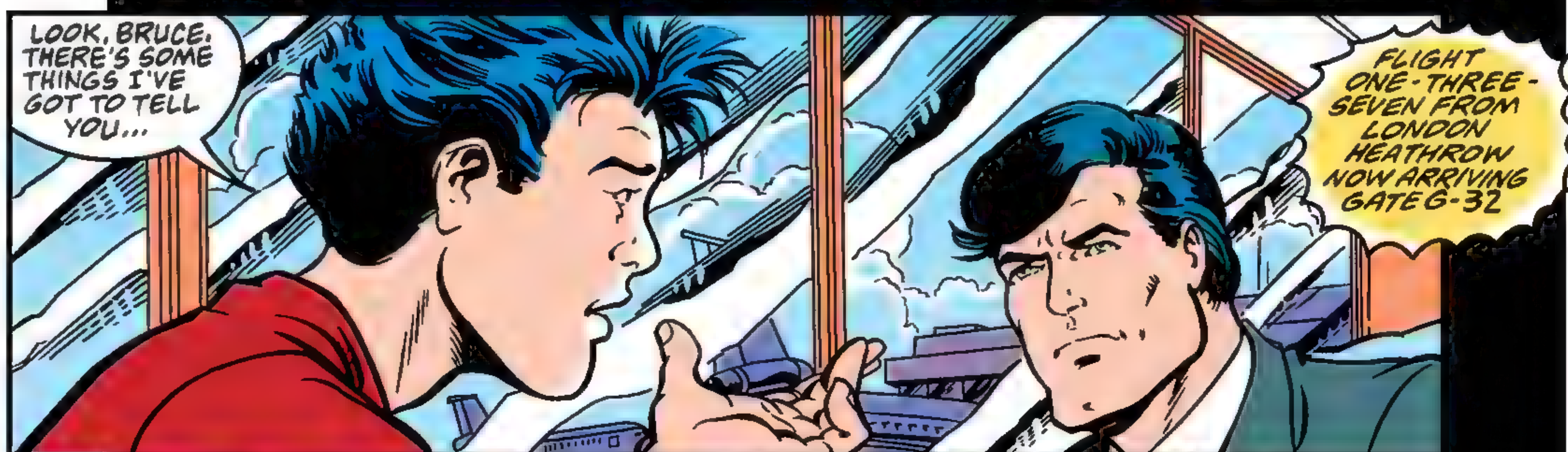
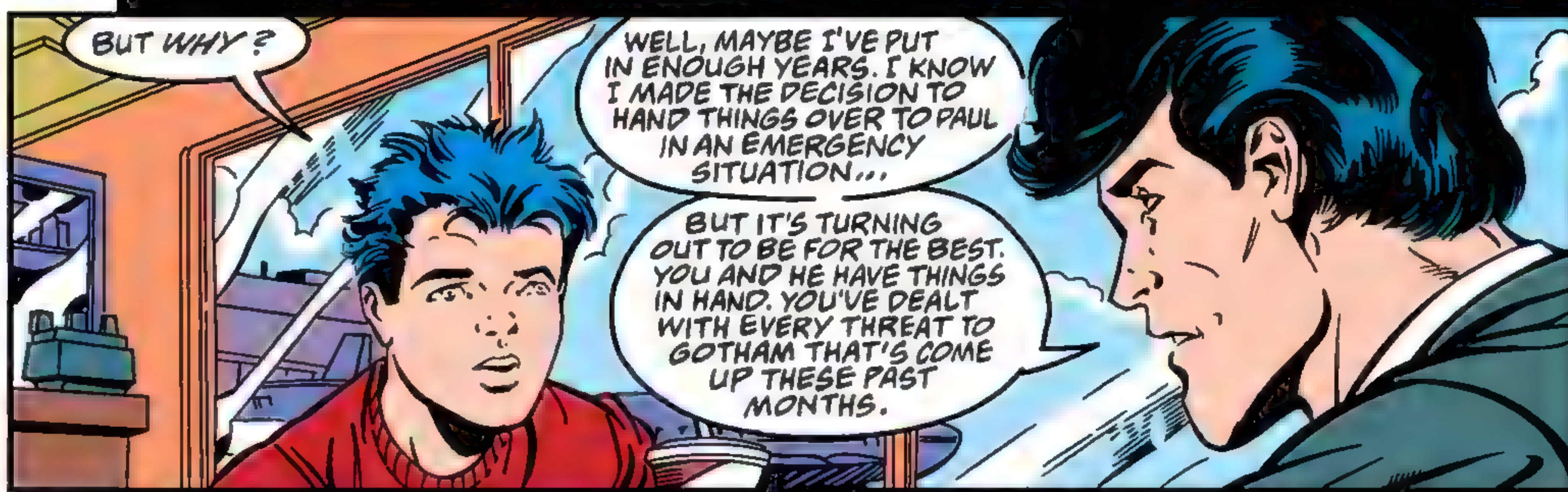
GOOD THING YER FATHER'S COMIN' HOME T'DEAL WITH YOU.

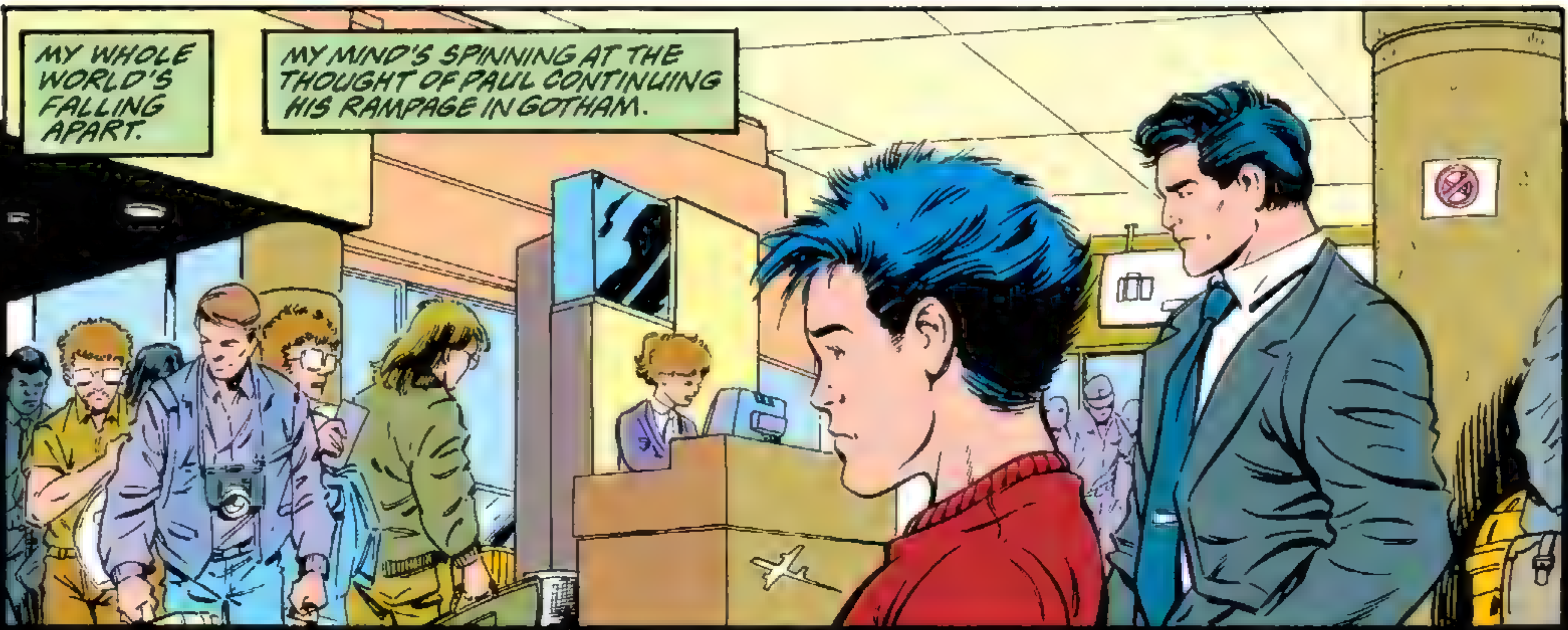


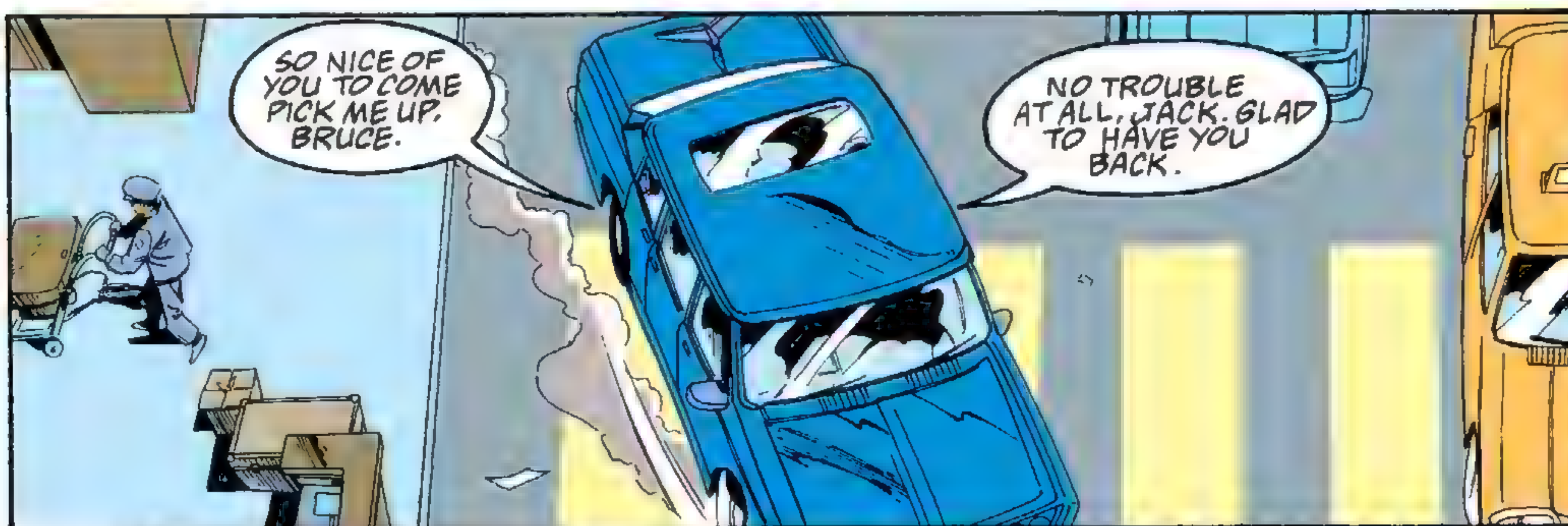
MAN!

I'LL PAY FOR THAT WITH A WEEK OF COLD BREAKFASTS.



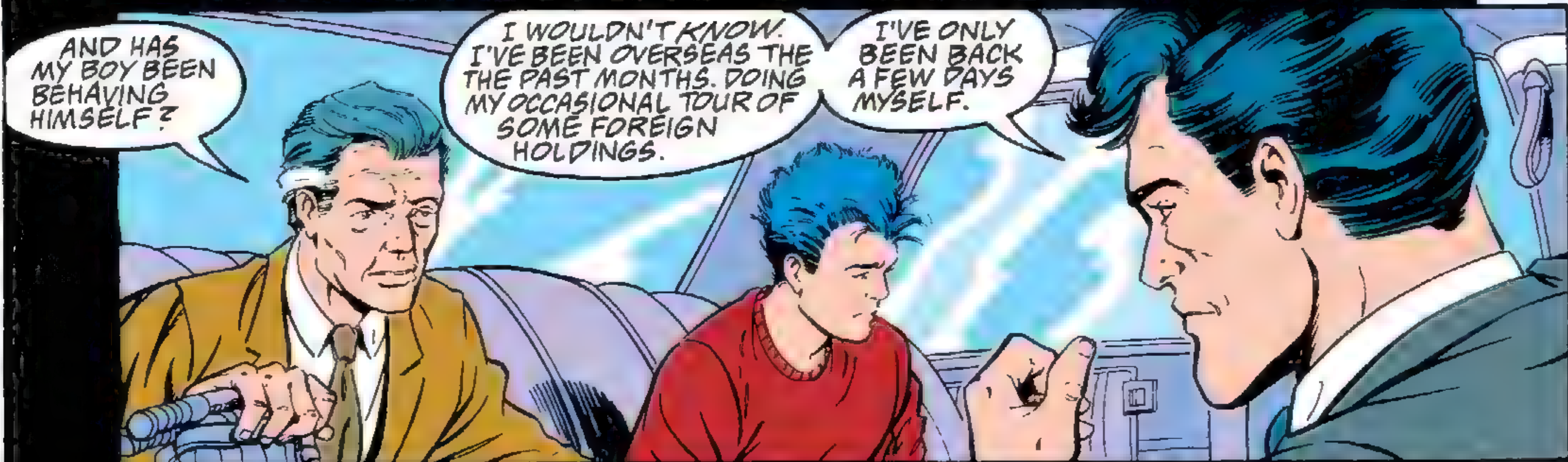






SO NICE OF YOU TO COME PICK ME UP, BRUCE.

NO TROUBLE AT ALL, JACK. GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK.



AND HAS MY BOY BEEN BEHAVING HIMSELF?

I WOULDN'T KNOW. I'VE BEEN OVERSEAS THE PAST MONTHS. DOING MY OCCASIONAL TOUR OF SOME FOREIGN HOLDINGS.

I'VE ONLY BEEN BACK A FEW DAYS MYSELF.



I SUPPOSE THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE'LL BE HITCHING A RIDE, SON.

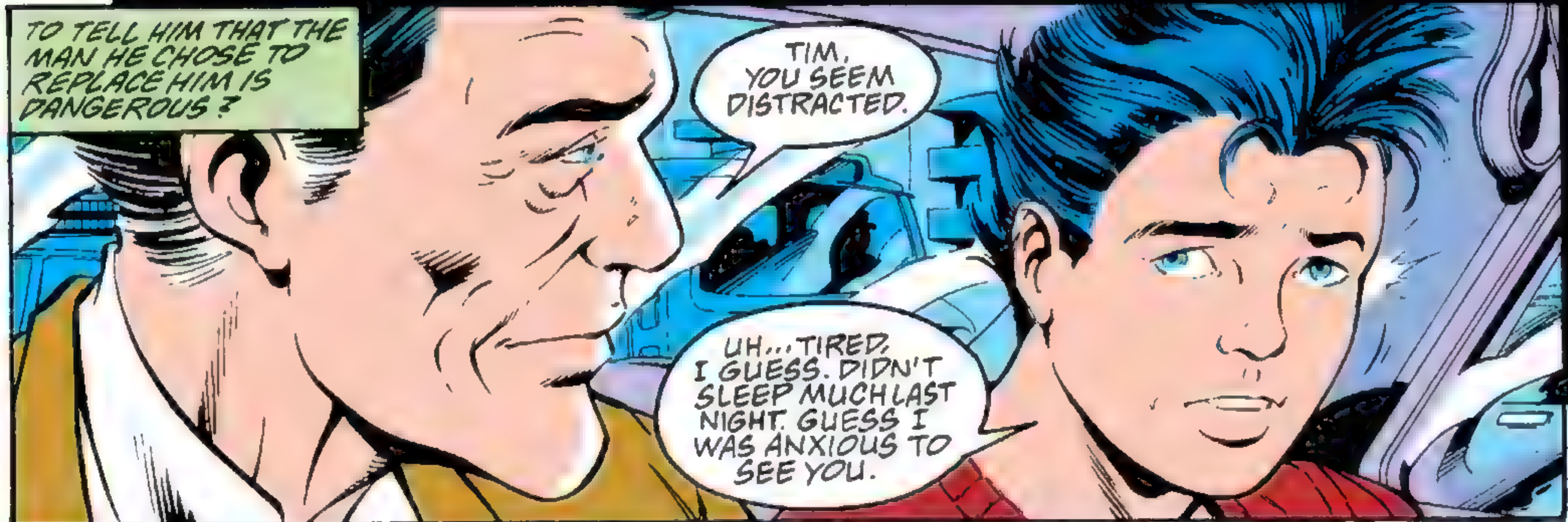
NOW THAT YOU HAVE A LICENSE WE CAN PICK OUT A FAMILY CAR.

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.



BRUCE SEEMS LIKE THE WORLD'S BEEN LIFTED OFF HIS BACK.

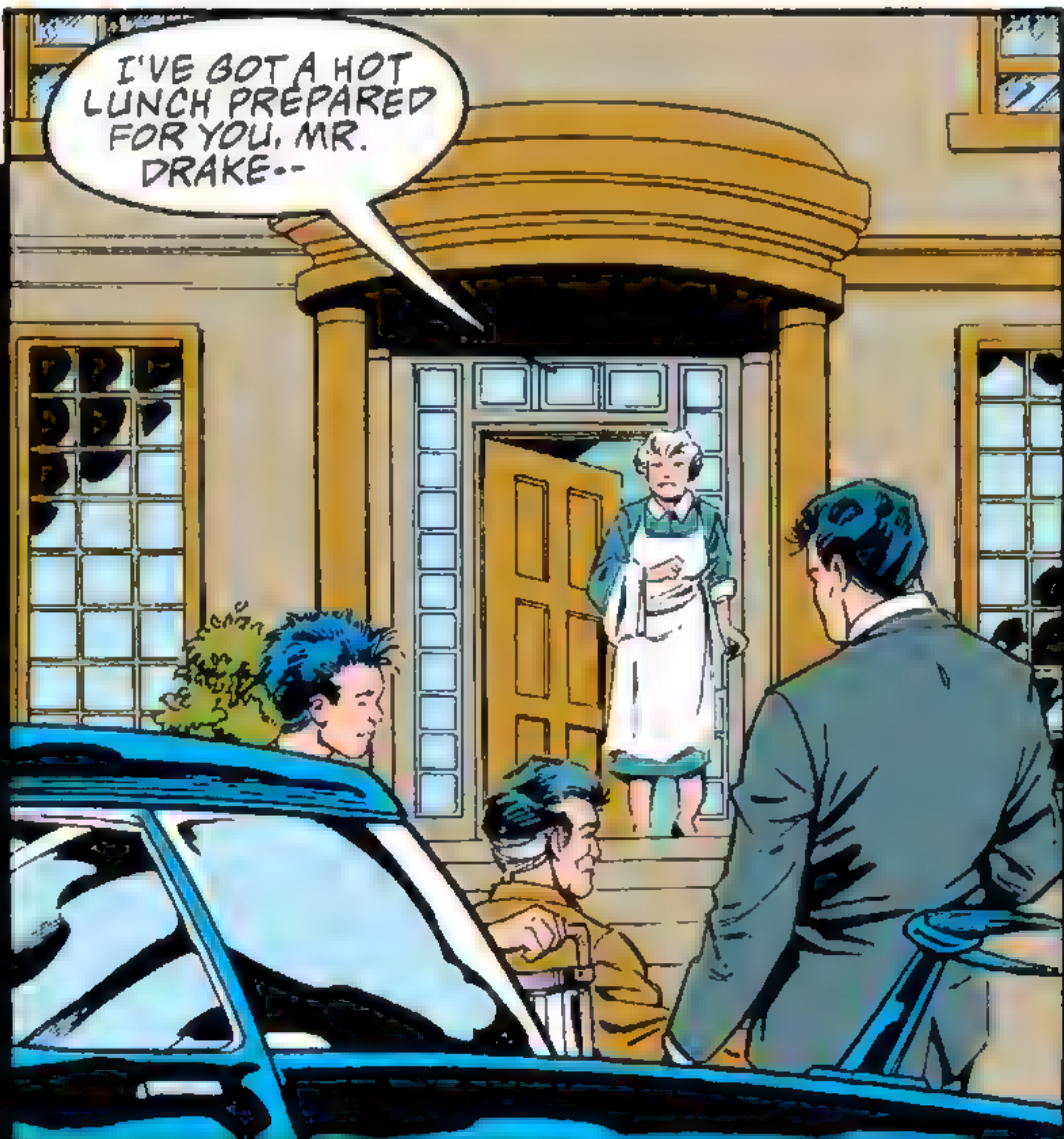
DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO RUIN HIS PLANS?



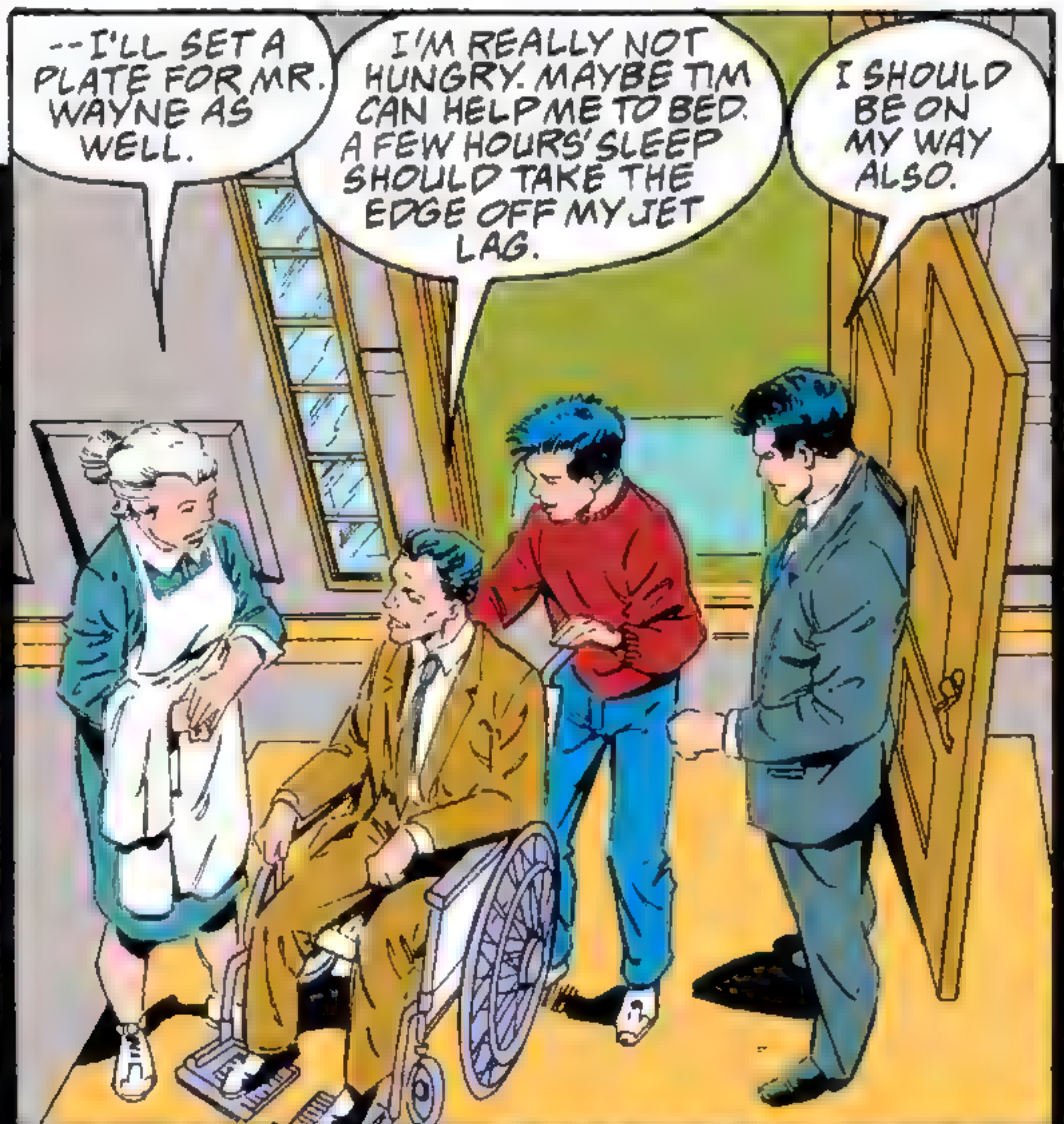
TO TELL HIM THAT THE MAN HE CHOSE TO REPLACE HIM IS DANGEROUS?

TIM, YOU SEEM DISTRACTED.

UH...TIRED, I GUESS. DIDN'T SLEEP MUCH LAST NIGHT. GUESS I WAS ANXIOUS TO SEE YOU.



I'VE GOT A HOT LUNCH PREPARED FOR YOU, MR. DRAKE--



--I'LL SET A PLATE FOR MR. WAYNE AS WELL.

I'M REALLY NOT HUNGRY. MAYBE TIM CAN HELP ME TO BED. A FEW HOURS' SLEEP SHOULD TAKE THE EDGE OFF MY JET LAG.

I SHOULD BE ON MY WAY ALSO.



CAN YOU WAIT FOR ME, BRUCE? I THOUGHT YOU COULD SUGGEST A CAR FOR US.

SURE.

BOYS AND CARS. I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE SHOWROOMS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.



SON, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON.

HOW?

I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN THE BEST FATHER TO YOU. I LET MY INTERESTS TAKE PRIORITY. AND THEN YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH...



IT'S OKAY, DAD. I UNDERSTAND.

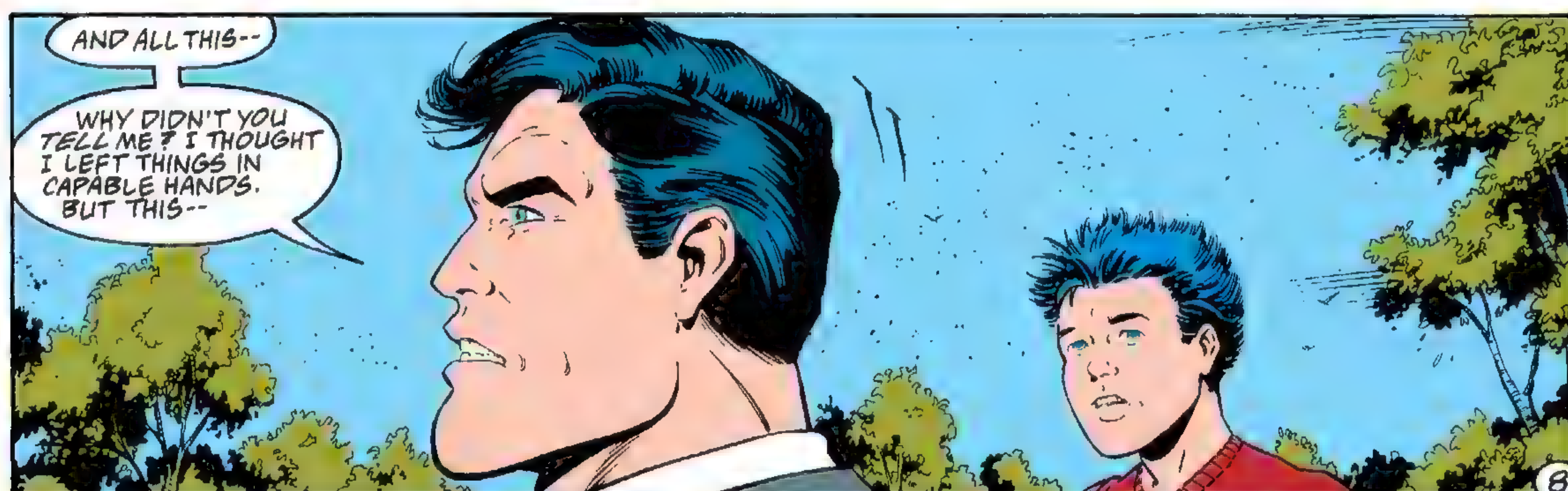
I'M GOING TO BE HERE FOR YOU, TIM. MORE INVOLVED. I WANT US TO BE CLOSER.

THAT'S GREAT. NOW YOU GET SOME REST. CALL FOR ME WHEN YOU WAKE UP.



GOOD NEWS FOR TIM. BAD NEWS FOR ROBIN.

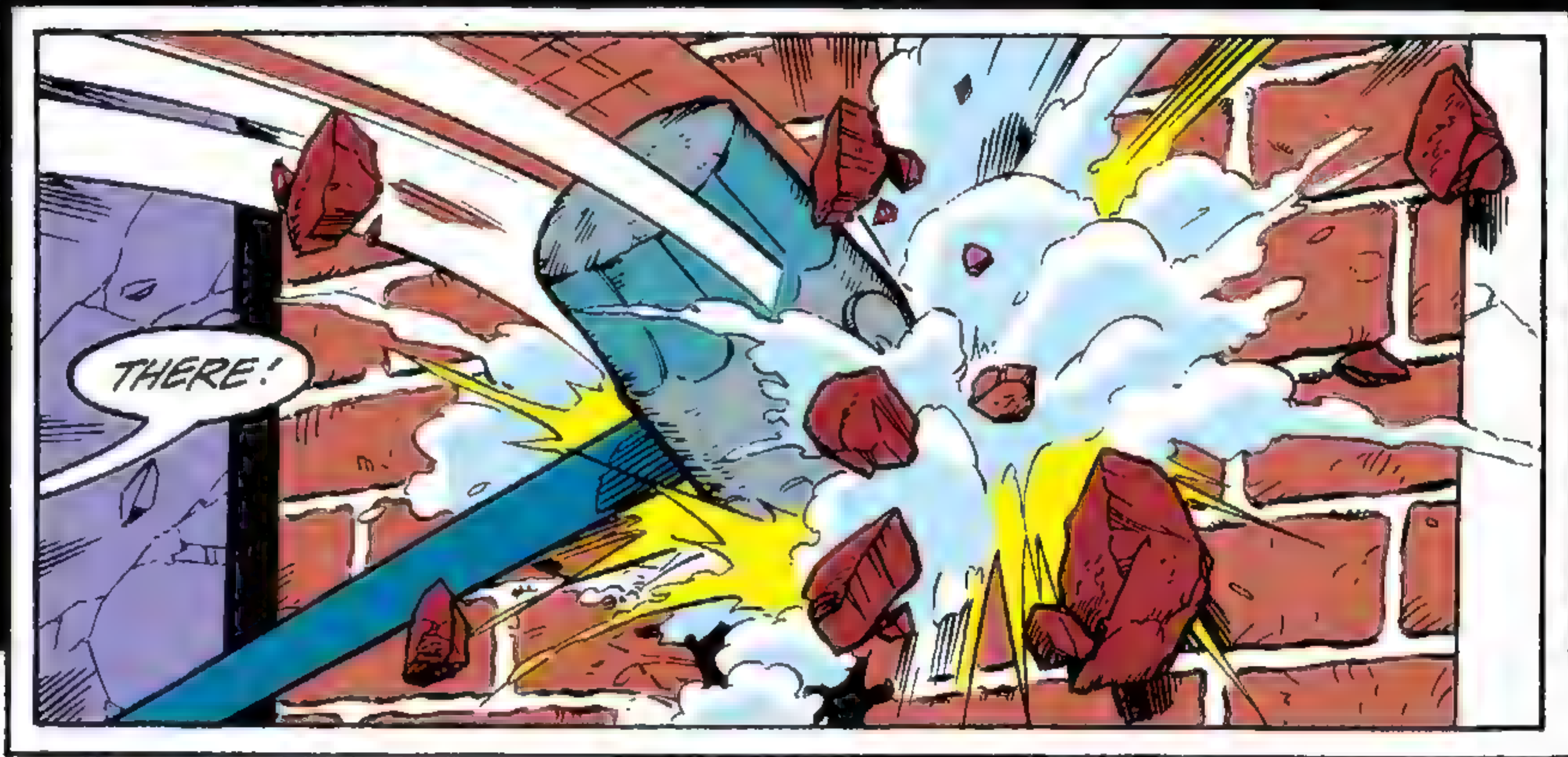
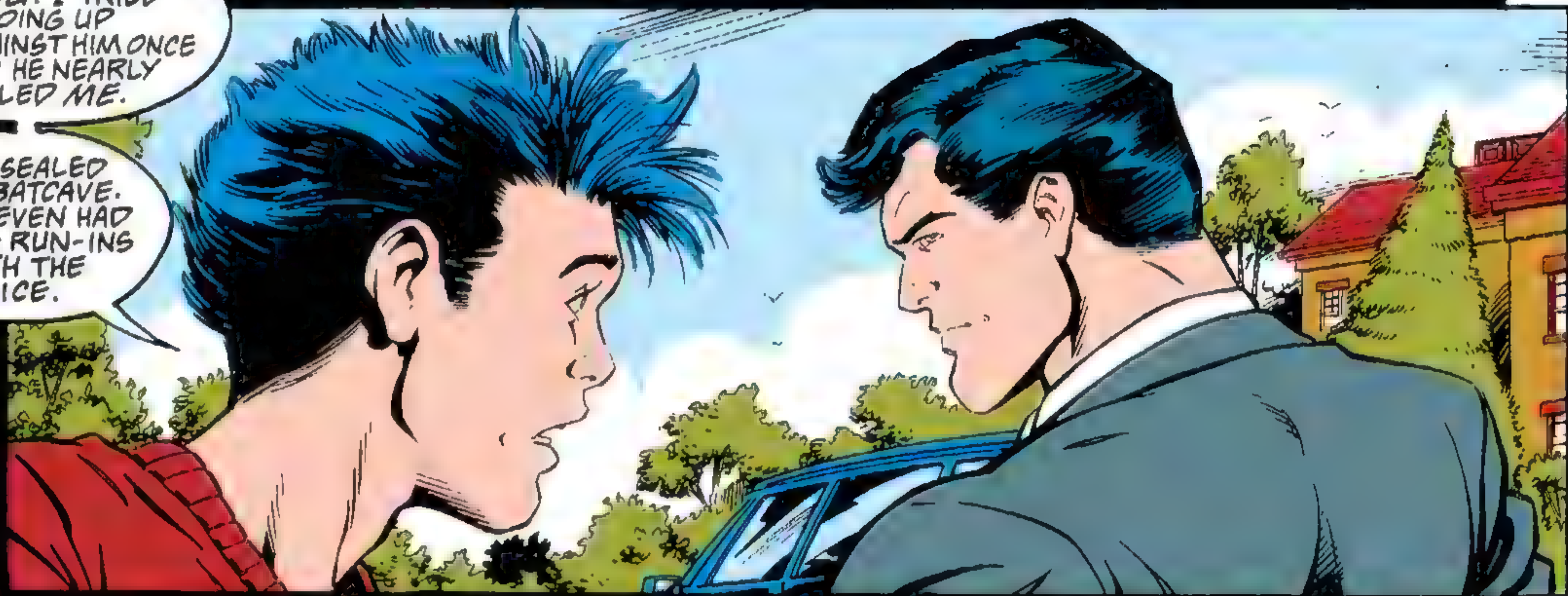
ONE MORE LAYER OF GUILT AND I THINK I'LL COLLAPSE.

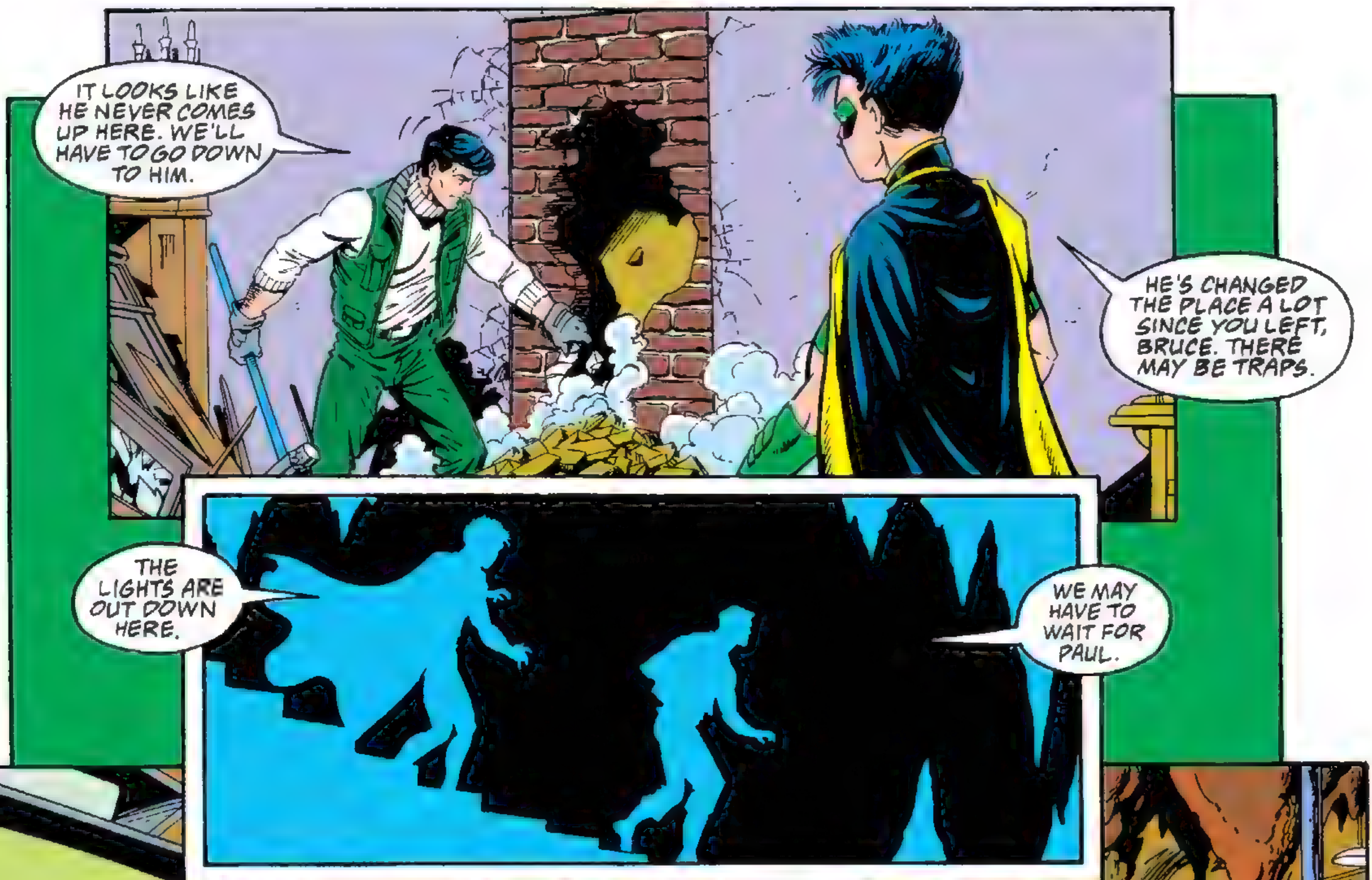




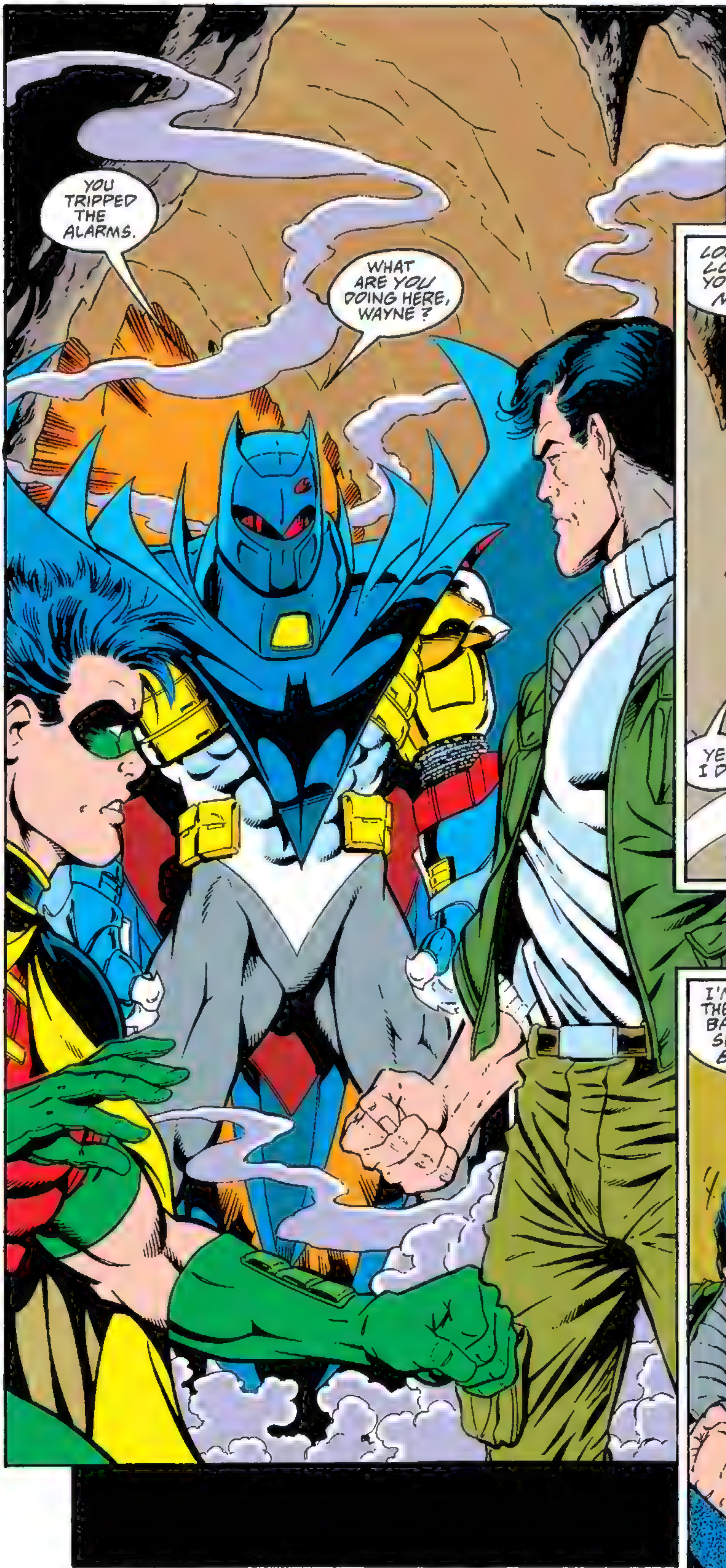
BUT I'M NOT YOU. I TRIED GOING UP AGAINST HIM ONCE AND HE NEARLY KILLED ME.

HE SEALED THE BATCAVE. HE'S EVEN HAD SOME RUN-INS WITH THE POLICE.









YOU
TRIPPED
THE
ALARMS.

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING HERE,
WAYNE?



LOOK AT YOU. YOU
LOOK LIKE WHAT
YOU'VE BECOME. A
MONSTER.

YOU HAVE A
VALID REASON
FOR COMING
HERE?

YES,
I DO.



I'M TAKING BACK
THE MANTLE OF THE
BAT BEFORE YOU
SPILL ANY MORE
BLOOD ON IT.

YOU DON'T
DESERVE IT.
YOU NEVER
DID.

YOU LEFT ME WITH A CITY
TO PROTECT. I DID AS I
SAW FIT.

HOW MANY LIVES WOULD
HAVE BEEN SPARED BUT FOR YOUR
SUFFERANCE OF ANIMALS LIKE
ABATTOIR ? OR POISON IVY ?
OR THE RIDDLER ?

OR THE
JOKER ?

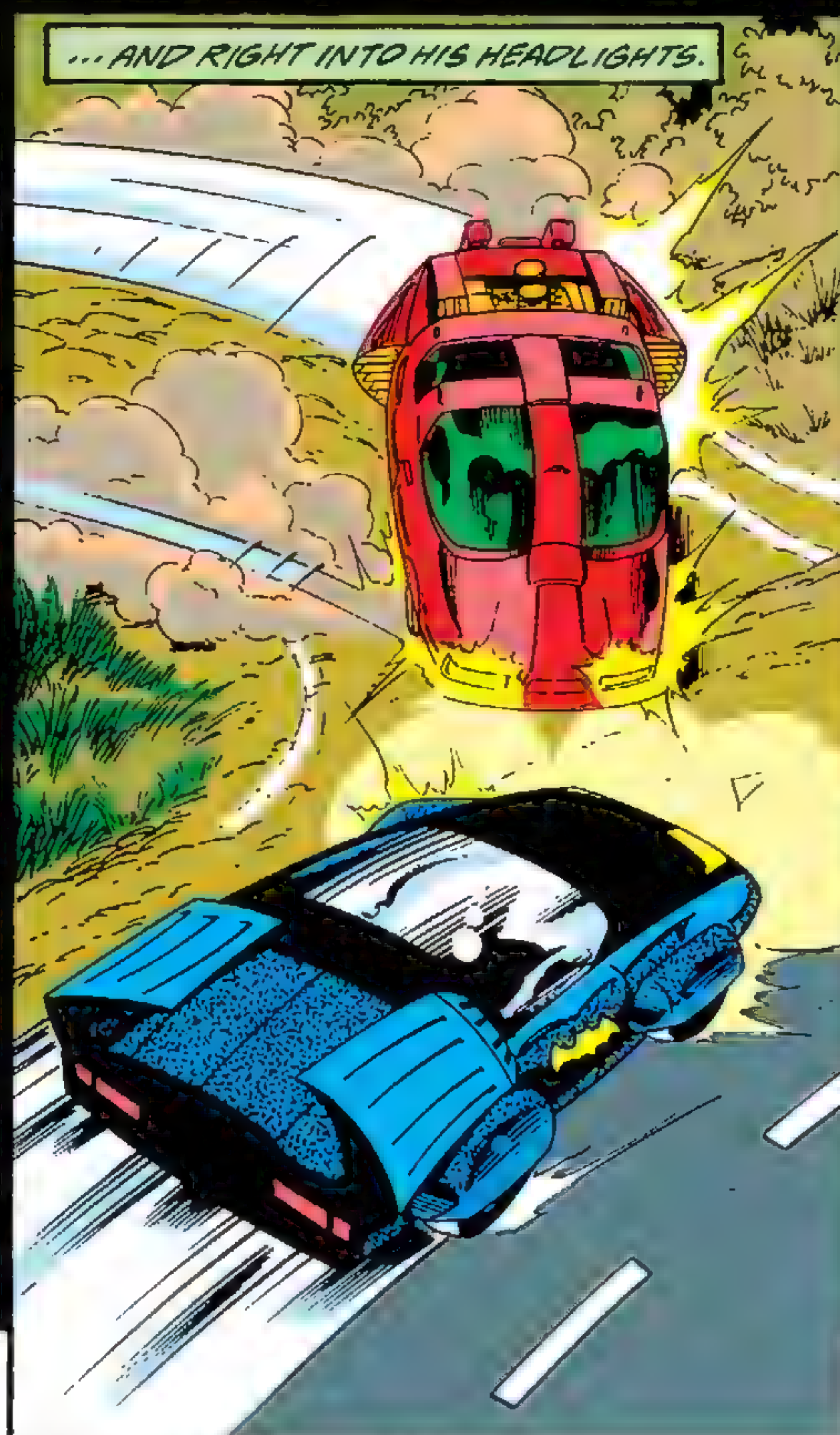
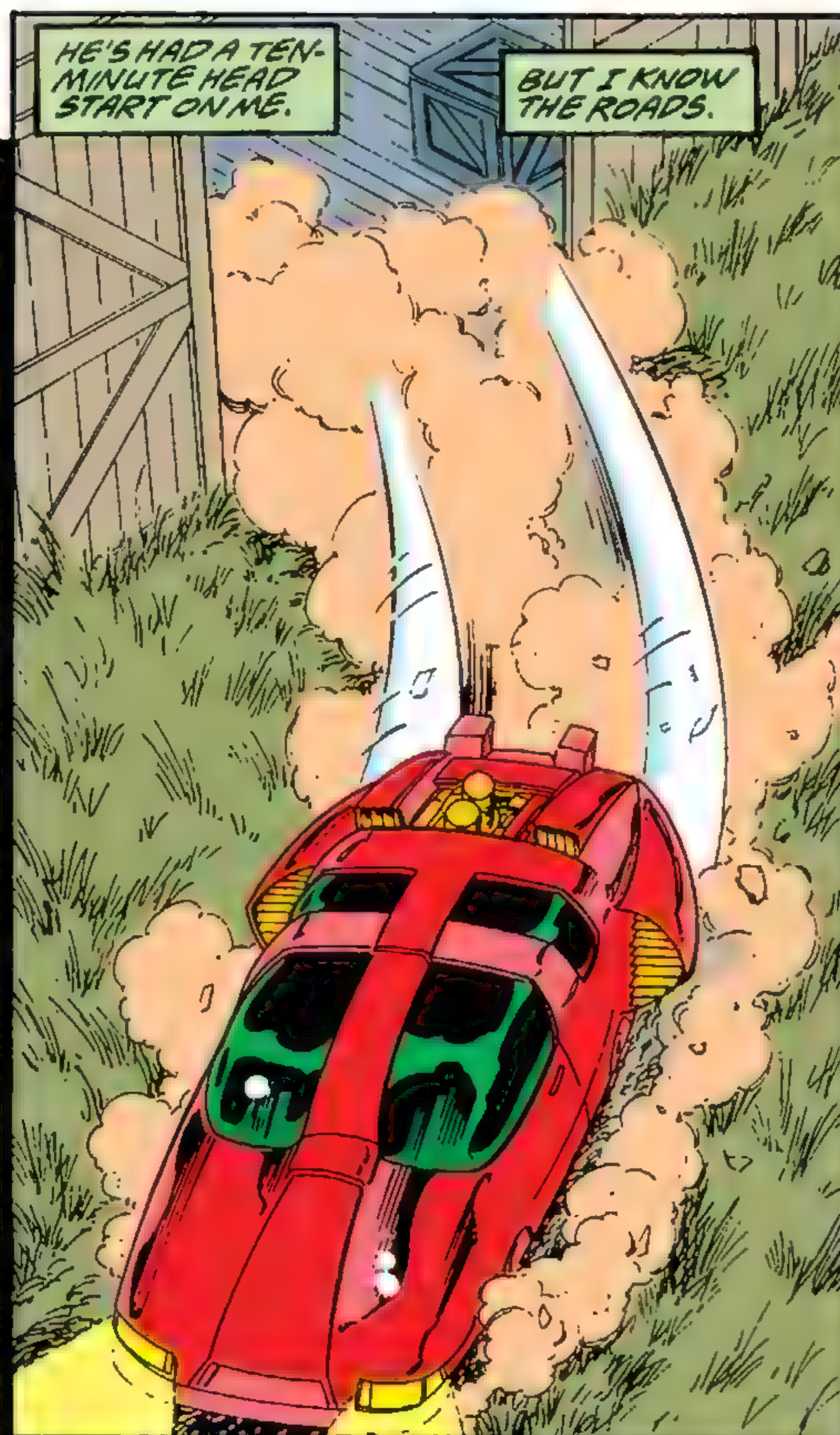
MAYBE IT'S
YOU WHO NEVER
DESERVED TO
WEAR THIS COWL,
WAYNE.

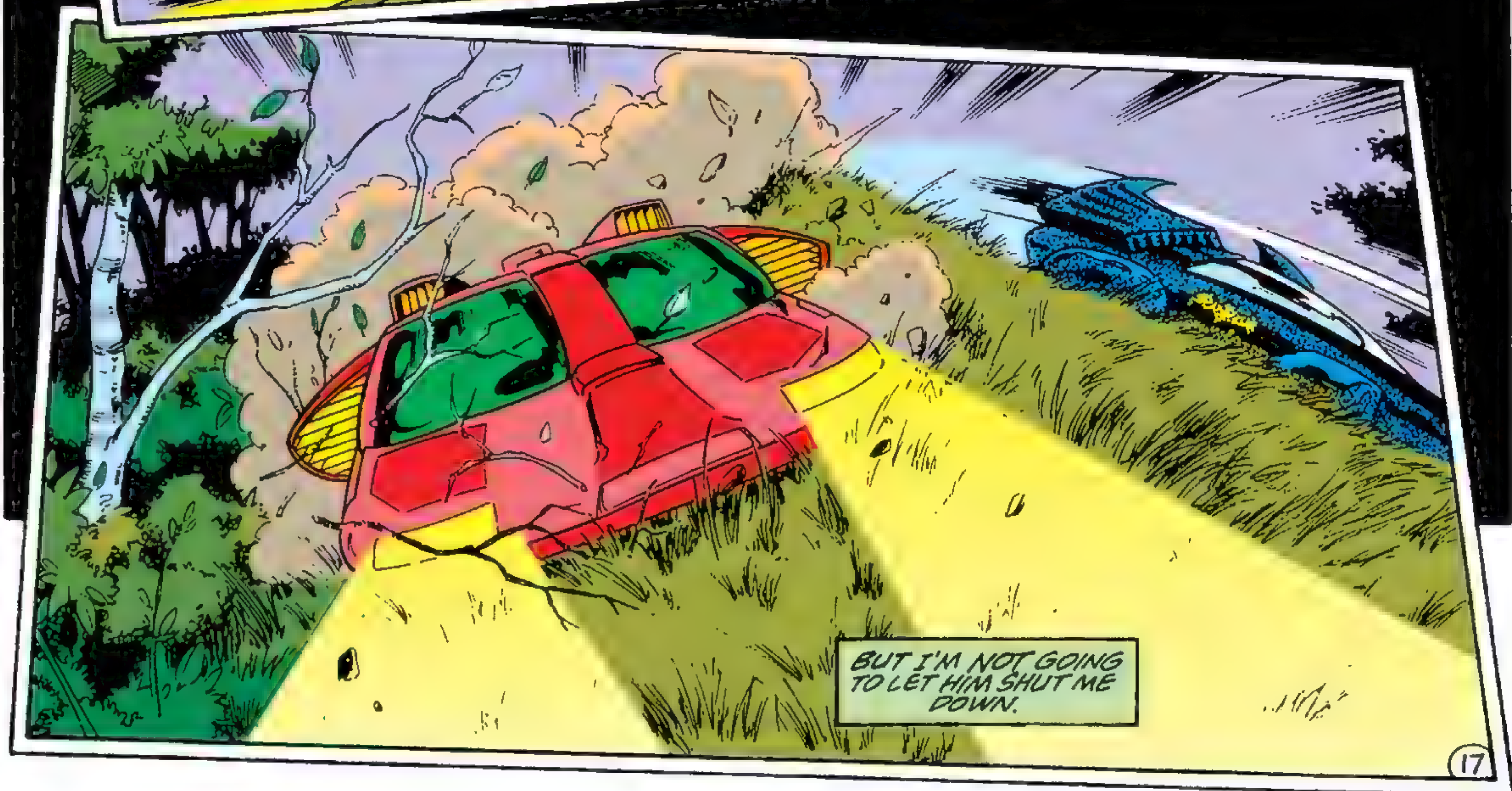
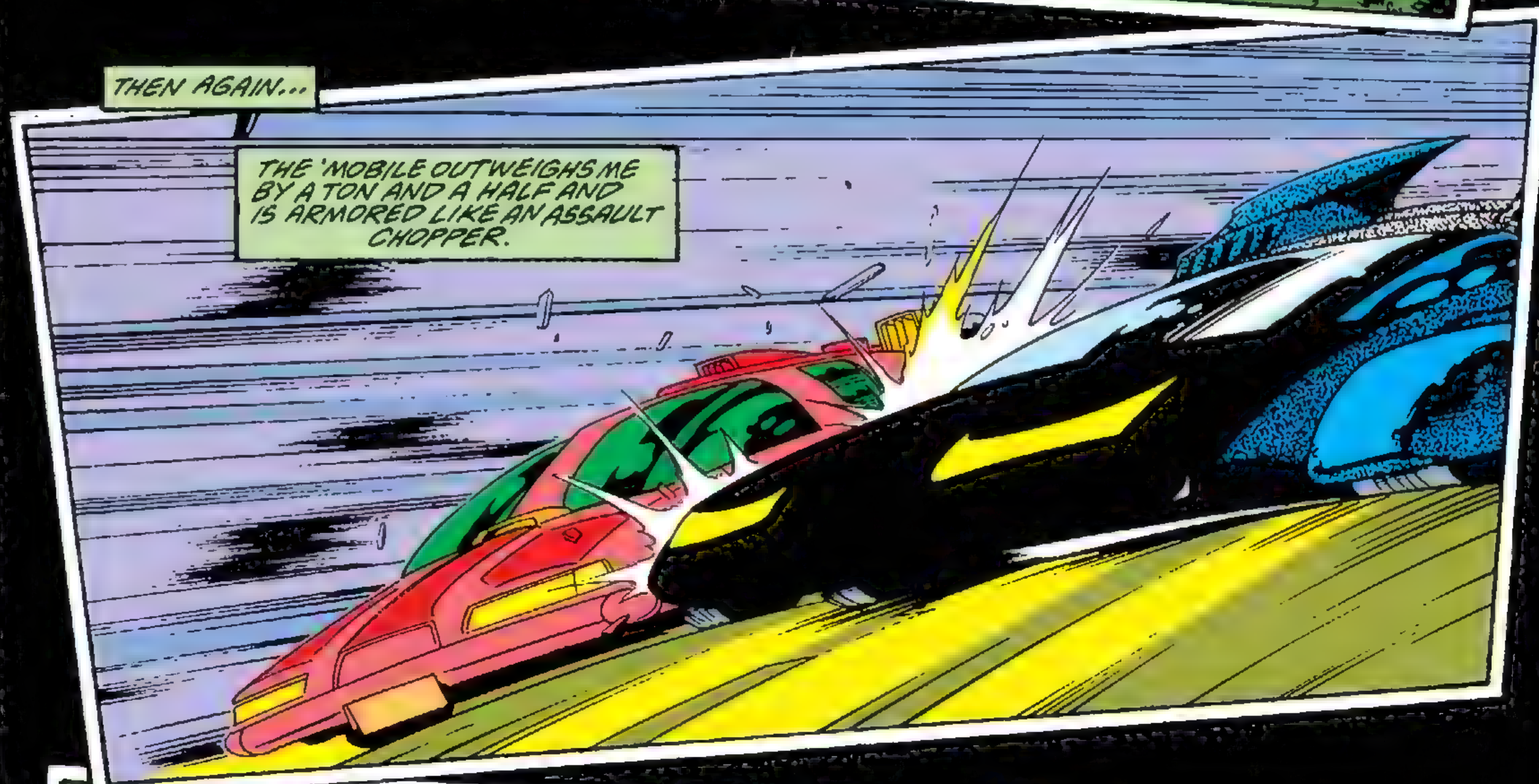
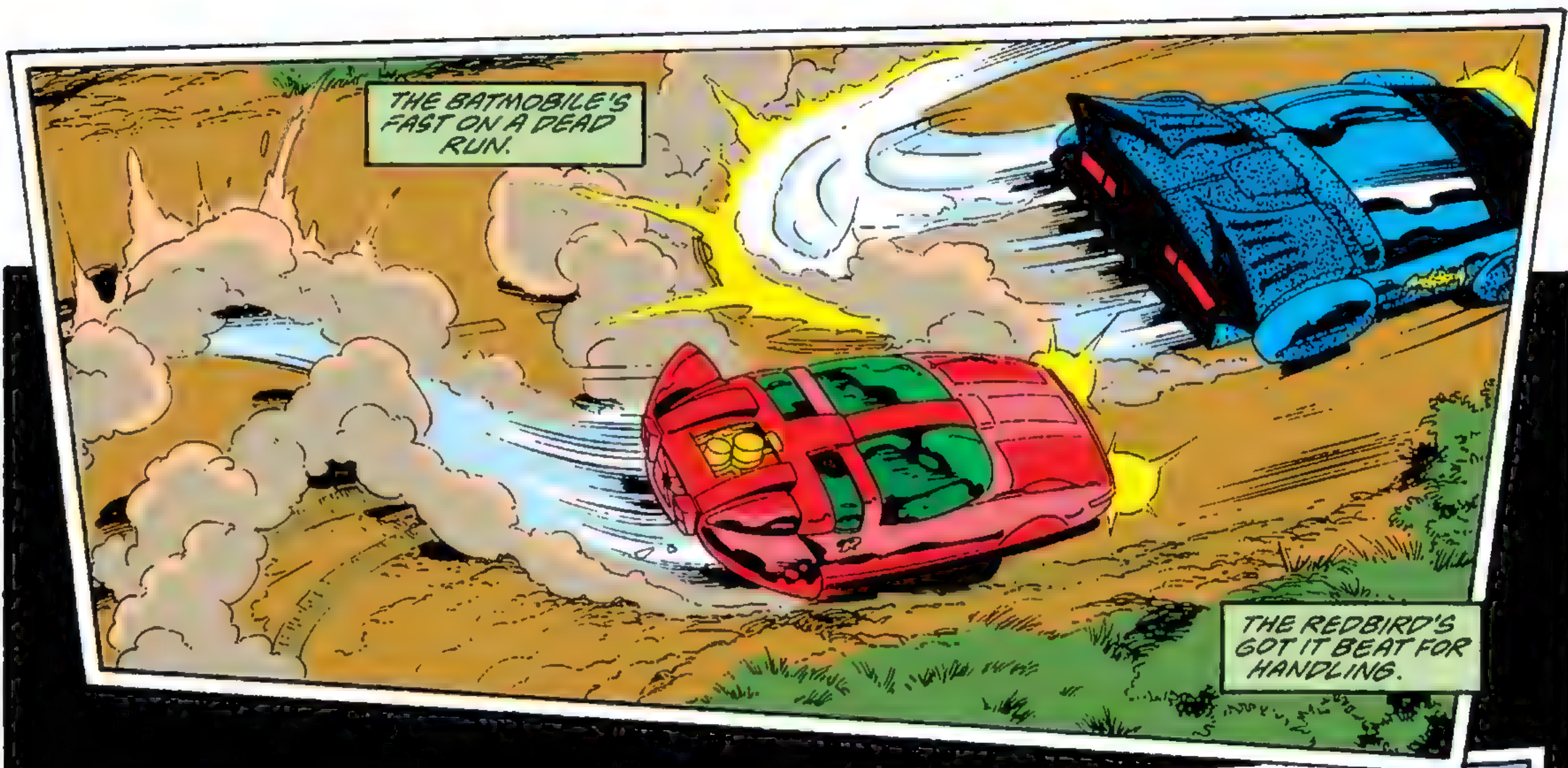
I'VE HEARD JUST
ABOUT ENOUGH,
PAUL...

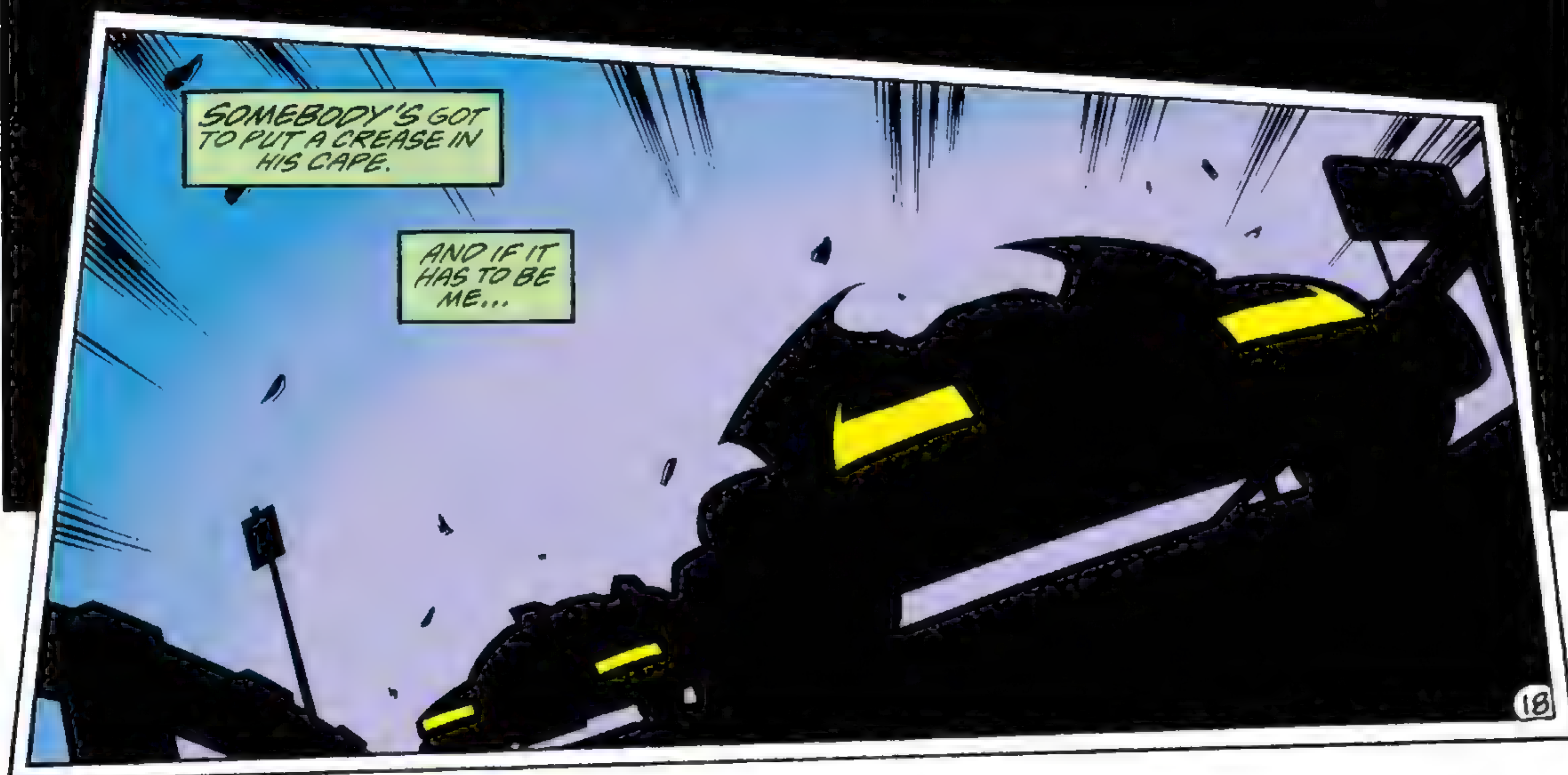
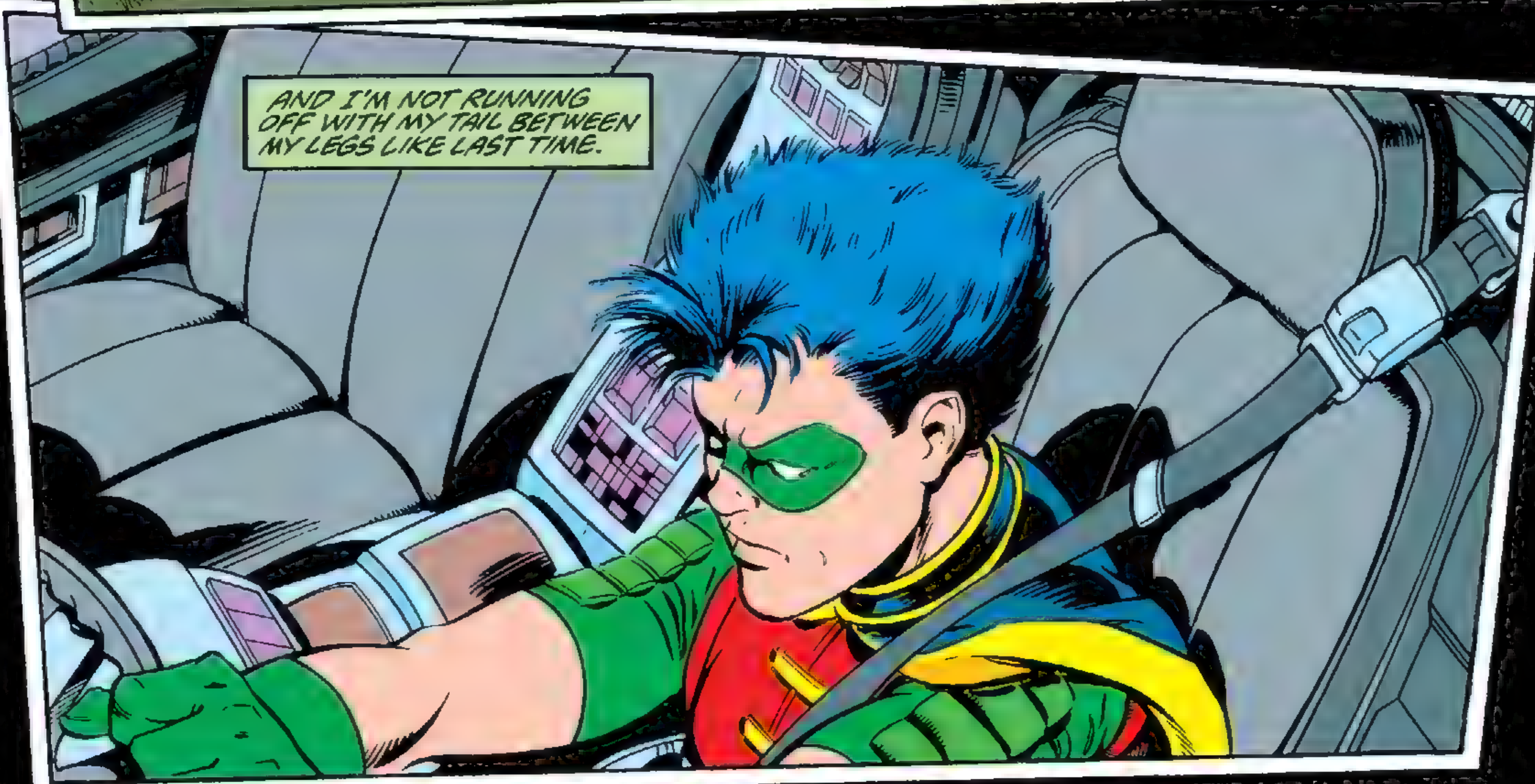
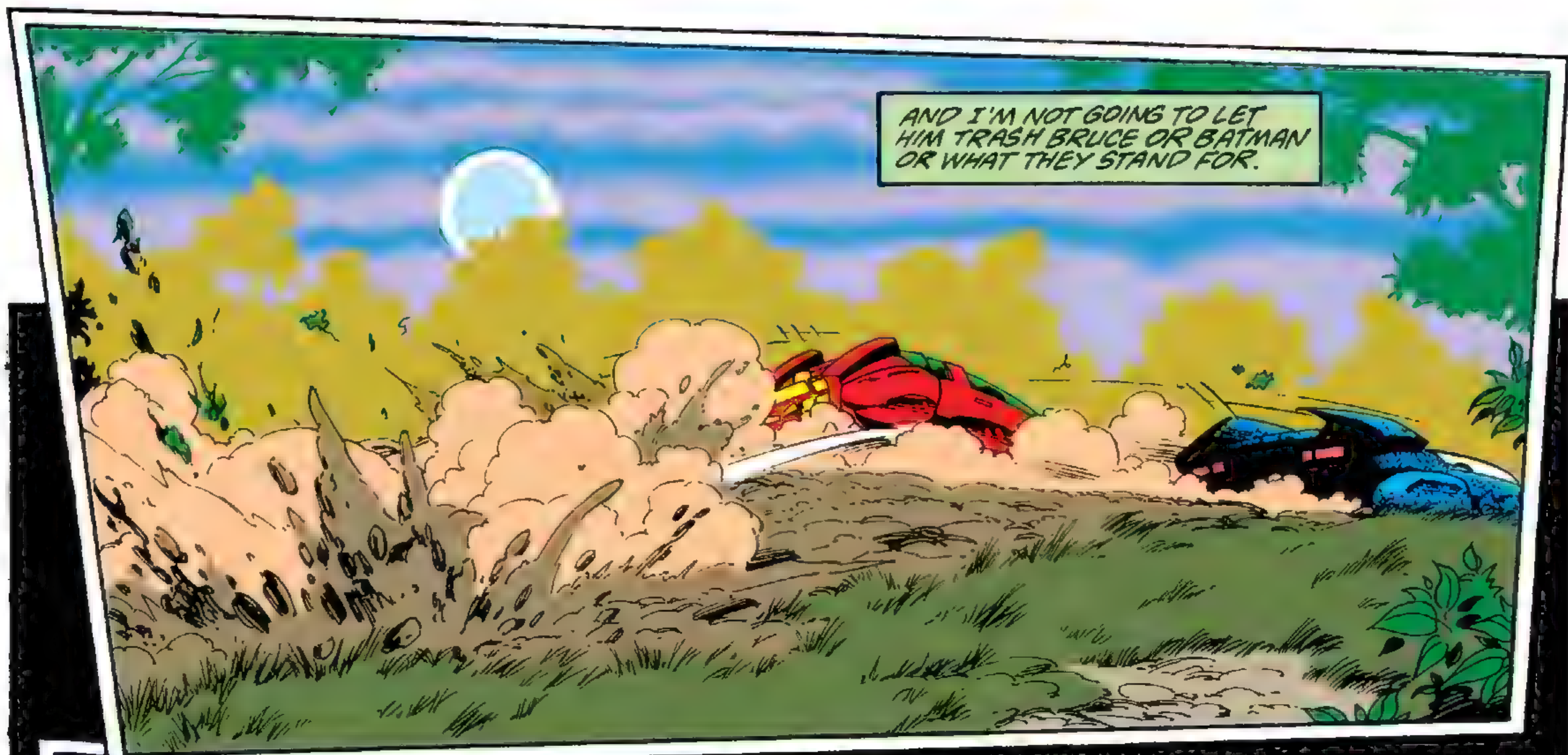
NOT
PAUL. NEVER
AGAIN.











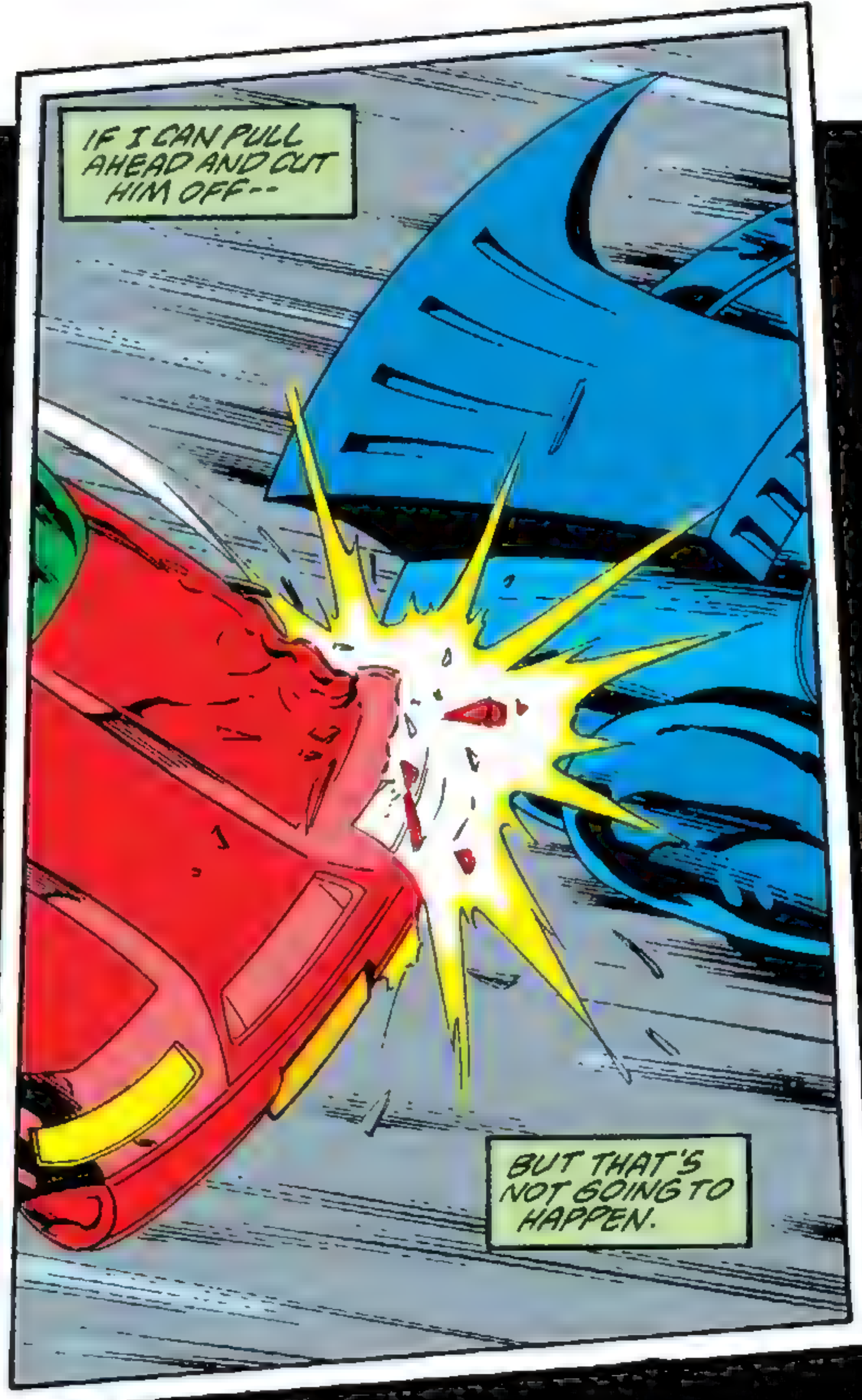


I FLIP ON THE NITROUS FEED.

THE ACCELERATION
THROWS ME BACK
IN MY SEAT.

WRONG
WAY

NOT
ER



IF I CAN PULL
AHEAD AND CUT
HIM OFF--

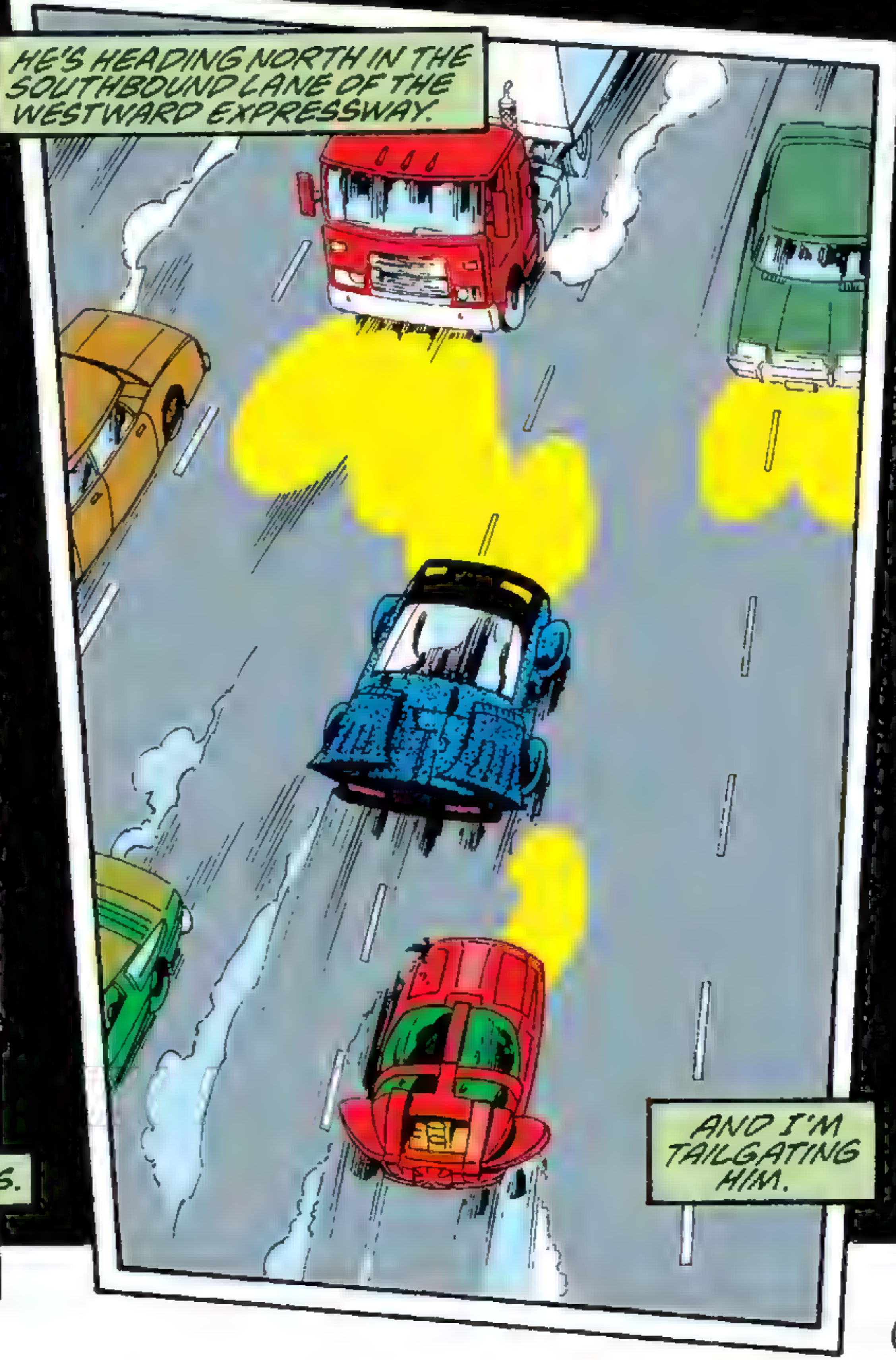
BUT THAT'S
NOT GOING TO
HAPPEN.



PAUL'S PLAYED
HIS EDGE.

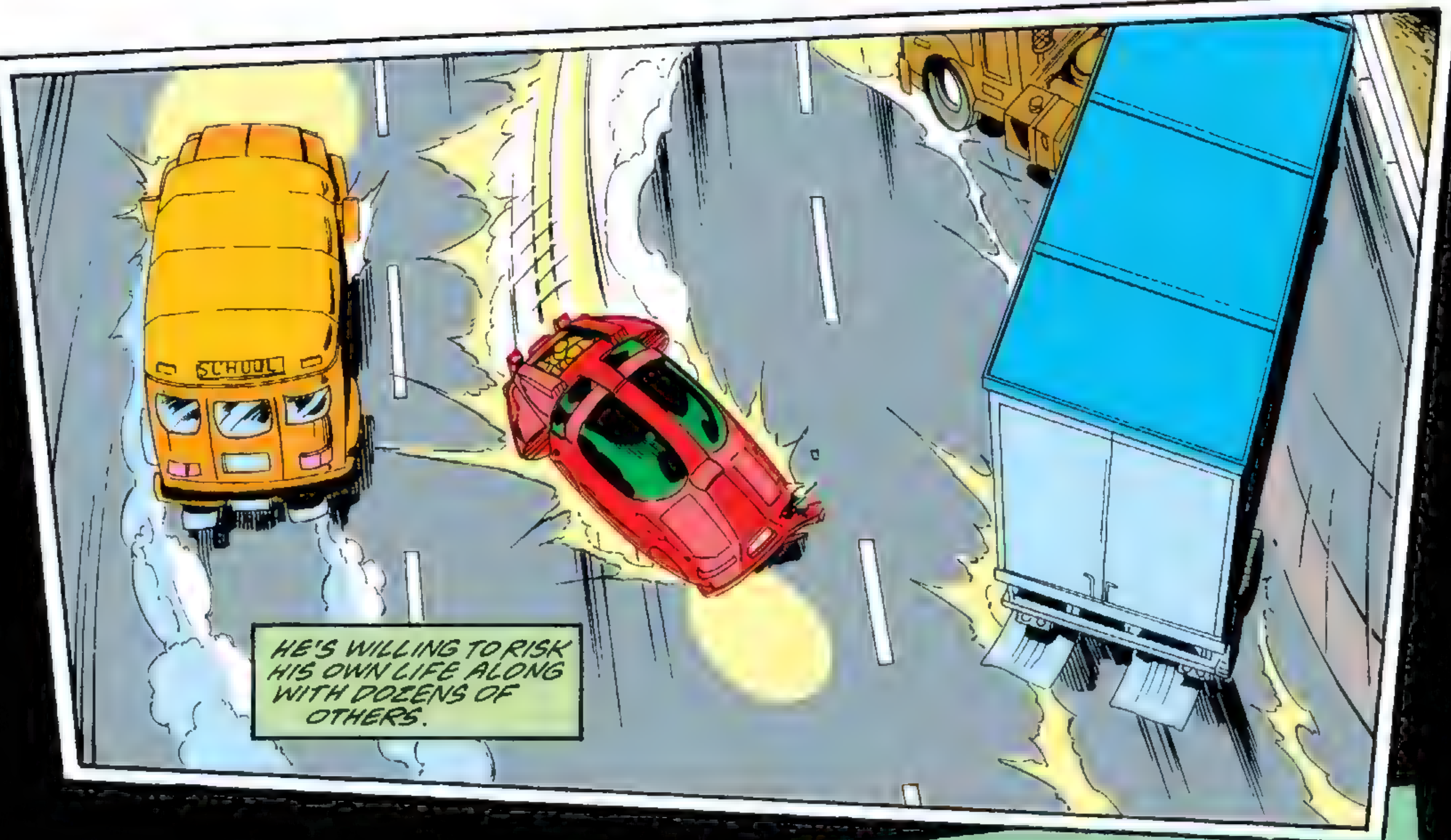
HIS HEARTLESSNESS.

HIS RUTHLESSNESS.



HE'S HEADING NORTH IN THE
SOUTHBOUND LANE OF THE
WESTWARD EXPRESSWAY.

AND I'M
TAILGATING
HIM.



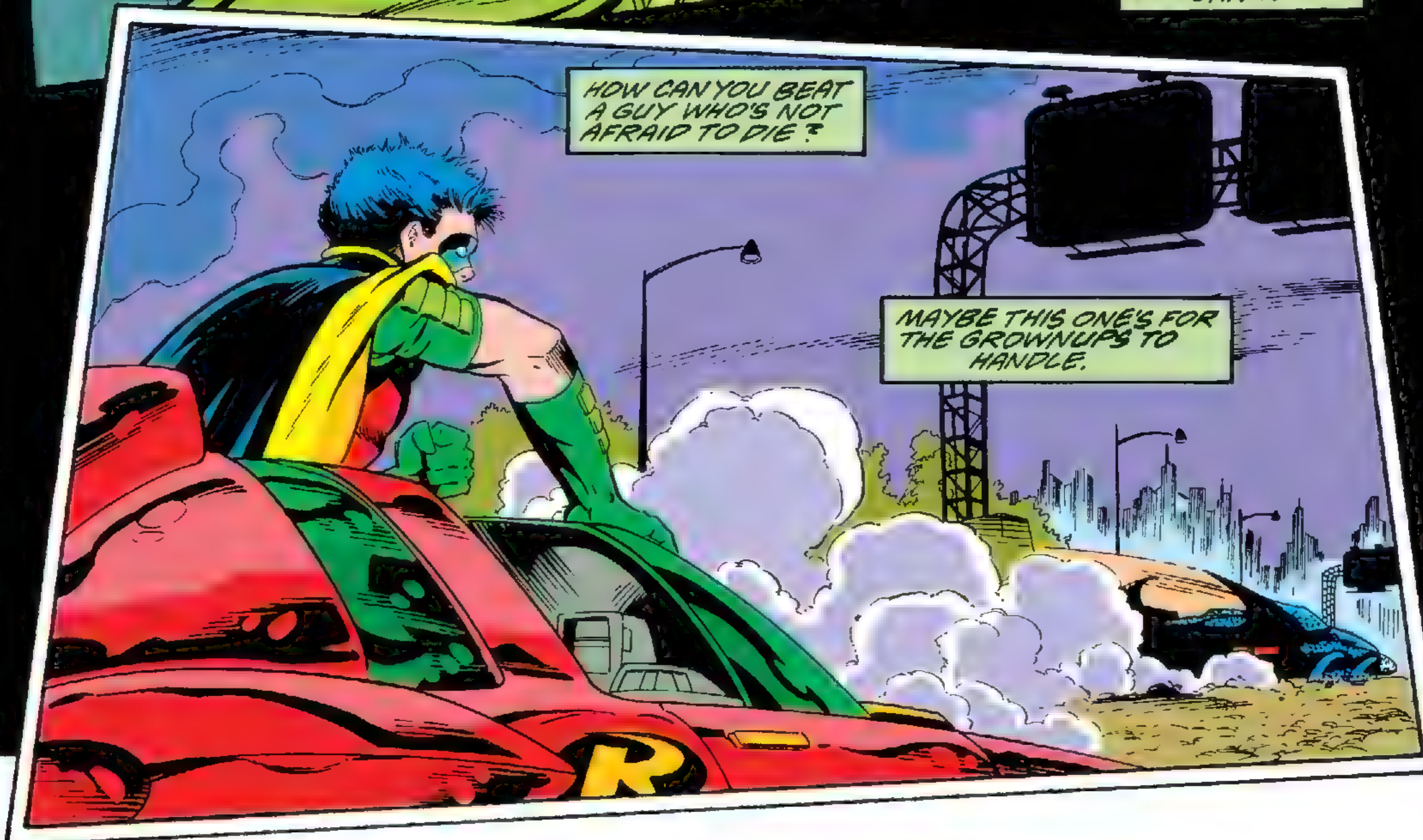
HE'S WILLING TO RISK
HIS OWN LIFE ALONG
WITH DOZENS OF
OTHERS.



BRAKES
LOCK UP.

TIRES SCREAMING.

WANT TO CLOSE
MY EYES BUT I
CAN'T.



HOW CAN YOU BEAT
A GUY WHO'S NOT
AFRAID TO DIE?

MAYBE THIS ONE'S FOR
THE GROWNUPS TO
HANDLE.



I THINK I MIGHT HAVE
BUSTED OUT A TAILLIGHT
ON THE BAT-RIDE.

BONEHEAD
PLAY, DRAKE.



YOU'RE
ALL
RIGHT?

NOTHING HURT
BUT MY INSURANCE
PREMIUMS.

HE
GOT
AWAY.



SO
WHAT'S
NEXT?

PAUL'S NOT
GOING TO GIVE UP
THE MANTLE
WITHOUT A
FIGHT.

BUT I'M
FOOLING MYSELF
TO THINK THAT
I'M READY TO
TAKE HIM
ON.

THEN
WHO
CAN?



ONLY THE BATMAN
CAN BRING HIM DOWN.
BUT I CAN'T TAKE UP
THE MANTLE UNTIL
I'VE REGAINED ALL
MY STRENGTH.

I'M PHYSICALLY
FIT ENOUGH. BUT
MY REFLEXES ARE
SHOT. THE PHYSICAL
MEMORY IS GONE.



BUT IT TOOK YEARS TO
CONDITION YOURSELF, BRUCE.
HOW CAN YOU GET BACK TO
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT IN
TIME TO TAKE ON PAUL?

A CRASH COURSE.
INTENSIVE TRAINING
AT THE HANDS OF A
MASTER.

AND WHO'S
THIS MASTER?

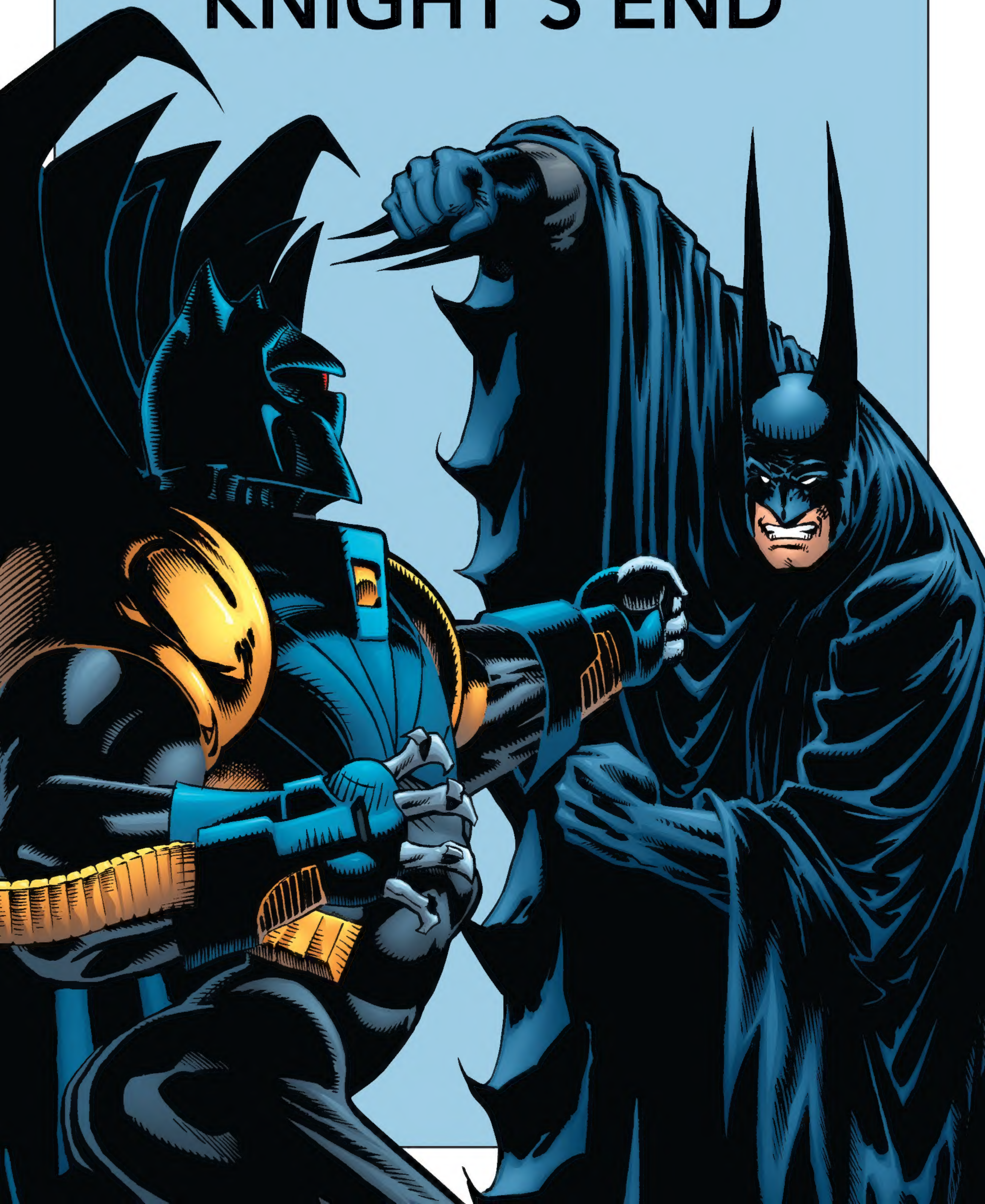


Follow the adventures of Batman and his own war on crime in



BATMAN KNIGHTFALL VOLUME 3

KNIGHT'S END



AN EXPLOSIVE NEW
BATMAN
IS AT THE
HELM

BRUCE WAYNE, battle-broken and out of commission after his epic showdown with Bane, has appointed a new Dark Knight to keep the villains at bay. Jean Paul Valley (a.k.a. Azrael) has assumed the role of the caped crusader, but without Bruce's integrity as a calming influence, Jean Paul is swiftly getting out of hand, alienating both Robin and Commissioner Gordon.

Meanwhile, the hulking baddie Bane is still on the loose, while new villainous foes are introduced onto the battlefield that is Gotham including master marksman Mekros and sinister sniper Gunhawk. Also, watch out for the return of familiar faces such as the serial killer Abbatoir and of course, the eerily jovial Joker.

Can the new Dark Knight face these nefarious challenges without Bruce Wayne and Robin? Might his violent manner of crime-fighting permanently cripple the already beleaguered Gotham?

BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL VOLUME 2: KNIGHTQUEST, the epic storyline in the Batman legacy, collects **DETECTIVE COMICS** 667-675; **SHADOW OF THE BAT** 19-20, 24-28; **BATMAN** 501-508; **CATWOMAN** 6-7 and **ROBIN** 7.



The Hand